INFLUENCE OF MENTORING AND ORGANIZATION POLITICS ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT:
A Case Study Of Workers In South-Western Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to investigate the influence of mentoring and organization politics on career development of workers in the south-western Nigeria. Three hundred (300) workers randomly selected from 12 organizations in south-western Nigeria participated in the study. Three hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and results show that sex status, perceived mentoring and organization politics are predictors of career development while marital status and age do not predict career development among Nigerian workers in the south-western region. Furthermore, results revealed that marital status and perceived mentoring do not have interaction effect on career development. Also, no interaction effect was found in sex status, marital status and organization politics on career development, but sex status, age and perceived mentoring significantly interact to affect career development. Recommendations were made in line with the results of the study.

KEYWORDS: Mentoring experience, Organization politics, Career development, Career advancement, Glass ceiling

INTRODUCTION

The goal of every employee in any organization is to climb to the top of the ladder in the organization. This suggests that every human being is interested in reaching the top of his/her chosen career. Therefore, the achievement of every employee is

measured by the height he/she can get to before bowing out of the organization. The movement towards this peak cuts across sex, age, marital status, status at work and nationalities as everybody's belief is that the sky is the limit. It has been identified that development may lead to advancement for more men than women because men are thought to gain more skills and knowledge from professional development than women (Johnson, 1998). Ragins and Cotton (1993) said it is evident that a glass ceiling exists for women in their career advancement through an organization that regulates access to development experiences as part of pattern that grooms men for powerful positions. Olajuyigbe (1997) said women have been in the vanguard of development in the world over the years. The author asserted that the contributions of women to nation building are monumental and their supportive efforts in the developmental process are commendable. The author further posited that despite women's noble roles in the developmental process, poverty had been feminized globally. In a related study, Van and Hughes (1990) asserted that women are afforded less access to jobs or assignments that contribute to their competence and skills. This has prevented them from getting to the apex of the organization structure (in most cases) and limits their career opportunities and development. Stroh, Breth and Reilly's (1992) findings revealed that female managers who were comparable to men in qualifications still suffer from slightly less good salary progression than men.

A mentoring relationship is a partnership between a senior and a junior colleague in which the senior partner promotes the development of the junior partner's career (Kram, 1984). The senior partner might engage in career advancement activities such as coaching, providing visibility, protecting the protégé from threats, or providing challenging assignments (Wagner & Hollenbeck, 1995). Mentor relationship is one of the most complex and important association a person can have in early adulthood. Kram (1984) suggested that everyone needs a mentor.

A mentor is seen playing an important part in the life of a young adult, helping him/her to build the first major life structure. Mentors are present everywhere but mostly found in the work setting (Levinson et al, 1978). Everyone needs a mentor and everyone who makes it has a mentor (Johnson, 1998). Thus, mentoring has been an important experience for a significant number of individuals and organizations.

Hunt and Michael (1983) identified four stages of mentor-protégé relationship namely initiation stage, protégé stage, break-up stage, and lasting friendship stage. Mentoring relationship is of two major dimensions. One is psycho-social where the mentor is a role model providing counseling and coaching and the other is job-related where the mentor provides exposure, sponsorship and challenging assignments to augment the protégés career (Johnson, 1998). Mentoring cannot be activated by another party, but it is occasioned naturally by those involved in it. There are formal and informal mentoring programmes as distinguished by Kram (1984). Formal mentoring programme is where arrangement is made by organizations, employees or professional bodies in the matching of mentors and protégés whereas; informal mentor-

ing programme is where the relationship between mentor and protégé springs up naturally and voluntarily.

Johnson (1998) asserted that mentoring is a valuable tool for enhancing individual capabilities and fostering career development. The decision to mentor may be influenced by the expected outcomes (Kram, 1984) and previous experience (Ragins & Cotton, 1993). Benefits associated to mentoring include sense of satisfaction and fulfillment received from fostering the development of one's career (Hunt & Michael, 1983), the receipt of self regeneration from the creative and youthful energy of protégés (Levinson, et al, 1978), and the valuable work-related information obtained from the protégés and some of the motivating factors for mentors (Mullen, 1994). The costs attributed to mentoring experience include unhealthy form of mutual exploitation by the mentors (Levinson, et al, 1978), risk of being displaced by successful protégés (Halatain & Knotts, 1982), and unnecessary and unfair judgment on mentors (Ragins, 1997). It is reasonable for protégés with prior experience to expect more benefits and fewer costs than their counterparts with no experience that is likely to over-estimate costs and under-estimate benefits in the relationship (Mullen, 1994).

