

# Understanding the Interrelationship Between Career and Professional Development and Job Satisfaction

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## ARTICLE INFO



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### Keywords:

Career; Job Satisfaction; Motivation;  
Professional Development

### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.33096/jmb.v8i2.825>

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## ABSTRACT

Career and professional development is a long process of personal growth along an individual's life span. Despite their efforts to develop skills and knowledge, there are extrinsic factors that are expected by the employees to help advance their careers. There are also some factors make individuals opt to stay at their current positions and feel satisfied with the jobs. To maintain a healthy workplace environment, a Global Staff Survey (GSS) was conducted by a non-profit organization in 2020. Out of 12 topics surveyed, this article aims to analyze the result of the survey, particularly, Indonesia-specific country-context, focusing on understanding the interrelationship between career and professional development and job satisfaction or motivation. Primary data is taken from the survey participated by 192 respondents from six provinces in Indonesia. The respondents consist of different levels of positions of both national and international staff with various lengths of employment. Career and Professional Development and Job Satisfaction/Motivation are two variables extracted from the result of the survey which is analyzed through desk review methodology.

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## ABSTRAK

Pengembangan karier dan profesional adalah proses panjang pertumbuhan pribadi di sepanjang rentang hidup seseorang. Terlepas dari upaya mereka untuk mengembangkan keterampilan dan pengetahuan, ada faktor ekstrinsik yang diharapkan oleh karyawan untuk membantu memajukan karir mereka. Ada juga beberapa faktor yang membuat individu memilih untuk tinggal di posisi mereka saat ini dan merasa puas dengan pekerjaan. Untuk menjaga lingkungan tempat kerja yang sehat, Global Staff Survey (GSS) dilakukan oleh organisasi nirlaba pada tahun 2020. Dari 12 topik yang disurvei, artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hasil survei, khususnya, konteks negara khusus Indonesia, yang berfokus pada pemahaman keterkaitan antara pengembangan karier dan profesional serta kepuasan atau motivasi kerja. Data primer diambil dari survei yang diikuti oleh 192 responden dari enam provinsi di Indonesia. Responden terdiri dari berbagai tingkat posisi staf nasional dan internasional dengan berbagai panjang pekerjaan. Pengembangan Karir dan Profesional dan Kepuasan/Motivasi Kerja adalah dua variabel yang diekstrak dari hasil survei yang dianalisis melalui desk review.

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## INTRODUCTION

A global staff survey was conducted by a non-profit organization in June 2020 to improve organization performance through an inclusive, respectful, and healthy work environment to better deliver the organization's mission. The survey was periodically implemented, and this time, it was covering 12 topics related to organizational behavior namely: Career and Professional Development, Job Satisfaction/Motivation, Staff Security, Work/Life Balance, Management

Responses to Global Staff Survey and Independent Reviews, Office Efficiency and Effectiveness, Performance Management, Standards of Conduct, Diversity, Knowledge, and Information Sharing, Personal Empowerment, and organization's response to Covid-19 (GSS2020IndonesiaAll.pdf, 2020, pp. 1-28). The previous survey was conducted in 2017. In 2020, it was participated by local and international staff, both professional and supporting staff, individual consultants, and volunteers. This study analyzes the result of the survey, in particular Indonesia-specific country-context, by understanding the interrelationship between career and professional development and job satisfaction or motivation. It is a normal practice where an individual will tend to look for a better career when a person has gone through a series of professional developments to achieve job satisfaction. However, job satisfaction may be varied depending on personal reasons.

Careers may be translated into various ways depending on a personal perspective as it involves subjective factors based on employment experiences. It applies to the different roles of occupation, not necessarily limited to high-level occupation or promotion only (Tomlinson, 2004, p. 92). A traditional definition of career refers to a more advanced position of individual employment path. Patton and Mc. Mahon defines a career as a sequence of jobs that an individual has gone through in his/her life-span (2014, p. 5). However, it has been shifted as more organizations offer short-term employment such as temporary contract, part-time, consultancy, and sort of types following dynamic demands that career is no longer awarded for loyalty (Torrington, Hall, & Taylor, 2005, p. 408).

