EFFECTS OF COMPETITIVE GOALS IN THE REALIZATION OF CAREER SUCCESS IN THE STATE PUBLIC SERVICE OF ABIA STATE
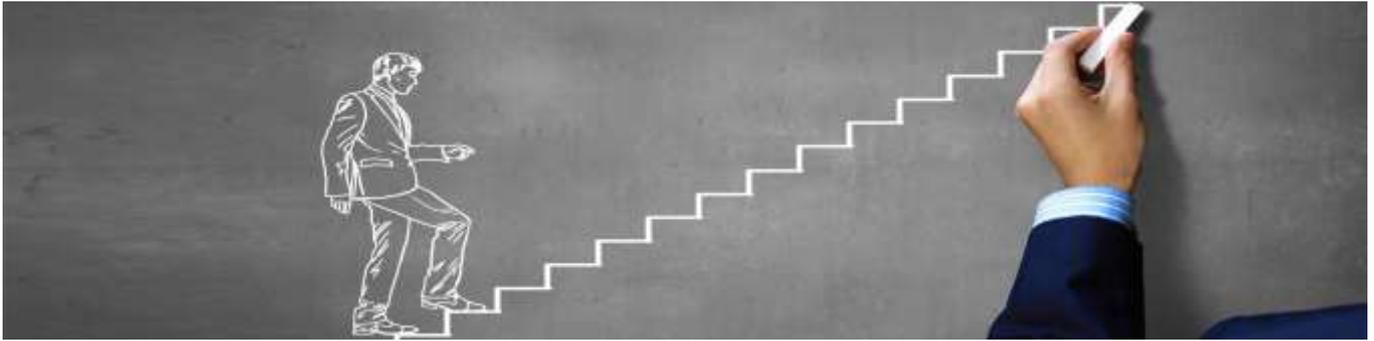

Original Research Article

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of competitive goals in the realization of career success in the state public service of Abia state. Primary data were obtained through interviews, from 42 employees of 20 ministries of state public service in Abia state based on the five research questions while secondary data were obtained from textbooks, internet printout and journals. The findings revealed that competitive goals have effects on the career success of state public service in Abia state. We concluded that since competitive goals affects career success, proper understanding of seven steps of Boyer (2012) will be of great help to overcome negative effects of competitive goals.

KEYWORDS:
Career Success, Competitive Goals, State Public Service.

I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of competitive goals in the realization of career success in the state public service in Abia state is of a great importance because the competitive goals which will be discussed below contributes positively or negatively in the realization of career success In recent time, Abia state has experienced government policies which disengaged the non indigenous civil servant in the area of primary and secondary school teachers (August 25, 2011, www.vaguard.com/politics) which led to untimely termination of their job and consequently their career. Rapid change and retirement of directors and senior staff of state public service in the state has become the order of the day. Career procedures and job tenure can no longer be guaranteed.

Before now, civil servants in the state use to have the opportunity of climbing the ladder of civil service successfully to their retirement but now civil servants are forced to voluntarily resign or change career because of unpaid salaries that looms the system not to mention of unpaid pensions and gratuity in the state. The advance of modern technology especially in the area of banking has reduced the rate of employment in the state whereby most works that should be done by humans are done by machines which led to minimum rate of employment and high rate of unemployment in the country (Ihemeje, 2016). Back home, this time has seen the destruction of farm crops by herdsmen resulting shortage of food supply and causing inflation on goods and services making home life horrible for a civil servants and others. This does not reduce the statutory responsibility of a civil servant; he or she must provide for the family as the culture of the people demands.

Notwithstanding the existing problems, the public civil servants need continuous education, training and development which will usurp more money from their dwindling economy. This results to non attainment of desire success because without continuous education, training and development it is difficult to climb the ladder of a career. It is also imperative to note that the political instability of the state starting from the creation of the state (1991) posited a problem to the state public civil servant because the necessary infrastructure (good health care scheme, education facilities, security and so on) needed to assist a public civil servant are lacking as such hampering their success and causing untimely death of many as well. Furthermore, the incessant desire for better green pasture has also resulted many public civil servants changing their career to pursue their present status. In the presence of the above stated issues and more. It becomes necessary now to examine what is career success and to what extent is it possible to attain career success.

Objective of the study

This work is meant to examine the effects of competitive goals in the realization of career success in state public service in Abia state.

