

Influence of Career Growth in the Context of Promotion Speed, Professional Ability, Organizational Rewards for Knowledge Workers Job Engagement in an Organization

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Abstract

Job engagement, as a kind of positive working being characterized by enthusiasm and selfless work, is being seriously challenged in the modern enterprise organizations. Based on the review of social exchange theory, this study constructed a research model which included: promotion speed, professional ability, organization rewards, organizational identification and job engagement from the perspective of improving the job engagement of the knowledge-workers in organization. The focus of the study is to find out the influence of the promotion speed, professional ability, organization rewards, on the dimensions of job engagement, and to figure out how organizational identification adjusted their relationships. In order to verify the hypothesis, this research adopted the method of questionnaire survey and regarded the knowledge-workers as the study subjects by delivering the online questionnaires and paper questionnaires to them. A total of 168 valid samples are obtained. The mentioned hypothesis is verified by analysing the data of samples using reliability analysis and regression analysis. The results showed that promotion speed, professional ability, organization rewards has a positive impact on job engagement and organizational identification has a significant effect between these two variables. Finally, this paper suggests that organizations should establish reasonable training, compensation and promotion system from the perspectives of career growth and organizational identification and build an innovative corporate culture etc. to increase the job engagement of the knowledge-workers.

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1. Introduction

According to Stoyanova and Iliev[1], only 14% of employees in organizations around the world are fully engaged in their work. The emergence of this situation makes people feel worried and surprised. Everyone seemed to be busy and working hard. Nonetheless, only a small number of people in the report showed a high level of work commitment and the results are worthy of

reflection. Sweetman and Luthans [2] and Demerouti et al.[3], pointed out that it is difficult for employees to achieve a high level of work engagement, given the current level of human resource development. This is in line with study done by Schaufeli et al.[4] which reported that in the modern enterprise organization, the work state is characterized by full enthusiasm, positive and self-imposed, and work commitment, is facing severe challenges. Therefore, it has become a top priority to find

ways to increase the input of knowledge workers and to encourage enterprises to create talent advantages in the wave of economic globalization.

In today's knowledge economy era, the rapid development of the economy is inseparable from the promotion of knowledge. As a developer and carrier of knowledge, knowledge workers are the key core resources for enterprises to gain advantages in competition. Knowledge workers are more innovative and have a strong motivation for career growth, mainly because they pay more attention to personal career development, willing to learn, constantly pursue the satisfaction of individual needs and good at setting goals and achieving them [5]. The demand for knowledge workers is increasing day by day, and employee career development plays an increasingly important role in business management practice. Kidd [6] explained that the output of knowledge workers is intangible and difficult to measure. It can be seen that knowledge workers have made tremendous contributions to the output of enterprises, and how to guide and utilize knowledge workers is a problem that enterprises must solve in the future.

In the field of human resources, the relationship between work engagement and career growth is closely linked [7-8]. In addition, career growth can be conceptualized into four factors: professional ability, career goal, promotion speed and organizational rewards [9]. According to theory of social exchange from Homans [10], when an organization gives employees the benefits or promotion, employees will repay the organization, try to return to the organization through full-hearted work, high-quality completion task and give suggestions. Concurrently, Okurame [11] argued that there is a significant relationship between organizational identification and organizational citizenship behaviour. Crawshaw et al. [12] pointed out that career growth is a complex dimension. When observing this variable, there should be more independent variables because career growth will be affected by many aspects, such as job performance, work attitude, etc. Therefore, career growth has to be taken into consideration and as it might play a role in determining job engagement.

In recent years, work engagement is a hot topic of discussion in the field of human resources [13]. Scholars began to focus on exploring the potential relationship between employee job engagement and career development from multiple perspectives [14]. But so far, there are very few studies on the relationship between career growth and employees job engagement, mainly because these variables are easily subjectively operated and the measurement cycle is too long.

Organizational identity is seen as a state of mind [15-16] and can be understood as the employee's psychological perception of the organization's consistency in values and goals [17]. Employees' recognition of the organization will lead to positive work behaviour and proactively solve the difficulties

encountered [18]. Organizational identification makes employees psychologically aware that their future development is closely linked to the development prospects of the organization. Employees with high organizational identity will make more decisions that are beneficial to the organization. According to Guarana[19], it has been stated that organizational identification moderated the relationship between workload and job engagement. Therefore, this study is conducted to identify the moderator factor of organizational identification and how it moderates the relationship between the determinants (professional ability development, promotion speed, and organizational rewards) with the job engagement.

