

# **Career Management, Employee Empowerment and Motivation in an Academic Institution: Fostering Job Satisfaction**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Employee stagnation in a certain position, centralized decision making and tendency for micromanagement are among the pressing issues for companies experiencing growth. The chief purpose of the study is to determine the extent of career management, people empowerment and employee motivation as perceived by the personnel of the University of Cebu (UC). The study applied the descriptive design with the use of questionnaire designed by the researcher as the major tool for data collection. The respondents were the teaching and the non-teaching personnel of UC. The results revealed that there were significant differences on the extent to which people empowerment was upheld by management as well as the motivational needs of the employees. In the aspects of motivation, among Herzberg's hygiene factors, only two (2) were well addressed. These were pay and job security. Therefore, it is concluded that hygiene factors do not necessarily go together as perceived by employees despite the fact that Herzberg's two-factor theory grouped these aspects together as one.

**Keywords** – Human resource, career management, Herzberg's two-factor theory, descriptive design, Cebu City, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

Individual barriers included a kind of passivity shown in the increased dependency from management for advice, direction, opportunities as well as the perceived importance of not having a degree and having low self-confidence (O'Connor, 2000). In a situation where a large number of employees are trapped in a passive work environment, an employee has to set aside his personal goals, thinking that there are many applicants who are ready to take his job. On the other end, seeing some employees who are already employed but are just contented with what they have in the organization, one may think whether this is a case of a prolonged status quo of one's career. There are also instances when young individuals are propelled to enroll into a specific profession. These people become enthusiastic about such work despite the fact they lack the knowledge on the competencies required to attain success and satisfaction to that particular professional field (Judith, 2014).

Career management and people empowerment are two motivators that the entity should give due consideration. Those employees who have a clear direction to where they are going to, and when they get into the organization will have all the reasons to do their job in line with the output desired by the management. However, on the part of the employee, pursuing a career path will not be that much progressive if the culture of empowerment is not entirely in place. Involving personnel in organizational decisions would make them relate that their work is now a fundamental principle of good management. According to Pagoso (2006), a motivated person is ready to act. Generally, based on common experience, if the organization is able to provide a clear career path to each employee and provide him with a certain degree of autonomy to perform his assigned task then, he will be motivated to do his job.

In the study conducted by Patrick Chang Boon Lee of Nanyang Business School of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore on Career Goals and Career Management Strategy among Information Technology Professionals, the results showed that with regards to career management strategy, career planning is positively related to career strategy; career strategy is positively related to professional enhancement; and professional enhancement is positively related to career satisfaction. One important implication is that it is important for computer professionals to plan and strategize their own career. This would lead to greater career satisfaction.

Stumpf (1988) ties business strategy to organizational career management practices. Examples of these are policies of promoting from within, position mapping, propagation of mentor-mentee relationship are just few critical practices that can help if an organization wants to maintain its market grip in a dominant way. Given the fact that University of Cebu is one of the biggest privately owned universities in the Philippines with three (3) autonomous campuses armed with different core competencies, maturity levels, and track records, the researcher contends that the aforementioned variables are worth looking for to serve as the collective benchmark in addressing some fundamental human resource problems. This should be done to prepare and equip an organization to deal with the changes and pressing new challenges and demands in the organizations.

## FRAMEWORK

The paper is premised on the theory that career management, people empowerment and work motivation are important and useful elements to enhance the organization's effectiveness in the context of sustaining human capital as resource (Goetsch, 2002). In this era where change is constantly taking place in the organization, quite often than not, one of the most important assets of an organization is forgotten. It is the hidden part of the equation that if not considered, will hinder the success of any development process for the attainment of organizational goals. A major portion of organizational development usually relates to how well the organization understands the human capital assets.

### **Career Management**

The notion of "career" has been considered as the chief approach in analyzing the period of employees service in a company (Cullen, 2013). Of all the human resource management functions, management development is perhaps, the most misunderstood and poorly implemented. The single characteristic that distinguishes a successful organization from others is the caliber of the management team. Career management is associated to the organization's tactics in the instruction process, with the application of a model that delineates the manager's job as the focus in the fundamental competency and at the same time engulfed by various altruistic acts. The crucial element is to ascertain the explicit transmission from the knowledge area to the work setting (Wright & Belcourt, 1994).