In comparing employees involved in mentoring relationship with managers and typical subordinates of the same managers, Burke, McKenna and McKeen (1991) found that the managers provided more psychological support to their protégés than the typical subordinates. Mobley et al (1994) found that having a mentor brought benefits to protégés regardless of their sexes. They also found that protégés who had mentor reported a significant degree of job satisfaction than those without mentor. In his study of social workers who have been mentors and protégés and those who have neither been mentor and protégé, Collins (1994) found that mentoring affects career development positively.

Politics is an endemic phenomenon in organizations and its importance lies on its potential consequences and effect on work outcomes (Mintzberg, 1983). It often interferes with normal organizational processes (such as decision-making, promotion and records) and damages productivity and performance both on individual and organizational levels (Griffin, 1987). It is a fact that politics and politicking in organization often leads to conflict in the organization such as employee-employee conflict, employee-organization conflict, and group-organization conflict. Therefore, organization politics has been described as functioning on the basis of a number of system of influence, authority, ideology and expertise (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1996). Also Pieffer (1981) described it as the activities carried out in organizations to acquire, develop and use power, and other recourses to obtain one's preferred outcomes in a situation where there is uncertainty or consensus about choice. Wagner III & Hollenbeck (1995) described organization politics as the tactics individuals or groups use to acquire power and to use it to advance their interest. Politics exists virtually in all organizations in Nigeria and it has its negative and positive effects. Politics at workplace is a behavior frequently associated with manipulation, defamation, submissive-

ness and illegitimate ways of ceasing power to attain one's objectives (Vigoda, 2000). The tactics for achieving these include establishment of alliances, identifying the weaknesses of target adversaries, and developing loyalty on the part of subordinates (Griffin, 1991). However, personality factors are important determinants of organization politics (Kacmar, 1989).

A career is an individually perceived sequence of attitude and behaviors associated with work experiences over the span of a person's life (Wagner & Hollenbeck, 1995). It is an occupational identity and a primary factor in the definition of self (Holland, 1986). It is a process of work activities, position, associated attitudes and reactions experienced over a person's life usually with a variety of objective events like promotion and self perceived reactions that occur throughout a lifetime (Hall, 1976). Hall (1976) posited four career stages namely exploration stage, trial stage, establishment stage and exit stage.

RESEARCH METHODS

Hypotheses

1. Marital status and perceived level of mentoring will have significant main and interaction effect on career development of Nigerian workers.

2. Sex status, marital status and perceived level of organizational politics will have significant main and interaction effect on career development of Nigerian workers.

3. Age, sex status and perceived level of mentoring will significantly influence the level of career development of Nigerian workers.

Period of Research:

The research work took place between year 2003 and year 2005.

Research Design:

This study utilized descriptive and survey research designs. The independent variables considered are sex status (male & female), marital status (married & single), age (18-27 years, 28-37 years, 38-47 years, 48-57 years & above 57 years), perceived mentoring (high & low) and organization politics (positive & negative) while career development is the dependent variable.

Target Group:

Three hundred workers from the South-western Nigeria, and comprising of one hundred and fifty each of male and female participated in the study which was under-

taken in public and private organizations in six states. The six states are Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo respectively. Their ages range between 18 and 60 years with a minimum educational qualification of secondary school leaving certificate and the highest educational qualification of university degrees.