2. Methodology

The mechanism of the influence of knowledge-based employees' career growth on their work input is discussed, and the regulatory role played by organizational identity is demonstrated through empirical tests. Therefore, this paper used quantitative research procedures to propose research hypotheses based on the literature review. The research model is constructed, and appropriate measurement tools are selected for each type of variable and revised in combination with the actual so that the sample data collection is more specified. Then, the collected raw data is analyzed and interpreted by means of statistical analysis tools to verify the proposed research hypotheses and theoretical models.

In this study, before the data collection, detailed theoretical research on the independent variables, dependent variables and moderate variables of the research model was carried out. After reading a large number of references, especially the research results in the past five years, this is to ensure that the variables involved have clear conceptual definitions and measurement indicators. The measurement factors involved in the questionnaire include organizational identification, promotion speed, professional ability, organization rewards, and job engagement. All items in the questionnaire were scored using the 5-level Likert scale.

The information collection channels of this study mainly adopted online and offline modes. The online model mainly sets and recycles electronic questionnaires through the questionnaire platform, distributed and publicized the questionnaires by means of various communication software such as We Chat, email, and online forums, etc. In the offline mode, random questionnaires are distributed to business offices near Kuala Lumpur, and the information is collected and unified data is entered. Although many questionnaires were distributed, only 168 sets were valid to be analysed. Thus, the sample size of this study is taken to be 168.

Data analysis is the process of transforming data into useful information. This is the stage in which the data is processed using a comprehensive statistical software SPSS (Statistical Project of Social Sciences) which

thoroughly inspect and manage the data taken from the respondents. The software generated the results in tabular and trends that show relationships amongst the data being analyzed. The analysis done in this study included basic demographic analysis and reliability test. This research also performed correlation analysis and regression analysis on the data to check the accuracy of the results.

According to the review of the literature, central hypotheses are formulated as:

H1: Employee professional ability development has a positive impact on job engagement.

H2: Employee promotion speed has a positive impact on job engagement.

H3: Employee organizational rewards have a positive impact on job engagement.

H4: The impact of employee organizational career growth as in promotion speed, professional ability, organization rewards factors on job engagement is moderated by organizational identification.

H4a: The organizational identification has a significant positive moderating effect between promotion speed and job engagement.

H4b: The organizational identification has a significant positive moderating effect between professional ability and job engagement.

H4c: Employee organizational identification has a significant positive moderating effect between organization rewards and job engagement.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Reliability Test

The reliability analysis was performed on the constructs of promotion speed, professional ability, organization rewards, organizational identification, job engagement. The reliability analysis of variables in this study is shown in Table 1. Based on the table, majority of the variables

had coefficients exceeding the acceptable level 0.7 as suggested by Kline [20]. More concretely, promotion speed $\alpha = 0.917$, professional ability $\alpha = 0.930$, organizational identification $\alpha = 0.937$, organization rewards $\alpha = 0.917$ and job engagement $\alpha = 0.931$. All of these variables were greater than 0.9. Hence, these data show that there is good internal consistency among the variables, and the reliability of the questionnaire and the scale is verified.

Table 1: Results of reliability test

Variable	Cronbach's	Items
Promotion Speed	0.917	5
Professional Ability	0.930	5
Organization Rewards	0.917	4
Organizational Identification	0.937	5
Job Engagement	0.931	7
Total	0.932	26

3.2 Correlation Analysis

The research model of this paper mainly involved the variables of promotion speed; professional ability; organization rewards; organizational identification; job engagement. The correlation coefficient matrix of each research variable is obtained by SPSS 25.0, as presented in Table 2. Based on the results, it is shown that there was a significant positive correlation between organizational identification and job engagement ($r = 0.486$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, there was also have a significant positive correlation between promotion speed and job engagement ($r = 0.369$, $p < 0.01$), followed by professional ability and job engagement ($r = 0.459$, $p < 0.01$) and organization rewards ($r = 0.420$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2: Results of correlation analysis