Research Questions

Certain research questions were formulated to get this work and these are:

1) Does employee transfer affects career success in state public service state public service state public service in Abia state?
2) Does government policy affects career success state public service in Abia state?
3) Does family responsibility affects career success state public service in Abia state?
4) Does continuing education and training affects career success state public service in Abia state?
5) Do economic factors affect career success state public service in Abia state?

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURES

Career Success

According to new Webster's dictionary (1995) defines career as a progress through life with respect to ones work. But the definition of career success is very personal. For someone it may be prestige of a title, while for another it may be the amount of money earned. But for the purpose of this paper, career success is defined as accomplishment of progress through life with respect to ones work. Utilizing this definition, it is apparent that we all have or will have careers. The concept is as relevant to transient, unskilled labourers as it is to engineers, teacher or physician. Again for the purpose of this paper, all careers will be treated under the umbrella of state public service in Abia state.

Dimensions of Career

To identify the career dimension of this research paper we rely on recent career literature and consider the meaning of contemporary career as career scholars have intensively discussed the changing nature of the career concept. After the introduction of the notion of the boundaryless career (Arthur 1994), who has pointed to the increasing relevant of the inter-firm mobility (Arthur and Rousseau 1996), the internal career (schein1996) and individual responsibility towards career development (Mirvis and Hall1996), we assume that these changes are as relevant for global career as well as for domestic ones and thus consider the dimensions:

Individual Career Dimension

Reviewing the career literature above, we identify three individual dimensions that seem to capture the complexity of modern day careers. Career competencies, locus of career development responsibility and work/family boundary.

Career Competencies: Giving the emergencies of the internal career and the multiple changes in organizational context, career scholars (Arthur, claman and defillippi 1995, defillippi and Arthur 1994, 1996) have agreed that competency accumulation should occur at the level of individual, introducing three career competencies; know- why, know-how and know-whom.

- Know-Why: competencies answer the question "why"? as it relates to career motivation, personal meaning and identification (Deffillippi, and Arthur 1994 Gunz, Evans and Jalland 2000) while some scholars (weick and berlinger 1989) encourage individual to decouple their identities from the work experience, most scholars (mirvis and hall, 1996, mohman and cohen, 1995) discuss this competencies in terms of identifying personally with work and integrating their work experiences into their work coherent to self- picture.

- Know-How: Competencies relevant skills and job-related knowledge, flexible and transferable. This emphasis on personal accumulation of information and knowledge led some authors to define a career in terms of what is learned from experiences: the information, knowledge and perspective acquired or changed over time and to stress high occupational commitment.

- Know-Whom: competencies reflect career relevant networks that can take on multiple meanings: some authors consider these networks in terms of occupational communities or communities that provide a reference group for shared problem solving. Other scholars stress inter firm contacts or clients, buyer and supplier relationships for information about job opportunities and other sources, still other mentioned developmental relationships that resides outside ones place of work such as community, groups friendship, circles or ones former educational institutions.

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Locus of Career Development Responsibilities: Because of the increasing importance of the internal career and uncertainties in organizational contents career scholars have emphasized the individual's responsibility for career development. Individual's subjective sense of where one is going in ones work life is taking precedence over individual's expectations of organizational defined career paths, shifting the responsibility for personal and professional growth to the individual. In addition the uncertainties in organizations are no longer able to steer people through prescribed career path contribute to this shift. This emphasis on individuals career responsibility gears attention towards idiosyncratic career journeys and professional willing to go anywhere, at anytime.

Work/Family Boundary: While the previous career dimension appeared because of emerging internal career orientation and the boundaryless form of organizations other career scholars started to question the boundary between work and family. As private life is gaining importance, professional careers are profoundly shaped by family, the career and life choices of his/her partner and by children and elders who need care and time. In addition an individual's career cannot be understood outside the person's relationship with one or more other persons because the division between work life and personal life is much more blurred these days.

Types of Career Success

The most common framework of career success that has been used by researchers in the field is the distinction that has been made by Hughes (1937) between objective and subjective career success. Let us examine each briefly:

Objective Career Success: Can be defined as the external indicators of career success that one accumulates during ones careers such as salary and number or promotions because of the external nature of the indicators of this types of career success, objective career success is directly observable, measurable and verifiable by others (Heslin, 2005) while job performance and status were added by (Corinne, 2012).

