Phenomenological Inquiry on the Promotive and Hindering Factors of the Organizational Support Employed Towards Employees Career Development

Marites M. Cuyos

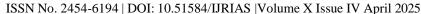**Mindanao State University – General Santos, Philippines**

ABSTRACT

Organizational support plays a crucial role in employees' career development, influencing motivation, engagement, and overall job satisfaction. Employees who perceive strong organizational support are more likely committed and productive, whereas those who feel unsupported become disengaged, impacting workplace dynamics. This study explores both the promotive and hindering factors of organizational support in career development among employees at Cronasia Foundation College, Inc., General Santos City. Utilizing mixed methods approach, combining qualitative data from a phenomenological inquiry with quantitative analysis, the study gathered insights from thirteen (13) employees of divergent departments currently enrolled in a master's degree program. Data were collected through structured, face-to-face interviews, which were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic content analysis. Findings revealed that employees valued the organization's support, particularly in academic advancement and financial assistance. However, internal and external hindering factors, such as workplace relationships, task delegation, and environmental influences, were identified as barriers to career growth. Considering external factors such as socio-economic trends, market conditions, and personal motivation could offer a more holistic view of career development process. The results underscore the importance of and organizational policies with employee aspirations to enhance retention, engagement, and professional growth. Finally, integrating feedback from organizational leaders and HR professionals, this research can guide institutions in refining their support mechanisms, ultimately fostering a more productive and committed workforce.

Keywords: Organizational Support, Career Development, Phenomenological Inquiry, Higher Education Institutions

INTRODUCTION

Organizational support refers to the expected assistance that an organization provides to its employees. When employees feel supported in their career development, they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and disciplined in their work. This encouragement fosters a strong work ethic and commitment to professional growth. Conversely, employees who lack motivation due to insufficient organizational support may become disengaged, which can negatively impact not only their performance but also the morale of their more engaged colleagues.

The exploration of promotive and hindering factors in organizational support for employee career development is pivotal in understanding workforce dynamics and enhancing organizational effectiveness. Globally, employees increasingly prioritize career development opportunities, with 94% indicating they would remain longer with employers who invest in their professional growth (ClearCo., 2023). This underscores the universal relevance of organizational support in career advancement. Authoritative sources highlight that organizational support for development (OSD) significantly influences career satisfaction and employee retention. A study demonstrated that participation in training programs and quality mentoring relationships positively correlate with employees' perceptions of OSD, which in turn enhances performance and reduces turnover (Maurer and Lippstreu 2008). Similarly, research indicates that employees' proactive engagement in career management behaviors, coupled with organizational support, leads to higher career satisfaction (Barnett and Bradley, 2007).

At a micro level, specific factors such as individual characteristics and organizational climate play crucial roles in career development. For instance, a study within a financial services company in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, found that personal competencies and a supportive organizational environment significantly affect employees' career progression (Hidayat & Latief, 2019).

Additionally, research has shown that a positive workplace environment enhances employee commitment and performance, further influencing career development outcomes (Anjum, et al, 2022).

This research delve into the lived experiences of employees to identify both the supportive and obstructive organizational factors impacting their career development. A phenomenological approach was attempt to provide a nuanced understanding of these dynamics, offering insights that can inform organizational policies and practices.

The selection of this research topic stems from the critical importance of career development in employee satisfaction and retention. Understanding the factors that promote or hinder career advancement is indispensable for institutions aiming to foster a committed and competent workforce. This study was important to uncover actionable insights that can improve organizational support mechanisms, thereby improving employee outcomes and organizational performance.

This study contributes to the field of education by addressing gaps related to the practical application of organizational support theories in career development. By focusing on employees' lived experiences, it provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of support structures, informing the development of more targeted and impactful educational programs within organizations. Moreover, it highlights the need for aligning organizational practices with employee aspirations, thereby promoting a more engaged and productive workforce.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to ascertain the phenomenological inquiry of organizational support to the career development among the employees at Cronasia Foundation College, General Santos City. Specifically, it sought to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are the employees' experiences in organizational support for career development?

2. What are the promotive factors employed towards the career development of the employees?

3. What are the hindering factors employed towards the career development of the employees?

Theoretical Lens

The study anchors in three key theories: Firstly, Perceived Organizational Support (POS) Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) posits that employees develop a general perception of how much their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. When employees feel supported, particularly in career development opportunities such as training, mentorship, and financial assistance, they are more engaged, motivated, and committed to their work. Conversely, a lack of perceived support can lead to dissatisfaction, reduced effort, and higher turnover rates.

Secondly, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985) emphasizes the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in career development. Employees are more likely to thrive in environments where their basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are met. When organizations provide career development support, such as educational opportunities and mentorship programs, employees feel more competent and motivated to enhance their skills. However, when hindered by unsupportive workplace cultures, unclear career paths, or lack of growth opportunities, employees may feel disengaged and unmotivated.