Table 1: The composition of research participants across the South-Western Nigeria

States	Male	Female	Married	Single
Ekiti	25 (16.66%)	25 (16.66%)	22 (13.09%)	28 (21.21%)
Lagos	25 (16.66%)	25 (16.66%)	26 (15.47%)	24 (18.18%)
Ogun	25 (16.66%)	25 (16.66%)	27 (16.07%)	23 (17.42%)
Ondo	25 (16.66%)	25 (16.66%)	29 (17.26%)	21 (15.90%)
Osun	25 (16.66%)	25 (16.66%)	34 (20.23%)	16 (12.12%)
Oyo	25 (16.66%)	25 (16.66%)	30 (17.85%)	20 (15.15%)
TOTAL	150	150	168	132

Source: Authors' Survey, 2005

Table II: The number of organizations used across the South-Western Nigeria

States	Number of public organizations	Number of private organizations
Ekiti	1 (State organization)	1 (Partnership organization)
Lagos	1 (Federal organization)	1 (Multinational organization)
Ogun	1 (State organization)	1 (Partnership organization)
Ondo	1 (Federal organization)	1 (Individual organization)
Osun	1 (State organization)	1 (Individual organization)
Oyo	1 (Federal organization)	1 (Partnership organization)
TOTAL	6	6

Source: Authors' Survey, 2005

Research Instruments:

Three standardized research instruments (questionnaires) were used to generate data from the participants. They are:

1. Perceived Mentoring Experience (PME) developed by Balogun and Okurame (1999) with reliability coefficients of 0.63 (Balogun & Okurame, 1999) and 0.67 (Omolayo & Obe, 2005), and validity coefficients of 0.63 (Balogun & Okurame, 1999) and 0.66 (Omolayo & Obe, 2005).

2.   Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) developed by Kacmar and Ferris (1991) has reliability coefficients of 0.74 (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991), 0.77 (Vigoda, 2000) and 0.75 (Omolayo & Obe, 2005), and construct validity c o - efficient of 0.64 (Omolayo & Obe, 2005).

3.   Career Development Scale (CDS) developed by Meyer (1998) which has Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.70 and split-half reliability coefficient of 0.81 (Meyer, 1998), test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.71 and concurrent validity coefficient of 0.60 (Omolayo & Obe, 2005).

Statistical Methods:

2x2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), 2x2x2 ANOVA and 5x2x2 ANOVA were used to analyze the three hypotheses of this study.

Procedure:

The distribution and collection of the questionnaires were done by the researchers after obtaining the participants' permission to participate in the research.

Results

The results of the study are presented in table form as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Marital status and perceived level of mentoring will have significant main and interaction effect on career development of Nigerian workers.

Table III: 2x2 ANOVA table showing the main and interaction effects of marital status and perceived mentoring on career development.

Source	Sum of square (SS)	Degree of freedom	Mean square (MS)	F	P
Main effect					
Marital status	0.62	1	0.62	0.284	>.05 NS
Perceived mentoring	558.04	1	558.04	255.72	<.05
Interaction effect					
Marital status & Perceived mentoring	2.182	1	2.182	0.070	>.05 NS
Error	**9224.29**	**295**	**31.27**		

Source: Authors' Survey, 2005

Result as shown in Table III revealed that there is no significant main effect of marital status on career development (F (1,295) = 0.284, p>.05), but there is a significant main effect of perceived mentoring on career development (F (1,295) = 255.72, p<.05). No significant interaction effect of marital status and perceived mentoring was found on career development (F (1,295) = 0.070, p>.05).

Hypothesis 2: Sex status, marital status and perceived level of organizational politics will have significant main and interaction effect on career development of Nigerian workers.

Table IV: 2x2x2 ANOVA table showing the main and interaction effects of sex status, marital status and organizational politics on career development.

Source	Sum of square (SS)	Degree of freedom	Mean square (MS)	F	P
Main effect					
Sex status	553.76	1	553.76	25.40	**<.001**
Organization politics	2591.14	1	2591.14	118.83	**<.001**
Marital status	14.25	1	14.25	0.65	>.001 NS
Interaction effect					
Sex status, Marital status & Organization politics	53.71	1	53.71	2.46	>.001 NS
Residual	6345.28	291	21.813		
Total	**285829.00**	**299**			

Source: Authors' Survey, 2005

Table IV above shows that sex status (F (1,299) = 25.40, p<.001) and organization politics (F (1,299) = 118.83, p<.001) have significant main effect on career development whereas, marital status has no significant main effect on career development (F (1,299) = 0.65, p>.001). However, there was no interaction effect of sex status, organization politics and marital status on career development (F (1,299) = 2.46, p>.001).