A career is also an individual professional journey and an endless process of learning development through experiences. Given current demands, strengthening and enriching an individual portfolio with sets of knowledge, skills, experiences, and competencies become essential. Professional development is not merely a person as an employee but also includes a life-long development process. Career development and achievement become the individual's responsibility rather than relying on the employer (Torrington, Hall, & Taylor, 2005, p. 354). There has been an assumption that when an individual felt comfortable and fit with the job, he or she would gain satisfaction, advancement, and job security that would stop looking for other opportunities (Hartung, 2013, p. 85). This assumption may likely happen to a certain stage of the life cycle. Using the ladder of life-career stages, Hartung (2013, pp. 92-96) citing the career cycle as follow: (1) Growth, which spans from childbirth to 13 years old. During this period, the self-concept of knowing who I am is developed, (2) With the horizon of 14 to 24 years old, exploration is marked with practicing developmental activities as a part of the exploration stage. At this point, adolescents and young adult are building their capabilities, knowledge and identifying their job preference, (3) Establishment, entering the age of 25 to 44, a career path is started by performing all potential competencies, interpersonal skills, and adaptability to achieve a stable position in the workplace. During this period, individuals will explore any opportunity of advancement for a higher-level position. Regardless of the achievement, employees start thinking of their roles in the family, community, and other social engagements, (4) Maintenance, in this 45-65-year-old stage, individuals are considering their long-term orientations of whether retaining or moving out from the comfort zone for more challenging occupations. Different people may have a different approach to securing their existing positions. Some will improve their knowledge and skills; others will keep growing their competencies, while others will seek innovation to keep up their performance and (5)

Disengagement, the career growth will finally be concluded with retirement in the span or beyond the age of 65 or less. In this phase, individuals will focus more on their individual life such as family, community, or other social engagement, building informal relationships beyond the workplace.

Looking at careers from a gender perspective, women's career growth is not merely based on personal choice but also limited by the nature they need to consider domestic reason such as family grounds (Spokane & Cruza-Guet, 2005, p. 31). Personal considerations such as skill, competency, values, and contextual conditions, e.g., socioeconomic status, education background, a family, may also affect career preference (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017, p. 37).

An organization holds a key role in identifying and defining required competencies for all job positions and promoting career development through training and education to support employees in gaining their professional growth and in matching the company's requirements (Rothwell, 2012, p. 43). An organization may also support individuals to continue their higher education by allocating a budget for staff tuition fees, particularly when the new knowledge and proficiency are essential for the organization (Mathis & Jackson, 2011, p. 167). Apart from that, the organization's development programs provide opportunities for staff to benefit from their professional growth, such as coaching, mentoring, and stretch assignments. This will give new exposure for the individuals to learn other new areas of expertise or even strengthening and deepening their knowledge.

Jacobs (2014, p. 29) categorized HRD Programmes into four main categories: Employees Development, Organization Development, Career Development, and Performance Support. In which under Employment Development, there are several kinds of learning modalities: 1) Training: Technical, Managerial, and Awareness, 2) Education: Seminars, Workshops, and Courses, 3) Locations: Off the job and on the job, 4) Approaches: Self-study, One-on-one, and Group and 5) Methods: Discovery, Presentation, Discussion, Roleplay, and Simulation.

Armstrong defines job satisfaction as a reflection of attitude and feeling towards individual work. Positive conduct in undertaking the job is seen as a manifestation of job satisfaction, while negative attitudes show a symptom of job dissatisfaction (2006, p. 264). As cited by Armstrong (2006, p. 256), Herzberg's Theory categorizes job satisfaction or motivation into two main factors: Intrinsic and extrinsic. 1) Intrinsic factor: emerging from personal motivation that influences behavior to a particular action. It includes responsibility, autonomy, intention to apply and improve skills, capabilities, and exploring growth opportunities and 2) Extrinsic factor: efforts done to motivate people, which includes acknowledgment, rewards, and punishments.

Besides the two factors above, quality of supervision, relationship in a working environment, and the level of success or stagnate in work affect job satisfaction. Employee commitment is also considered as positive working behavior which is related to Job Satisfaction. It contributes to retaining their existing job rather than leaving for a new one (Deci & Ryan, 2014, p. 14). Research conducted by (Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson, & Rayton, 2003) revealed four elements that affect job satisfaction: career opportunities, job influence, challenge, and teamwork. While research of 2011 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement reported 4 main factors affecting job satisfaction are job security, organization's financial stability and relationship with supervisor, compensation and benefits, communication between employees and senior management, and the work (SHRM - The Society for Human Resource Management, 2011, p. 4).

Another theory on job satisfaction or motivation is Process/Cognitive Theory emphasizing the psychological aspects which induce motivation with expectations by Vroom (1964), outcomes by Latham and Locke (1979), and equity perceptions by Adams (1965). In this theory, motivation is affected by the rewards as a result of efforts that the employee has been contributed to the job (Armstrong, 2006, p. 257)

Maslow categorizes human needs into five levels of needs related to motivation, which is well-known as the Hierarchy of Needs (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 257-257). 1) Psychological needs - involving basic human needs to survive such as air, water, food, and shelter, 2) Safety - including safety and job security covering employee's benefit and compensation, 3) Social Needs - acceptance of individual existence to a group of society, 4) Self-esteem - recognition of self-respect and 5) Self-fulfillment or self-actualization - the need for opportunities for personal growth or development.