Corpuz (2006) defined career management as the process through which employees become aware of their interests, values, strengths, and weaknesses. It also involves obtaining information about job opportunities within the company, identifying career goals, and establishing action plans to achieve those goals while development of the profession prepares a person for progression along a designated career path.

## **Empowerment**

People empowerment is another variable that is worth looking for. Its general idea is to give employees more power to make decisions, without the involvement of middle management. Sadly, many companies talk about moving from a hierarchical structure to empowerment, but very few take that first step (Blanchard, Carlos & Randolph, 1999). Empowerment is also a psychological perception where a person feels more independence, signifying, proficiency, and influence regarding their person in the organization (McShane & Von Glinow, 2005). Evans and Dean (2003) defined empowerment as a means of providing an employee the power to do any vital actions to satisfy the customers as well as trusting them to make right choices without the management's approval. In some companies, empowerment is used as the umbrella term for increasing employee involvement in decision-making.

Employees' perceptions on their leaders' behavior play a role in creating an empowering environment where employees are willing to do more than what is expected, with retention of employees as a result (Bester, Stander & Van Zyl, 2015). The notion that empowerment links to the insights of workers and the innate or mental processes that take place once operational and/or bestowing of authority to the employees has been imposed successfully, it is the psychosomatic method to empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995; Fong & Snape, 2015). Fong and Snape recommend that empowerment could be regarded as a condition that originates from within a person.

Managerial staff and line supervisors have the obligation to ensure their employees are performing their jobs, but they cannot coerce the workers to be extra efficient. Therefore, they should look into the motivating factors of the employees to perform better (Mercurio, 2006).

On the other hand, if employees are not satisfied with their jobs, then they would have the propensity to quit. Turnover can hurt the organization because it results in the loss of experience and knowledge that an employee has gained about the company, industry, and the business environment. Satisfied employees

manifest decreased probability to search for another job and a decreasing desire to leave (Gimena, 2014). Empowerment in an organization is far more like freeing a canary than like driving a car. That is, if there is credence that empowerment implicates an intrinsic aspiration to be responsible to one's life, compared to plain transfer of organizational authority to individuals. If empowerment enables another to act with more authority, the implications for creating the right conditions that will free employees to do this are very real. The conditions are cultural ones, involving trust and an atmosphere where change is perceived not as a threat but as an opportunity (Beach, 1996).

### **Employee Motivation**

Another variable considered in this study is the motivational level and needs of the employees. Motivation pertains to the vigor either inner or outer of an individual that stimulates eagerness and tenacity to engage to a particular course of action. Employee motivation affects productivity. So, it would be a part of a manager's job to channel follower's motivation toward the accomplishment of the organization's vision and goals. Analyzing workers' motives aids the management to learn what stimulate people to instigate an act; what inspire their preference of action; and their purpose of keeping up to that feat over time. It was argued that using money as a motivator almost always leads to higher performance (Daft, 2014).

There are several theories of motivation which are worth looking for which may guide the top management in setting its goals and strategic plans. One of the most popular theories of motivation is Frederick Herzberg's Two-factor Theory of Motivation which identifies two factors that dominate the workplace such as extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors include salary, job security, security, working conditions, and status while intrinsic factors, known as satisfiers, include recognition and advancement. Herzberg's theory implies that organization create noteworthy jobs to motivate people. Although unsatisfactory rewards systems can dissatisfy employees, it is also necessary for organizations to motivate workers (Zarate, 2006).