Subjective Career Success: Can be defined as the individual's internal apprehension and evaluation of his or her career across many dimensions that are important to that individual. This form of success focuses more on the internal satisfaction about the work that the person is doing and his or her career and thus is not directly observable by outsiders. The most important indicators for subjective career success are job satisfaction and career satisfaction (Arthur, khapora and Kramer, 2001) spurk, 2009). Work life balance and job security work were also added by Corinne (2012). This desire for career success cannot exist in work life of a employee without recognising the competing goals that put a challenge in the progress. We will now examine the competing goals in the realisation of career success with particular reference to state public service in Abia state.

Competitive Goals

Recently few employees refused a promotion with their companies because it would have meant they would have to move to another city. Some also turned down a promotion which would have meant significantly more responsibilities. Taking a look at the above examples, it reflects the new and unexpected complexities that employees are being confronted in their efforts to progress through their career. Competitive goals in this context mean those complexities that confront an employee in the process of advancing in his or her career such as:

1. employee transfer
2. government policy
3. family responsibility
4. continuous education and training
5. economic factors

let us examine each of these five factors:

❖ *Employee Transfer*: most employees have refused a promotion in their choice of career because it will led to moving to a new city which they may not be comfortable with or it will demand more responsibility which they are not ready to accept. According to session(2004) employees were often transferred so that their talents and training may be put to more effective use, furthermore, transfers are ways of encouraging resourcefulness and flexibility among employees (Naku, mutambara and indermum, 2014). There are many benefits associated with transfer such as to improve employee benefits, to reduce monotony, boredom, to remedy faulty placement decisions, to prepare the employee for challenging assignment in future, to stabilize changing work requirements in different department/locations, to improve employee satisfaction and morals and to improve employer employee relation. In the presence of all these benefits, transfer also possess some problems which employees experience in the course of transfer. Transfer may be also be associated in the following inconvenience to employees who otherwise do not want to move, employees may or may not fit in the new location/department, shifting an experienced hands may affect productivity, discrimination, transfer may affect employees morale (Rao, 2005).

❖ *Government Policy:* is an essential part to career success. Government policy towards employees is one of most important factors that influence the determination of the career of an employee while some government policies also demote career success such as the disengagement of non indigenous employee, forceful retirement to mention but a few, some government policies promote career success. Governments establish many rules and regulations that guide business or service in a state. These rules and regulations have an influence on competitiveness and profitability of business in the state. Government policy will always depend on the political culture of the moment. Policy crafted in a politically stable country will be different from that formed in an unstable country. A stable political system can make business enjoy friendly decision that promote local business and attract foreign investors. Unstable system present challenges that jeopardize the ability of government to maintain law and order this have a negative effect on the business environment. Governments get money to spend form taxation. Increased spending requires increases in taxes or borrowing. Any tax increase will discourage investment, especially among entrepreneurs, who take the risks of starting and managing business. Increased spending also eats into the limited pool of savings leaving less money for private investment. Reduction in private investments shrinks production of goods and services which will lead to elimination of jobs. Analysis of public policy involves a range of actors and takes place in many forums with outcomes entering the public domain through means such as government statements, newspaper editorials, non-governmental briefings and academic.

❖ *Family Responsibility*: Family is another essential part of employee that contributes to their success .Some employees have refuse to progress in their career because of family issues like not been able to manage their work with their family issues. Some also prefer to resign to been separated from their families due to transfer issues. The influence of family value on career decisions is receiving increasing amount of attention and value which can be described as general evaluative standards that serve to influence an individual's behaviour so as to reach a desired end state (Rokeach, 1979 quoted in Elgar, 2007). Both women and men now desire a more integrated approach to work and family rather than the dominance of one area of life over the other; the family influence has made female employee to return to work lately after giving birth, children and family members play their part in decision-making process on the persons career. Many employees desire to spend more time with their children as a factor in their

decision to quit, especially when their children are infants or toddlers. Spouses also play a role on the decision. It is evident from the above that influence of family members and concerns for family work issues have contributed much in shaping employee career decision- making process.