Twenty-one studies on motivation examining rewards effect show that rewards are a significant intrinsic factor in which verbal rewards or positive feedback have significantly leveraged intrinsic motivation. (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 22) The other factor which is a part of Process Theory is goal-setting theory pioneered by Locke and Latham (Locke & Latham, 2002). The goals which are on mutual agreement bring a commitment to higher motivation and performance, even though those are difficult ones. Setting difficult goals is proven to be more effective in bringing about higher performance than insisting people do their best. To reinforce the goal setting, it is essential to provide feedback to evaluate achievement on the defined goals.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research is conducted by desk review by analyzing the result of The Global Staff Survey (GSS) conducted by a non-profit organization in 2020, particularly Indonesia-specific-context. The survey was participated by 192 male and female respondents covering staff, consultants, and volunteers. There are 5 measurements used in this survey: Strongly positive, Positive, Neutral, Negative and Strongly Negative

Traffic light scoring is used based on the following:

	70% or more respondents answer positively
	Less than 70% of respondents answer positive, and less than 30% respondents negative
	30% or more respondents answer negative

Open questions were also given to the respondents to probe some questions which need more explanations or reasons. The topic of the survey covers 12 main areas, namely: career and professional development; job satisfaction/motivation; staff security; work/life balance; management responses to Global Staff Survey and Independent Reviews; Office Efficiency and Effectiveness; performance management; standards of conduct; diversity; knowledge and information sharing; personal empowerment; organization's response to Covid-19. Responses were disaggregated into 10 categories: by gender, by post category, by age group, by years of employment, by years in the present job, by contract status, by a supervisor, by LGBTQI+, long-term disability, and child with a disability. However, this research article is limited to look the

interrelationship between Career and Professional Development and Job Satisfaction/Motivation from 6 disaggregation categories: By gender, By supervisor, By the age of the group, By post category, By years of employment, and By years of in the present job

The survey was circulated through an email reaching out to six provinces in Indonesia: DKI Jakarta, Aceh, East Java, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Sulawesi, and Papua. As mentioned by Creswell, qualitative research questions are to understand the aspects that emerged behind the perspectives. (2009, p. 129). A basic qualitative analysis approach is used to analyze open-ended questions to categorize responses of similar tones into some themes (2009, p. 184). A hypothesis springs from the survey result that career and professional development are in line with or linear with job satisfaction/motivation or the other way around that job satisfaction/motivation reflects the achievement of career and professional development.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the survey is presented in six tables below with different categorizations. In the table-1 which is disaggregated by gender, both females and males rated job satisfaction or motivation higher than career and professional development.

**Table 1. Responses dissagregated by Gender**

No.	Topic	Female	Male
1	Career and Professional Development	60	67
2	Job satisfaction/Motivation	76	83

Source: Interview Result, 2020

To explore more on this topic, respondents were asked an open-ended question if there are any obstacles to progressing in their careers. The responses show that career and professional development are lower than job satisfaction/motivation and that career and professional development do not align with job satisfaction/motivation. Answering to the question, the responses were classified and found that career and professional development depend on the opportunity, preference of personal reason, and age. Another factor emerging in the responses is the domestic reason. It confirms Spokane's Theory (2005, p. 31) on a domestic issue as one of the considerations for a woman to pursue a higher career.

Looking at the responses above, an opportunity appeared as the most frequent factor affecting job satisfaction. This is also in line with the result of the research conducted by Purcell at all. (2003). However, this confirms Hartung's theory (2013, pp. 85, 92-96) saying that stop looking for other opportunities likely happens to a certain stage of the life cycle. In this point, age was mentioned as an aspect of consideration for not looking for further career advancement. This is proven by the table-2 below, which is categorized by the age group:

**Table 2. Responses disaggregated by Age group**

No.	Topic	35 and below	36-45	46-55	56 and above
1	Career and Professional Development	55	60	66	80
2	Job satisfaction/Motivation	77	78	81	91

Source: Interview Result, 2020

The table-II shows that those of the eldest group indicate satisfaction with their career and professional development compared with those below 56 and above. The ratings also show that those of 56 and above have stepped to their fullest professional growth. This survey result by age is in line with Herzberg's Theory. Personal motivation as an Intrinsic factor influences individuals to reconsider pursuance of a career and opt to stay in his/her current position.