Finally, Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) suggests that employee-employer relationships are based on reciprocal exchanges. Employees who receive strong organizational support often reciprocate with increased

loyalty, job performance, and commitment. However, when employees perceive an imbalance—where they contribute more than what they receive in terms of career development support—they may feel undervalued and disengaged, potentially leading to decreased productivity and higher attrition rates.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Organizational support, as defined by Supriadi et al. (2020), refers to employees' perception of the extent to which their organization provides assistance and resources. Similarly, De Oliveira, Cavazotte, & Dunzer (2019) describe it as a structured program or process within an organization aimed at facilitating career growth, often referred to as organizational career management. Kao et al. (2022) highlight its role in enhancing the effects of career mentoring, particularly in addressing job content plateaus among employees. Cheng et al. (2020) emphasize that organizational support is central to shaping employees' job-related attitudes and plays a critical role in maintaining and improving their employment stability.

Baranchenko et al. (2020) view organizational support as an initiative to boost employee retention, particularly for those with high external employability. Wahyuni (2019) further defines it as the extent to which an organization values employees' contributions, prioritizes their well-being, and provides necessary assistance when needed. According to Sumarsi and Rizal (2021), organizational support fosters a sense of appreciation among employees, reinforcing the organization's commitment to their welfare. Likewise, Oubibi et al. (2022) suggest that employees who recognize strong organizational support are more satisfied and inclined to reciprocate through increased engagement, loyalty, and productivity.

Gemilang & Riana (2021) argue that creating optimal working conditions through substantial organizational support is essential for employee satisfaction and performance. Astuty & Udin (2020) highlight that employees play a crucial role in achieving organizational success, making high levels of support vital for sustaining competitive advantage. Sihag (2021) asserts that organizational support significantly influences employee perceptions, attitudes, work behavior, and overall commitment to the organization. Meyers et al. (2020) expand on this by suggesting that such support is particularly beneficial for younger employees, as it helps them navigate their career paths and develop their strengths.

Given its importance, organizations must prioritize human resource and career development initiatives to cultivate employees' positive attitudes and commitment to their roles. Wu & Liu (2022) stress the need for policymakers and managers to focus on organizational support for career development, emphasizing its role in fostering a more human-centered approach to management.

Promotive Factors on Career Development

Teachers play a fundamental role in the education system, and their career development remains a crucial concern (Celick, 2017). Given this, it is essential for teachers to continuously enhance their subject knowledge and teaching skills. According to Greenhaus, Callanan, and Godshalk (2018), a career encompasses a series of work-related experiences throughout an individual's life, incorporating both objective aspects, such as job positions, and subjective elements, including personal attitudes, values, and expectations. Lin (2018) further emphasizes career development and performance evaluation is a human resource practices that influence employees' perception of organizational support.

To cultivate and retain a highly skilled workforce, Quagraine et al. (2019) highlight the importance of government-provided career development opportunities, which significantly impact employee retention and job performance. While mentoring has been widely recognized for its positive effects on protégés' career outcomes, Wen et al. (2019) point out that limited research has explored how these benefits extend to other aspects of protégés' lives beyond the workplace.

Hindering Factor on Career Development

Organizations are encouraged to cultivate workplace cultures that empower and establish employees as potential leaders. Providing mentorship, networking, and professional development opportunities can significantly aid

employees in advancing their careers. Leadership plays a crucial role in fostering an inclusive environment that ensures equal opportunities and actively combats workplace discrimination. By doing so, leaders help nurture young and emerging talent, enabling them to transition into senior management roles more efficiently (Barkhuizen, Masakane, & van der Sluis, 2022).

Moreover, Győri and Perpék (2022) emphasize that beyond creating motivating workplace conditions, organizations must also prepare employees for real-world job challenges, equip them with conflict management skills, and offer continuous professional support. Similarly, Singh, Saharan, and Bhat (2022) highlight the importance of addressing workplace challenges faced by women, particularly in the civil aviation sector, and developing strategies to eliminate discrimination. Promoting gender equality in leadership can enhance women's representation in decision-making roles, reduce workforce gender gaps, and foster a more creative, innovative, and inclusive work environment that benefits both businesses and employees.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative data from a phenomenological inquiry with quantitative analysis to gather essential insights from the participants. This approach was employed to understand their perspectives on organizational support for career development. According to Teherani et al. (2015), the phenomenological method is well-suited for exploring, investigating, and describing a phenomenon based on the experiences of those directly involved.

A total of thirteen (13) participants from different deperments took part in the study, consisting of seven females and six males. These participants were currently enrolled in a master's degree program as part of the institution's initiative to support their career growth.

For this phenomenological inquiry, the researcher used a structured questionnaire, which was validated by experts to ensure the credibility, reliability, and validity of the study. Data collection was conducted through face-to-face individual interviews, an approach deemed appropriate for gathering in-depth responses. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Establishing rapport with participants was crucial, and the researcher maintained a non-judgmental attitude to foster open communication. Additionally, careful consideration was given to the emotional aspects that could impact the accuracy and authenticity of the data (Ferreira et al., 1998).