Hypothesis 3: Age, sex status and perceived level of mentoring will significantly influence the level of career development of Nigerian workers.

Table V: 5x2x2 ANOVA table showing the main and interaction effects of age, sex status and perceived mentoring on career development.

Source	Sum of square (SS)	Degree of freedom	Mean square (MS)	F	P
Main effect					
Sex status	203.599	1	203.599	7.46	<.01
Age	110.89	3	36.96	1.35	>.01 NS
Perceived men-toring	335.83	1	335.83	12.30	<.01
Interaction effect					
Sex status, Age & Perceived mentoring	216.27	3	72.09	2.64	<.01
Residual	7724.04	283	27.29		
Total	**285829.00**	**299**			

Source: Authors Survey, 2005

Result from Table V revealed that there is a significant main effect of sex status (F $(1,299) = 7.46$, $p<.01$) and perceived mentoring (F $(1,299) = 12.30$, $p<.01$) on career development, but age does not have significant main effect on career development (F $(1,299) = 1.35$, $p>.01$). Sex status, age and perceived mentoring significantly interact to affect career development (F $(1,299) = 2.64$, $p<.01$).

Table VI: Correlation table showing the relationship among the variables

Variables	Perceived mentoring	Organization politics	Career development
Perceived mentoring Correlation N	1.000 299		
Organization politics Correlation N	.209 ** .00 299	1.000 299	
Career development Correlation N	.241 ** 000 299	.582 ** .000 299	1.000 299

[** Correlation is significant at .01 level of significance]
Source: Authors' Survey, 2005

DISCUSSION

The result of this study shows that there is no significant main effect of marital status on career development. This suggests that being married or single does not hinder the career development of workers. Therefore, both the married and single workers can develop their career in organizations they find themselves. However, a significant main effect was found in perceived mentoring on career development, suggesting that workers with high level of mentoring will achieve better career development than workers with low level of mentoring. This finding supports the previous findings of Burke, et al (1991) and Collins (1994) that mentoring affect career development positively. The result further revealed that there is no significant interaction effect of marital status and perceived mentoring on career development. The plausible explanation of this is that being married or single, and having a high or low level of mentoring does not jointly affect the career development of the workers.

Furthermore, the result revealed that sex status has significant main effect on career development. This suggests that career development of workers is dependent on their sex status. Thus, sex status is a determinant factor in the distribution of work activities and progression on the job. The result also found a significant main effect of organization politics on career development. This is in agreement with the findings of Van and Hughes (1990) and Stroh et al (1992). This suggests that participating in organization politics enhances better career development. The plausible explanation of this is that workers need to participate in the politics within their organizations to enhance their career development. They need to develop and have the ingredients for organization politicking such as loyalty to superiors and belonging to caucus and relevant alliances. This supports the previous findings of Griffin (1991). Furthermore, no interaction effect of sex status, marital status and organization politics was found on career development. This implies that the three variables do not jointly affect career development, suggesting that being male or female, married or single, engaging in organization politics or not, does not jointly affect career development.

Moreover, the result revealed that age has no significant main effect on career development. This implies that age of workers has nothing to do with their career development. However, sex status, age and perceived mentoring interact significantly to affect career development.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it was concluded that perceived mentoring, sex status and organization politics are predictors of career development while marital status and age do not predict career development among Nigerian workers in the Southwestern region. Furthermore, marital status, and perceived mentoring do not interact to affect career development. Likewise, sex status, marital status and organization

politics do not jointly affect career development. However, sex status, age and perceived mentoring significantly interact to affect career development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

Mentoring process should focus more on the protégés' self development. Mentors should make sure that the protégés develop self awareness, have self initiation, be creative and develop their intelligence instead of the mentors doing everything for the protégés.

Work organizations should limit the extent to which politics affects the running of the organizations. Politics should not affect organization decisions like promotion, training and development, transfer, turnover, recruitment and placement.

Career success and progress should be monitored among the workers. This is because career development is a high motivational factor towards achieving both workers' and organizational objectives.

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