Abraham Maslow's Theory of Motivation arranged human needs into a hierarchy. Maslow's theory posits that an individual will satisfy basic-level needs before modifying behavior to satisfy higher-level needs. The need in a pyramid consists of physical, security, social, self-esteem and self-actualization need. In this theory, a person would intend to satisfy first the physical or the basic human needs that are necessary for basic survival. The needs in the upper

part of the pyramid contribute slight enthusiasm until these essential needs are fulfilled. Once physiological needs are gratified, safety or security becomes the predominant needs. The necessity for belongingness to a group, community or organization represents the affiliation need. The fulfillment of the self-recognition need creates the sense of self-assurance, notability, influence, and hegemony. Upon fulfilling the self-recognition requisite, self-actualization becomes the dominant need. Self-actualization is known as the self-realization stage that denotes the necessity to make most of a person's capability and aptitude (Gambrel & Cianci, 2003).

Another theory of motivation is David McClelland's Learned Needs Theory in which he suggested that a strong n-affil or affiliation-motivation somewhat destroys a manager's objectivity, because of their need to gain appreciation from others. Consequently, this undermines the manager's decision-making skill (Zarate, 2006).

The basis of Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory is the expectation that a person will strive on the basis of his acuity of the likelihood of his expectations to occur. The expectancies and valences determine motivation that is the context of this theory. Expectancy is a belief about the likelihood or probability that a particular behavioral act will lead to a particular outcome. Expectancy is based on the assumption that a combination of forces within the individual and in the environment determines behavior (Medina, 2011).

Adams' Equity Theory which says that people will be motivated at work when they perceive that they are being treated fairly. In particular, equity stresses the importance of perceptions. So, regardless of the actual level of rewards people receive, they must also perceive that they are being treated fairly (Williams, 2013). Organizational fairness refers to the people's perception of fairness in organizations (Kivimäki, Elovainio, Vahtera & Ferrie, 2003). Organizational justice or fairness concentrates on people's perceptions of the equality of their work outcomes or in proportion to their work inputs (Moorman, 1991).

Skudiene and Auruskeviciene, (2012) investigated the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on internal employee motivation. The analysis of the academic literature and research demonstrated that there exist two types of CSR orientations that are internal and external. Internal CSR includes socially responsible activities related with employees' issues. The findings suggested that internal and external CSR activities positively correlate with internal employee motivation. In-house CSR was found stronger related to internal employee motivation than all the external CSR dimensions. Regarding the

external CSR, customer-related activities had a significant correlation with the organization's employee motivation than local communities as well as business activities with business partners. The weakest relation was between the internal employee motivation and CSR activities with business partners. To sum it up, the CSR initiatives undertaken towards employees, customers, local communities and business partners will lead to the enhanced employee internal motivation.

Mafini and Dlodlo (2014) investigated the association between extrinsic motivation, job satisfaction and life satisfaction among workers in a government office. Exploratory factor analysis was utilized to excerpt the five factors: remuneration, quality of work life, promotion, supervision and teamwork that affect the extrinsic motivation of public service employees. The usage of Spearman's rank correlation analysis procedure showed that with the exclusion of promotion, there was a moderate to strong association between the extrinsic motivation factors and job contentment. Further, there exist a positive relationship between fulfillment in work and gratification. This means that these two factors either go together or the opposite direction.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The study determined the extent to which career management, people empowerment, and employee motivation were adopted by the University of Cebu to improve the existing program and redesign its Employee Development Program to be able to address the needs employees and foster satisfaction.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study utilized the descriptive survey research design using a self-made questionnaire for data collection. Those questionnaires were distributed to specific respondents and retrieved after being filled out. Gathered data were tallied and tabulated for presentation, interpretation, and analysis.

### **Research Site**

The study was conducted at the University of Cebu which is composed of the University of Cebu Main Campus, located at Sanciango Street, Cebu City; UC-Mambaling Campus, located at Tabada Street, Mambaling, Cebu City; UC-LapuLapu and Mandaue Campus located at Hernan Cortes Ave, Mandaue City; and UC-Banilad Campus located at Governor Cuenco Ave, Banilad, Cebu City.

## **Participants**

The respondents of the study were the administrators, academic, and non-academic personnel of the four (4) campuses of University of Cebu. There were 100 administrators as respondents while there were 293 for the faculty and non-teaching staff, using Slovin's formula. To comply with research ethics protocol, the researchers obtained informed consent from everyone who was interviewed on given questions to answer.