**Table 3 : Responses disaggregated by Supervisor**

No.	Topic	Yes	No
1	Career and Professional Development	65	61
2	Job satisfaction/Motivation	79	79

Source: Interview Result, 2020

Table 3 indicates that supervisor affects an individual's job satisfaction/motivation. The ratings of career and professional development are lower than job satisfaction/motivation. A question was raised whether a career conversation was discussed in the last 12 months with the supervisor and what could be improved; the responses show that a supervisor is considered an essential factor for career and professional development and affecting job satisfaction/motivation as well. This is relevant to Herzberg's Theory. Even though career development and achievement become the responsibility of individual rather than relying on the employer (Torrington, Hall, & Taylor, 2005, p. 354), there is a high expectation from the supervisee that the supervisor should have initiated discussion on professional growth providing more rooms for an opportunity for their professional developments.

Looking at responses disaggregated by post category below, all posts show a lower career and professional development rating. Answering whether there are obstacles to progressing in a career, most of the responses are limited opportunities. However, quite high ratings are given to job satisfaction or motivation. It again confirms that job satisfaction or motivation is not linear with career and professional development.

Answering what could be improved under the area of career and professional development, most respondents' answers related to job security in which most of the staff feel insecure about their current job due to instability of financial resources for their posts and type of contract that limit them to stay longer with the organization. This is the reason for not expecting a career and professional development for such short term-contract.

Table 4 responses disaggregated by years of employment below verify the insecurity in which those with the employment of 6 to more than 11 years rated higher both for career and professional development and job satisfaction/motivation than those of less than less 1-year employment.

**Table 4. Responses disaggregated by Years of employment**

No.	Topic	< 1 year	6-10 years	> 11 years
1	Career and Professional Development	56	58	69
2	Job satisfaction/Motivation	75	82	82

Source: Interview Result, 2020

To strengthen the responses related to career and professional development, another open-ended question was asked to the respondents whether they feel secure with their job (If positive). The answers show that career and professional development is mostly affected by job security and the work itself. Employees feel secure in their professional careers since they are hired under fixed-term-contract or long-term-contract. They also feel to have contributed meaningful values to the organization through their skills and knowledge that these are considered valuable achievements in their career span. Even though the question was related to career and development, the answers are coherent with the four main factors affecting job satisfaction reported by SHRM (2011, p. 4) in their research on Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement.

Below is the table 6-responses disaggregated by years in the present job, which constantly shows that Job satisfaction/motivation is higher than career and professional development as indicated by other categories. The length of employment also reflects that job satisfaction/motivation is higher than those who have stayed longer in the organization. Those who responded positively felt secured with their current jobs, felt comfortable with the working environment, felt recognized, and happy with the benefit offered by the organization. These factors align with the hierarchy of needs that over safety, social needs, self-esteem, and self-fulfillment (Armstrong, 2006, p. 257).

**Table 5. Responses disaggregated by Years of in present job**

No.	Topic	Less than 1 year	Over 1 but less than 5 years	5 years or more
1	Career and Professional Development	70	57	65
2	Job satisfaction/Motivation	81	76	82

Source: Interview Result, 2020

## CONCLUSION

Firstly, The survey result indicates that job satisfaction with more than 70% positive responses is not followed by career and professional development, which is overall considered neutral with a rating of less than 70% positive response. This means that career and professional development is not linear with job satisfaction/motivation, or job satisfaction/motivation does not reflect a career and professional development. Since career and professional development is a continuing development process of an individual and that personal growth is progressing throughout the life span, people tend to seek other opportunities. However, it tends to become stagnant when reaching retirement age (56-65 years old) that individuals will eventually accept their career and achievement positively. Secondly, Factors affecting career and professional development may come both from internal and external factors. The internal factors affecting staff advancement are age and preference of personal reason including gender. It also reveals that age is an internal factor that makes people stop seeking career advancement since elder people prefer to stay in a comfort zone. In pursuing professional growth, the external factors are driven by supervisor and opportunity expected by employees. Other factors that may affect are job security and the work itself. Despite its vital needs for a human, basic needs are not considered factors affecting career and professional development. The role of a supervisor is considered an essential

factor for career and professional development and affecting job satisfaction/motivation as well. This study is limited to analyze two topic areas out of twelve topics covered in the survey, specifically career and professional development and job satisfaction/motivation. The data is disaggregated by 6 out of 10 categories: by gender, by post category, by age group, by years of employment, by years in the present job, by a supervisor, excluding disaggregation by LGBTQI+, long-term disability, and child with a disability.

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