Thematic analysis were used to analyzed the collected data. In 2000, Ezzy describes and categorized systematically based on recurring themes, concepts, or common characteristics. To streamline and interpret large amounts of information effectively, structured procedures were applied to organize the data into meaningful units (Singleton, 1997).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study was a phenomenological inquiry to ascertain the employees experiences on the organizational support towards career development. The thematic analysis was used to analyze the data gathered. Given that the study focused on understanding oneself using their own views, the researcher was able to describe and analyze the participants' actual experiences in order to address the research's central objective of the present study.

Employees Experiences

This theme highlights employees' experiences regarding the organization's support for their career development. The table illustrates the employees' satisfaction with the assistance provided, particularly in their pursuit of academic advancement. Given this opportunity, employees appreciate the organization's support for their master's degree studies.

Table 1 presents key themes related to employees' experiences, specifically focusing on support for their master's education and financial assistance.

Table 1. Employees Experiences Themes

Employees Experiences	Frequency
Masteral Degree	9
Financial support	4

The findings were supported by the study of Gemilang & Riana (2021) that great support from companies in order to create ideal conditions for employees is very necessary. Similarly, Oubibi et al. (2022) maintained that when employees are aware of organization support and rewards, they are more likely susceptible in their work environment.

Promotive Factors

Most of the respondents stated that with organization's support in their career development helped them to gain confidence and continually look forward to find positive ways to improve their skills. For instance, Employee No. 8 shared his own experiences wherein he said:

"*As an employee it helps me to grow, gain more confidence to do better. I believe in myself that I will continually look ahead and find positive ways to improve my skills.*"

Further, Employee 10 also expresses his perspectives because of the opportunities and support of the organization to enhance their capabilities through taking Masteral Degree wherein he stated that:

"*I highly value and respect the opportunities that the institution offers, especially in terms of continuing upgrading academics, this means that professionalism is being valued to every employee of this organization.*"

As cited by Quagraine et al. (2019) that to develop and maintain highly skilled personnel the organization should provide with more career development options like supporting, impacting, their willingness to stay within the organization.

Hindering Factors

This theme explores the challenges that employees encounter in their career development. Participants shared their perspectives on the factors that hinder their professional growth. Table 2 presents the key themes related to these obstacles, categorized into external and internal factors.
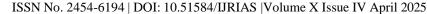
Table 2. Hindering Factors Themes

Hindering Factors	Frequency
External Factor	6
Internal Factor	7

There were 6 employees out of 13 that shared their views on the external factors in which they were referred to the environment. They believe that the environment can be a hindering factor to their career development.

Most of the respondents said that with the internal factor and their career development will be affected.

Employee No. 3 shared her own experiences wherein she said: *teamwork*, *designation of tasks* and the *relationship with co-worker*.

Employee 12 also stated that the "*workplace*" and "*people around*" were the barrier to her career advancement.

While, Employee 13 added that "*conflict and gossip of the employees" can* hinder career development.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that female employees were more impacted by internal factors, such as workplace relationships, teamwork, and organizational dynamics. This aligns with the study of Barkhuizen, Masakane, & van der Sluis (2022), which emphasizes the need for organizations to foster more inclusive, supportive workplace cultures that empower potential employees to established their leadership identity. Providing mentorship, networking opportunities, and professional development programs can significantly enhance women's career progression while addressing challenges related to discrimination and unequal opportunities. By creating a more equitable work environment, organizations can ensure that all employees, regardless of gender, have access to the necessary support for career growth and advancement.

CONCLUSION

This study explored employees' experiences regarding organizational support for career development through a phenomenological inquiry. Using thematic analysis, the research identified key factors that promote and hinder career growth, providing valuable insights into how organizations influence employees' professional trajectories.

Findings indicate that employees highly appreciate organizational support, particularly in terms of academic advancement and financial assistance, as these contribute to their motivation, confidence, and career progression. Employees who received support for their master's degree programs expressed gratitude toward the organization, recognizing its role in their professional development. This aligns with existing literature suggesting that strong organizational backing enhances job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity.
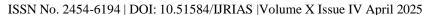
Promotive factors identified in the study highlight the positive impact of institutional support on skill development and career confidence. Employees who felt encouraged by their organization were more likely to seek continuous learning opportunities, further enhancing their competencies and engagement in the workplace.

On the other hand, hindering factors were categorized into internal and external barriers. Internal factors such as workplace relationships, teamwork, and interpersonal conflicts negatively influenced career development. Employees reported that gossip, workplace conflicts, and poor task delegation hindered their growth. External factors, including environmental influences and organizational culture, also posed challenges to professional advancement.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of strategic organizational support mechanisms in fostering career growth. Organizations should focus on strengthening promotive factors while addressing hindering elements to create an environment conducive to continuous professional development. By doing so, institutions can enhance employee satisfaction, retention, and overall workplace productivity.

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