❖   *Continuing Education and Training*: the advance of modern technology in every aspect of humans endeavour has encourage continuous education and acquiring skill to handle this modern technology to prevent obsolescence thereby demanding employees to further their education or training on this technological advancement. This is not favourable to many employees thereby forcing them to untimely retirement or face sack. Technological advancement have changed the nature of competitive marketing strategies, production methods, organizations relationship and access to information technology advancement has reduced the cost of doing business, made communication easier and service method more effective and efficient. Simply put, the technological dimension of the external environment impacts the scientific process used in charging inputs (resources, labour, money) to outputs (goods and service) today. To this effect, many employees attend evening classes, training or seminars or self-study to acquire more skills to be effective and efficient in their area of job hoping that they may be considered for promotion or transfer to a job which will give them better employment opportunities more job satisfaction.

❖   *Economic Factor*: this is another factor that affects the process of career success. The state of the economy of a nation influences the quantity and quality of working tools, materials and equipment, the cost of living and the level of workers both public and in the state in addition to recent economic recession being predicted in Nigeria and wide-spread retrenchment. The economic state has posited threat to the career success of many employees. The labour costs would influence both the quality and number of staff that the organizations can attract similarly the state revenue would determine the take home of a employee. If the state economic increases during inflation it means that the state public service will survive the inflation but if the state economy goes low it spells doom to the state public service thereby resulting a compulsorily decrease to their take home. In this way the economic situation of the state affects state public service directly upwards or downwards. It would be relevant to note that while a favourable economic climate generally represents opportunities for state public service growth such as continuous education, health care, access road and security, traditionally unfavourable economic climate spells doom to state public service because it generally results to retrenchment, untimely retirement, disengagement, abandonment, and so on.

III.   METHODOLOGY

This study is aimed at finding out the effect of competitive goals on career success in state public service in Abia state; to achieve this aim, survey method was used to take a snapshot at the situation in the ministries and analyze same. Furthermore, purposive/convenient non probability sampling technique was adopted to select twenty(20) out of twenty nine (29) ministries in state public service in Abia state which is mentioned below, which we believe was a representative of the number of the targeted population where it is believed that a common feature exists among the elements of a targeted population. Here is the twenty nine ministries in state public service:

1.   Office of the executive governor.
2.   Office of the deputy Governor
3.   Office of the secretary to the state Government
4.   Office of the Head of the state civil service
5.   Bureau of Budget
6.   Abia state planning commission
7.   Office of the state Auditor general
8.   Office of the Auditor _ General for local government
9.   Civil service commission
10.   Local Government service commission

11.   Board of internal Revenue
12.   Ministry of Justice
13.   Ministry of Finance
14.   Ministry of Agriculture
15.   Ministry of works
16.   Ministry of science and technology
17.   Ministry of Public utilities and water supply
18.   Ministry of Commerce and Industry
19.   Ministry of land survey and urban planning
20.   Ministry of Health
21.   Ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs
22.   Ministry of petroleum and solid minerals
23.   Ministry of Housing and urban development
24.   Ministry of women affairs
25.   Ministry of Sports and social development
26.   Ministry of youth development
27.   Ministry of information, culture and tourism
28.   Ministry of Environment
29.   Ministry of Education

WWW.abiastate.gov.ng retrieved on 20/7/2016.
Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources: the following were used by the research.

1)   Primary Source: personal interviews were conducted on the respondents through face to face interview, telephone communication and whatsapp chat.
2)   Secondary Sources: The secondary sources of data collection were text books, internet printouts, journals, and other research works in the ministries that supported the study.

Presentation of Data On Interviewees

SN	Ministry	Top level	Middle level	Lower level	Total
1	Head of the state civil service	1	—	2	3
2	Bureau of the state civil service	–	1	2	3
3	State auditor general	_	1	2	3
4	Civil service commission	1	–	–	1
5	Local government service commission	–	1	–	1
6	Board of internal revenue	1	–	–	1
7	Ministry of justice	_	–	2	2
8	Ministry of finance	–	–	1	1
9	Ministry of agriculture	–	4	–	4
10	Ministry of works	1	–	–	1
11	Ministry of science and technology	2	–	–	2
12	Ministry of public utilities and water	–	–	2	2
13	Ministry of commerce and	–	1	–	1
14	Ministry of land survey and urban	–	1	2	3
15	Ministry of health	–	1	–	1
16	Ministry of women affairs	1	1	1	3
17	Ministry of sports and social	1	1	1	3
18	Ministry of youth development	1	1	1	3
19	Ministry of education	1	–	–	1
20	Ministry of environment.	–	1	–	1
	Total	10	16	16	42