The administrator includes the Deans, Chairpersons, and Directors and Heads of different offices including the support services. There were 100 school administrators in all of its four (4) campuses who were considered in this investigation; 874 were full-time faculty instructors from all the campuses; and 216 non-academic personnel.

## **Instrumentation**

The study used a self-designed instrument composed of three (3) parts. The first part pertains to career development and management; the second part concerns to empowerment, and the third relates to employee motivation. The questionnaire on professional development and management is composed of four elements such as career direction, career time, career options, and career transition. While the questionnaire on empowerment consisted of three (3) parts, namely: self-determination, job meaning, and competence on job and employee's impact on the job. On motivation, the questionnaire also consisted of three (3) parts: pay, working conditions, job security, and peer relations. The second part of the tool on motivation pertains to company policy and administration, quality of supervision, and relationship with immediate head or supervisor. The third part relates to motivation links to achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunity for growth.

In the career development & management questionnaire, questions were asked for the purpose of determining the extent to which the management manifests interest on professional development for its employees. Each question is followed by some of the responses. Corresponding to each item are numeric scales with the following qualitative equivalents.

## **Research Procedure and Data Analysis**

The researcher sought the permission from the Chancellor of the University of Cebu to conduct a study. After obtaining the approval, letter requests were made to the different Human Resource (HR) Directors of the campuses to distribute

questionnaires to the respondents. There was ample time for the respondents to answer the research tool, after which they were retrieved for tabulation, presentation, analysis, and interpretation.

For the purpose of analyzing and interpreting collected data, weighted mean and Pearson were computed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data in Table 1 presents the data on the extent to which career management was implemented in all four campuses of the University of Cebu.

Table 1. Extent of implementation of career management

Indicators	Administrators		Faculty & Staff		Composite	
	Mean	Inter-pretation	Mean	Inter-pretation	Mean	Inter-pretation
Career Direction	2.95	GE	2.69	GE	2.74	GE
Career Time	2.62	GE	2.61	GE	2.59	GE
Career Options	2.77	GE	2.67	GE	2.77	GE
Career Transitions	2.69	GE	2.64	GE	2.64	GE
<b>General Average</b>	<b>2.74</b>	<b>GE</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>GE</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>GE</b>

The general average of 2.67 means that both the administrators ( $\mu=2.74$ ) and the faculty and staff ( $\mu=2.65$ ) answered that career management was implemented to a great extent in the institution.

Specifically, career management was perceived to have been applied to a great extent ( $\mu=2.74$ ) in the aspect of career direction. This result means that the institution is in the constant assessment process in terms of what are the employees' wants, needs, and professional interests. Further, this implies that the company is giving its employees some available alternatives in alignment to one's realistic aspiration.

Career management in the aspect of career time was likewise implemented to a great extent as revealed in the composite mean of 2.59. This finding can be surmised that the organization made available its target milestones and reasonable timeframes for the employees to track the progress to the professional growth of the employees.

In the aspect of career options, career management was also implemented to a great extent based on  $\mu=2.77$ . This result could be inferred that the employees

were supported to a great extent by the top management so that they may recognize the available options within the organization. In this aspect, it can be deduced that the university is not depriving its people of opportunities for advancement, promotional and lateral transfers, and any opportunity for career enrichment.

Career management specifically in the aspect of career transition was also implemented by the establishment to a high extent ( $\mu=2.64$ ). This outcome means that the institution had invested the considerable amount of resources in preparing its employees to new heights of professional growth and responsibility. The results affirms the idea of Mumford (2007), who said that it is significant for the employees that the pay they receive should correspond to the required efficiency in performing their assigned task. Typically, it is enviable for employees to be satisfied with their jobs (Mobley, 2006) as well as the company policies and rules.