	PS	PA	OR	OI	JE
PS Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed) N	1 168				
PA Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed) N	0.265 0.001 168	1 168			
OR Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.344 0.000 168	0.352 0.000 168	1 168		
OI Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.209 0.007 168	0.274 0.000 168	0.249 0.001 168	1 168	

JE					
Pearson Correlation	0.369	0.459	0.420	0.486	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
N	168	168	168	168	168

Notes:

PS = Promotion Speed; PA = Professional Ability; OR = Organization Rewards; OI = Organizational Identification; JE = Job Engagement

3.3 Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression was used to test the effect of promotion speed; professional ability; organization rewards on job engagement. Controlled variables were gender, age, education level, and position. The summary results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 4.

As can be seen from Table 4, the Sig. values of the three regression equations all approached zero, indicating that the model can be accepted. The regression coefficient of the independent variable promotion speed to job engagement ($\beta = 0.198$, $p < 0.01$), which indicated that

higher post in an organization reflected on higher professional ability. Thus, Hypothesis 2 (H2) is supported.

Based on results, the employee Professional Ability has the greatest impact on employee job engagement ($\beta = 0.325$, $p < 0.001$) and employee organizational rewards also has a positive impact on job engagement ($\beta = 0.229$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1(H1) and Hypothesis 3 (H3) are supported. Meanwhile, this also has the preconditions to test the moderating effect of organizational identification.

Table 3: Coefficients of regression analysis

Variables	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	Sig.
	Beta (β)	Std. error		
(Constant)	1.211	0.444		0.007
Gender	-0.082	0.116	-0.049	0.481
Age	-0.044	0.064	-0.052	0.491
Education level	0.006	0.058	0.007	0.917
Position	-0.047	0.056	-0.056	0.403
PS	0.195	0.071	0.198	0.001
PA	0.314	0.070	0.325	0.000
OR	0.199	0.065	0.229	0.003

Notes:

PS = Promotion Speed; PA = Professional Ability; OR = Organization Rewards; Dependent Variable: Job Engagement

3.4 Moderating Effect of Organizational Identification

When performing the regression analysis, it is necessary to take into account the deviations produced by the controlled variables. Some seemingly unrelated factors may have an impact on the results of the study, such as gender. Gender has always been considered a powerful control variable in research [21]. Therefore, combined with the results of Table 3, gender, education level, position and age are considered as control variables added into moderating test.

It can be seen from Table 5, that the first step was to verify the main effect between promotion speed and job engagement, Standardized Coefficients ($\beta = 0.148$, $p < 0.05$). In the second step, the moderate variable was added, and the main effect relationship was still significant ($\beta = 0.315$, $p < 0.001$). The third step, after adding the interaction item, it is shown the standardized coefficients $\beta = 0.139$ ($p < 0.05$) which indicated that organizational identification has a significant positive

moderating effect between promotion speed and job engagement. Hypothesis 4a is supported.

Next, is to examine the moderating role of organizational identification between professional ability and job engagement. As shown in Model 2, the first step was to verify the main effect between professional ability and job engagement, Standardized Coefficients ($\beta = 0.239$, $p < 0.001$). In the second step, added the moderate variable and the main effect relationship was still significant ($\beta = 0.348$, $p < 0.001$). The third step, after adding the interaction item, the standardized coefficients ($\beta = 0.185$, $p < 0.01$) which signified that organizational identification has a significant positive moderating effect between promotion ability and job engagement. Hence, hypothesis 4b is supported.

Besides, examining the moderating role of organizational identification between organization rewards and job engagement was also carried out. As shown in Model 3, the first step was to verify the main effect between organization rewards and job engagement, Standardized Coefficients ($\beta = 0.186$, $p < 0.001$). In the

second step, added the moderate variable and the main effect relationship was still significant ($\beta = 0.352$, $p < 0.001$). The third step, after adding the interaction item, the standardized coefficients ($\beta = 0.156$, $p < 0.01$) which proved that organizational identification has a significant positive moderating effect between organization rewards and job engagement. Hypothesis 4c is supported.