IV.   FINDINGS

Out of 42 that were interviewed based on the research question (1) which says does employee transfer affects career success in state public service in Abia state? 40 responded in affirmation which means that employee transfer affects career success while 2 disagreed. In the second research question which stated does government policy affects career success in state public service in Abia state? 40 out of 42 responded in affirmation which also means that government policy affect career success while 2 disagreed. The third research question was also administered to the respondents which says does family affect the career success state public service in Abia state? And 32 out 42 responded in affirmation confirming that family affects career success 10 disagreed. In the forth research question which stated that does continuing education and training affects career success in state public service in Abia state? 41 out of 42 responsible in the affirmation that continuing education and training affects career success while only one disagreed. Finally, the fifth research question which stated that does economic factors affect career success in state public service in Abia state? 39 out of 42 responded in affirmation, confirming that economic factors affect career success while 3 disagreed.

V.   DISCUSSION

Competitive goals are important factor in realization of career success therefore; state public servants should understand how these competitive goals affect the success of their career. In the course of conducting this study, five (5) research questions were formulated to address the objectives of the study. These research questions were used as an instrument of determining the effect of competitive goals on career success. In the first research question "does employee transfer affects career success in state public service in Abia state? Forty (40) respondents from the above ministries participated in the interview of those 42 interviewees 10 were top level servant 15 middle level servants and 15 lower level servants affirmed that that employee transfer affects career success. This is in agreement that some public service employees have terminated their career because they were not able to cope with the demands and responsibility associate with employee transfer. Two lower levels out of 42 interviewees were not in agreement that employee transfer affects career success. An interview was also conducted using the second research question that government policy affects career success from the above ministries and on the same employees of those 42 interviewees 10 were top level servants, 16 middle level servants and 16 lower level servants, 40 affirmed that government policy affects career success. They accepted that some government policies promote career success while some government policies demote career success in state public service in Abia state. Only 2 of the middle level servants disagreed that government policy affects career success.

In analysing the third research questions does family affects career success of state public service in abia state? Of those 42interviewees: 10 were top level servants, 16 middlle level servants and 16 lower level servants, 35 agreed that family affects career success of state public service in Abia state. This in line with our earlier discussion that family is an essential part contributes to the success of an employee. 10 out of 42 disagreed that family affects career success in state public service in Abia state. Another interview was conducted using does continuing education and training affect career success in state public service in Abia state? Of those interviewees; 10 were top level servants, 16 middle level servants and 16 lower level servants 41 agreed that contributing education and training affect career success in state public service in Abia state. This supports our earlier discussion that because of the advancement on modern technology in every aspect of human endeavour. It is now necessary that public servants need

continuing education and training to prevent been obsolescence in service. It is only one in lower level service that disagreed that continuing education and training affects career success in state public service Abia state.

Finally in the analysis of research instrument, another interview was conducted using the research question does economic factors affects career success in state public service in Abia state? Of those 42 interviewees; 10 top level servants, 16 middle and 16 lower civil servants level servants affirmed that economic factor affects career success in state public service in Abia state. This is in line with the above position that the state of economy of a nation influences the quantity and quality of all categories of worker both public and private in the state. It was only 3 lower level servants responded in the negative that economic factors does not affect career success. It is also necessary to note that the interviewees were informed before the interview that the research instrument was only valid for this academic research paper.

VI.   CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study there is a significant effect of competitive goals in realization of career success in the state public service in Abia state. It was concluded from the findings that the dimension of competitive goals namely employee transfer, government policy, family issues, continuing education and training and economic factors have positive effects on career success.

VII.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Since we have seen the effects of competitive goals in realization of career success in state public service in Abia state we recommend this seven steps proposed by Boyer (2012) ;

1) Understand your personal values.
2) Develop your vision, mission and purpose statement.
3) Understand your motivated skills and burnout skills.
4) Uncover your personal brand.
5) Develop your strategic career plan.
6) Identify and remove blocks.
7) Build yourself (invest in yourself).

These 7 steps outline a path for your long term career success. Each one requires work on your part, thorough consideration and action.

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