Table 2. Extent of implementation of people empowerment

Indicator	Administrators		Faculty & Staff		Composite	
	Mean	Inter-pretation	Mean	Inter-pretation	Mean	Inter-pretation
Self-Determination	2.72	GE	2.78	GE	2.73	GE
Job Meaning	2.93	GE	3.11	GE	3.08	GE
Competence on the Job	3.02	GE	3.17	GE	3.14	GE
<b>General Average</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>GE</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>GE</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>GE</b>

The general average of 2.98, derived from the responses from the administrators ( $\mu=2.88$ ) and faculty and staff, ( $\mu=3.02$ ) could be interpreted that people empowerment was implemented by the institution to a great extent.

Specifically, people empowerment was imposed to a great extent in the organization in the aspect of self-determination ( $\mu=2.73$ ). This means that employees enjoys a certain degree of independence and discretion to do their job within the organization.

People empowerment in the aspect of job meaning was also implemented to a great extent ( $\mu=3.08$ ). This result means that employees' contribution to the organization has been recognized by the institution. This institutional set up motivated the employees to take extra care of their work and would led the employee to believe that what they are doing is of importance.

In the aspect of competence on the job, it was also perceived to had been implemented to a great extent ( $\mu=3.14$ ). So, the institution has been proactive in enhancing the employees' capability in performing their jobs. Further, this would mean that employees were given a chance to become active participants in the organization once they become proficient in a certain organizational task. People empowerment in this context is related to role responsibility (Hicks, Fujiwara & Bahr, 2006) which emphasizes the obligation of the employees to exert effort towards the attainment of organization goals which lead to desirable performance.

Table 3. Extent to which the motivational needs of employees were addressed

Indicator	Administrators		Faculty & Staff		Composite	
	Mean	Inter-pretation	Mean	Inter-pretation	Mean	Inter-pretation
Pay/Salary	2.60	A	2.98	A	2.88	A
Working Condition	3.03	A	3.24	A	3.14	A
Job Security	2.89	A	3.16	A	3.11	A
Company Policies	2.89	A	3.14	A	3.09	A
Recognition	2.66	A	2.98	A	2.92	A
Responsibility	2.82	A	3.27	WA	3.18	A
Opportunity for Growth	2.74	A	3.08	A	2.96	A
<b>General Average</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>A</b>

Legend:

Scale	Interpretation
3.26-4.0	Well-Addressed (WA)
2.51-3.25	Addressed (A)
1.76-2.50	Moderately Addressed (MA)
1.00-1.75	Not Addressed (NA)

The general average of 3.05 denotes that the two groups of respondents, perceived that the their motivational needs were addressed by the administrators of the University of Cebu.

In the aspect of pay or salary, the motivational level of personnel was well-addressed which can be deduced that the employees were satisfied with the system of monetary remuneration of the institution.

Motivational level in relation to the working condition was also addressed by the organization. This finding means that the natural and physical work environment is conducive for the delivery of the expected service from the employee to its clients or customers.

Job security was also addressed which means that the people working in the organization were satisfied not only in terms of monetary aspect of employment but also on policy about a long-term relationship between management and employee.

Other organizational variables that were given importance by the management in the aspects of the motivational needs of the employees were company policies, recognition, responsibility and opportunity for growth. The result supports Herzberg's theory which implies that organization create noteworthy jobs to motivate people. Although unsatisfactory rewards systems can dissatisfy employees, it is also necessary for organizations to motivate workers (Zarate, 2006).

Table 4. Difference on the assessment of the administrators and faculty and staff on the extent to which of the manifestation of career management

<b>Part 1 S-Variable</b>	<b><i>t</i> Computed</b>	<b><i>t</i> Critical</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Career Direction	1.8366	1.96	Accept	No Significant Difference
Career Time	1.1014	1.96	Accept	No Significant Difference
Career Options	1.7526	1.96	Accept	No Significant Difference
Career Transitions	1.5176	1.96	Accept	No Significant Difference

The data exhibited that there was no significant difference in the assessment made by the two groups of respondents on the extent of manifestation of career management in the aspects of career direction; career time; career options and career transitions. It could be noted that these areas in career management had been perceived to have been implemented to greater extent. These areas are considered to be necessary so that employees will be satisfied not just on their jobs, but on how they are being managed. Baruch (2004) insinuated that before, planning in the aspect of career has more frequent than not been inadvertent, and when top management would be looking for employees to be promoted, the main characteristics were overall skills, competence and employment status.