Therefore, in summary, the organizational identification has a significant moderating effect between the dependent variable (job engagement) and independent variable (promotion speed, professional ability, organizational rewards), which overall supported hypothesis 4 (H4)

Table 4: Test result of the moderating effect of organizational identification

Independent variable	Dependent variable : Job Engagement		
	Standardized coefficient beta (β)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender	-0.046	-0.055	-0.048
Age	-0.027	-0.018	-0.012
Education level	-0.007	-0.004	0.009
Position	-0.055	-0.047	-0.063
PS	0.148*	0.183**	0.159*
PA	0.281***	0.239***	0.269***
OR	0.186**	0.203**	0.186**
OI	0.315***	0.348***	0.352***
OI*PS	0.139*		
OI*PA		0.185**	
OI*OR			0.156**
R Square	0.445	0.46	0.45
F	14.069***	14.949***	14.381***

Notes;

1. PS = Promotion Speed; PA = Professional Ability; OR = Organization Rewards; OI = Organizational Identification; JE = Job Engagement.

2. * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$

3.5 Overall Discussion

The empirical analysis in the previous subsections showed that promotion speed, professional ability, organizational rewards have a significant impact on job engagement, and organizational identification plays a moderating role in their relationships. This result is on par with the research made by Liu et al. [22]. This proved that there are two ways to improve job engagement. First is through career growth as a non-economic remuneration has a direct role in promoting work engagement; second is to play a moderating role of organizational identification and further strengthen the positive role of career growth in job engagement.

Career growth of knowledge workers has a positive role in promoting work engagement. From the regression

analysis results, the promotion speed has a significant impact on job engagement ($p < 0.01$). For knowledge workers, they pursue the satisfaction of personal needs and the realization of personal goals, pay attention to personal career development and growth. Promotion speed refers to the space and possibility of knowledge workers position promotion in the organization. When the organization gives employees strong motivation for achievement growth opportunities, it will encourage them to make greater efforts for organizational development. This is also supported by Fok and Yeung [5] who reported that when knowledge workers get a faster promotion speed, it showed that employees efforts in the organization have been recognized, which makes employees involuntarily more active and energetic in doing their work.

Based on the results of the regression analysis, organizational rewards have a significant impact on job engagement ($p < 0.001$). Organizational rewards come in many ways, such as salaries or opportunities to study abroad. If the current work is conducive to the realization of employees' career goals and expected salary, it will inevitably stimulate employees' enthusiasm and sense of pride in work and closely integrate their career goals with the strategic development of an organization. When they find possible conundrum in the organization, they will make suggestions on their own initiative, for example, through voice behaviours to prove their dedication to the organization.

Moreover, employees' professional ability has a positive impact on job engagement ($p < 0.05$). Professional ability development refers to the promotion of professional knowledge and skills in current positions. The advent of the age of knowledge economy has changed the traditional value chain and capital composition, development of employees' professional ability which is an important means to enhance their self-competitive advantages. When employees are able to accumulate experience, learn new knowledge and skills, and improve their professional ability, they will devote more attention to their work. At the same time, they are full of pride and sense of achievement, and even unwilling to leave the work.

According to the empirical results of moderating effect, the moderating effect of organizational identification is significant, which is on par with the research made by Karanika-Murray et al. [23] and Dutton et al [15]. Knowledge workers' organizational identity is an important situational variable, which has a direct impact on their actual performance. Employees with high organizational identity will form psychological contracts with the organization, and take pride in their work, and will implement more beneficial decisions for the organization. Under the condition of high organizational identity, the career growth of knowledge workers provided by organizations enhances their sense of belonging and stimulates their work potential and vitality. On the contrary, under the condition of low organizational identity, even if the organization gives certain career growth opportunities, it will not necessarily stimulate employees' positive action and job engagement. Further, employees may voluntarily leave to find other organizations with similar characteristics, values, goals, and behaviours.

4. Conclusion

The relationship between the career growth of knowledge workers and job engagement can be concluded based on the following:

1. Job engagement is directly affected by promotion speed, professional ability and organizational rewards.
2. Job engagement by the indirect influence of organizational identification.

Therefore, this study suggests that organizations should pay more attention to understand the needs of knowledge workers, take the initiative to help employees complete a comprehensive analysis of themselves and understand their interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Organizations also can find employees personal goals and help them set a specific and achievable goal.

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