Table 5. Difference on the evaluations of the administrators and the faculty and staff on the extent of the manifestation of people empowerment

<b>Part 1 S-Variable</b>	<b>t Computed</b>	<b>t Critical</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Self-Determination	3.5078	1.96	Reject	Significant Difference
Job Meaning	2.424	1.96	Reject	Significant Difference
Competence in the Job	3.8319	1.96	Reject	Significant Difference

There were significant differences in the assessment of the administrative personnel and the faculty and staff of the university in terms of people empowerment, specifically, on self determination, upholding empowerment in job meaning and on the area of competence in the job. Empowering the employees is a broad action, and the manner that empowerment deeds are undertaken in harmony with its gist, convey the association between the job performed and the corresponding satisfaction experience by the employees (Pelit, Öztürk & Arslantürk, 2001).

Table 6. Difference in the evaluations of the administrators and the faculty and staff on the extent to which motivational needs was addressed in the institution

<b>Part 1 S-Variable</b>	<b>t Computed</b>	<b>t Critical</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Pay	4.3555	1.96	Reject	Significant Difference
Working Condition	2.9043	1.96	Reject	Significant Difference
Job Security	5.3432	1.96	Reject	Significant Difference
Company Policies	5.4162	1.96	Reject	Significant Difference
Recognition	4.8253	1.96	Reject	Significant Difference
Responsibility	8.7935	1.96	Reject	Significant Difference
Opportunity For Growth	6.6994	1.96	Reject	Significant Difference

There were significant differences on the answers made by the administrative personnel and the teaching and non-teaching staff of the university in terms of whether the motivational needs of employees were addressed or were being given importance. Specifically, there were significant differences on the perception by the two groups of respondents in terms of the following aspects: pay, working condition, job security, company policies, recognition, responsibility, and opportunity and growth. It can be noted that all of the t computed value in all aspects in the motivational needs of the employees were greater than the t critical

of 1.96. Thus, the perceptions of the two groups of respondents in the university substantially differ.

The results affirm Mercurio (2006) who said that although the top management and supervisors have the responsibility of making sure that the employees are motivated do their tasks efficiently, their opinions and ranking on the motivating factors may differ.

## CONCLUSIONS

Despite the fact that career management and people empowerment had been implemented in most cases, there is still a need to redesign these organizational practices to foster job satisfaction especially on the part of the faculty and non-teaching staff of the university since they are in the first line to provide service to the primary clientele of a university. This action should be done to gain more consistency with consideration to some specifics that contradicts the overall extent of its implementation. Further, there is a need to align the existing overall company program especially the part that addresses motivational needs to balance some vital items equitably in terms of promoting work enthusiasm.

Career management, people empowerment, and motivational needs of the employees are functioning like the three pillars of a dynamic organization. This consistency in the management's policy, attitude, and philosophy matters a lot. Addressing only one or two of these will not guarantee efficient and effective functioning of people in the organization in the long run. An example of this is the finding that career management was implemented to a great extent but under motivational needs, an opportunity for growth ranks lowest from the employees' evaluation.

Furthermore, the people within the organization may be in different position and function but they did not differ in terms of vision about their career in the future.

## TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The results of the study require the need for the Vice-Chancellor for Administration, Campus Academic Directors, and Human Resources Directors to meet and devise a plan to implement the proposed program entitled "UC Career Management, Empowerment and Motivation Scheme. Part of this program is restructuring the policy that would trigger the employees' interest to

do something with independence and initiative. Thereby, there will be an increase in the culture of empowerment within the institution. There shall be a creation of an ad hoc committee that would carefully study the inconsistencies regarding performance appraisal and financial incentives associated with it. Improvement of the recognition policy of the institution to make less inorganic and more responsive to the lower needs of the employees is also recommended.

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