

MANAGERIAL CAREER PLATEAU:
DETERMINANTS, CONSEQUENCES AND COPING STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

During last decade managers who were practicing in different industries in Sri Lanka, have struggled with having less promotional opportunities. This initially leads them to become plateaued with their career. This study applied the theory from career management literature to examine factors significantly influenced to employees' perception of being subjectively plateaued and objectively plateaued. Additionally, this study aims to identify the relationship between career plateauing and its implication toward job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to quit and job induced stress. Further, coping strategies for effectively dealing with career plateauing scenarios were discussed from individual and organizational perspectives. Results indicate that objective career plateauing was influenced by age, educational level, lack of training opportunities, lack of promotional opportunities, high employees' value for family obligation. Furthermore, gender, business strategies, supervisory and peer support, employees' motivation to learn and role ambiguity were related to subjective career plateauing. Considering career plateauing consequences, this study found that job satisfactions and intention to quit were significantly related to both forms of career plateauing. The study analyzed to some extent, possible individual and organizational level coping strategies to mitigate the adverse impact of the career plateauing. Finally, implications and suggestions for future research are provided.

Keywords: Career Plateau, Contributing Factors of Career Plateaus, Job Satisfaction, organizational Commitment, Intention to quit, Job induced stress, Career Plateauing coping strategies

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CHAPTER 1:

Managerial Career Plateau:

Determinants, Consequences and Coping Strategies

1.1 Introduction

The changes in the business environment, such as the restructuring and downsizing trend, have resulted in greater numbers of people competing for fewer promotional opportunities (Allen, T.D., Joyce E.A.R., Mark,L.P; & Gregory H. D. 1999, p.1113). “Consequently, more individuals are experiencing longer assignments in the same position with fewer prospects for future vertical mobility” (Allen, T. D., Joyce, E. A. R., Mark, L. P., & Gregory H. D. 1999, p.1113). In today’s context, many managers are more likely to plateau at an earlier age than those a generation ago, and also earlier than they might expect. (Ettington, D.R. p.72)

Conceptually career plateauing can be defined as “the point in a career beyond which further promotion is low (FERENCE, Stoner, and Warren, 1977, p.602). Various factors may result in managerial career plateauing and several of them consist of lack of individual skills and abilities, lack of individual needs and values, lack of intrinsic motivation, lack of extrinsic rewards, stress and burnout, and slow organizational growth (Feldman and Weitz), and demographic variables, personal orientation factors, and work environment perception (Allen T. D. et al, 1999, p.1117). These factors have different degree of impact to make a certain employee plateaued in his or her career.

Most of the literature on career plateauing conclude that there are unfavorable consequences of plateauing toward both individual employee performances and organizational outcomes. For instance, several studies have demonstrated that plateaued employees report lower levels of job satisfaction, (Chay, Y.W. et al., 1995, p.65) lower levels of organizational commitment (Alen, T.D et al, 1998, P.167), and greater intentions to quit (Weiner et al, 1992, p.42).Additionally, plateaued managers demonstrate lower levels of performance, and report greater work stress (Allen, T.D. et al, 1998, p.167)

Despite these findings, significant gaps in the career plateauing literature still remain. For example, there has been very little research directed at examining variables that contribute to the occurrence of career plateauing. Few studies have examined the differential factors related to perceptions of subjective versus objective career plateauing. For understanding of the plateauing phenomenon precisely, it is important to identify factors that may result in career plateauing and how those variables vary according to the type of plateau. Additionally, this information may help organizations to avoid the potential detrimental outcomes associated with career plateaus.

In the light of above, the emphasis of this study is mainly on career plateauing aspects with special reference to Sri Lankan managerial employees attached to different kinds of industries. This thesis explores more specifically, the most critical determinants of managerial career plateauing and potential consequences of it. Further, particular emphasis is placed to identify and suggest alternative individual and organizational coping strategies to overcome the undesirable outcomes of plateauing.

1.2 Research Question

Human resource managers have estimated that approximately 50 percent of their staff were plateaued and that, of those individuals, about two thirds could be classified as solid citizens and another one third as deadwood (Near, 1984, p.75). In Sri Lanka, at present, there are many executives in different industries who have experienced plateau with their positions around more than five years. A number of factors may directly and indirectly influence to plateauing circumstances and each factor creates a different degree of importance as well. More specifically, the main reasons for career plateauing can be due to lack of higher level positions, skills obsolescence, poor performances, significance of the present position, failure to meet deadlines and slow growth in industry competitiveness and so on.

Today's sluggish business environment in the Sri Lanka (see appendix III), and the unpredictability of market forces make career plateauing an increasingly important issue for midlevel managers and professionals, and for their employing organizations. The most crucial issue associated with this aspect is potential less commitment and loyalty and in turn it leads to inability to meet organizational short term and long term goals and objectives. On the other hand

lower employee job satisfaction due to the plateauing may result in undesirable consequences like, poor employee performances, increased stress and employee intention to quit the organization.

Given these events and other factors, it is clear that career plateauing can be treated as a major human resources issue which must be further explored and find alternative solutions for effectively deal with the issue in Sri Lankan context. Since there is little published research in this aspect based on the Sri Lankan employee perspective, this study attempts to address the following research question:

- (1). Which factors determine career plateauing among Sri Lankan managerial employees
- (2). Its impact for both the individual and the organizational level?

1.3 Sub Research Questions

After the research problem has been defined, it is necessary to break it down into components that can be addressed separately. To find the answers to each components of the problem, it is essential that a set of specific questions be formulated that capture the essence of the part or components. These specific questions are called research questions. (Malhotra N.K. 2004, p.93)

In the light of problem statement above the questions of this study will be:

1. What factors are contributing to managerial career plateauing among Sri Lankan managers?
2. How critical are these factors in terms of its degree of implications?
3. Are they much aware of their plateauing position?
4. What reactions do managers perceive about career plateauing?
5. What consequences may be created due to managerial career plateau?
6. What coping strategies have managers pursued to get rid of career plateauing?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the main purpose of this research is to explore the concurrent human resources issue of managerial career plateauing among Sri Lankan managerial employees. This main objective

can be split into more specified objectives in a way that highlight the stepping stone of the research endeavour.

- Identify the nature and determinants of managerial career plateauing in a broad way, along with its potential implications in term of individual and organizational level.
- Suggest alternative approaches to partially overcome the undesirable implications of managerial career plateauing.

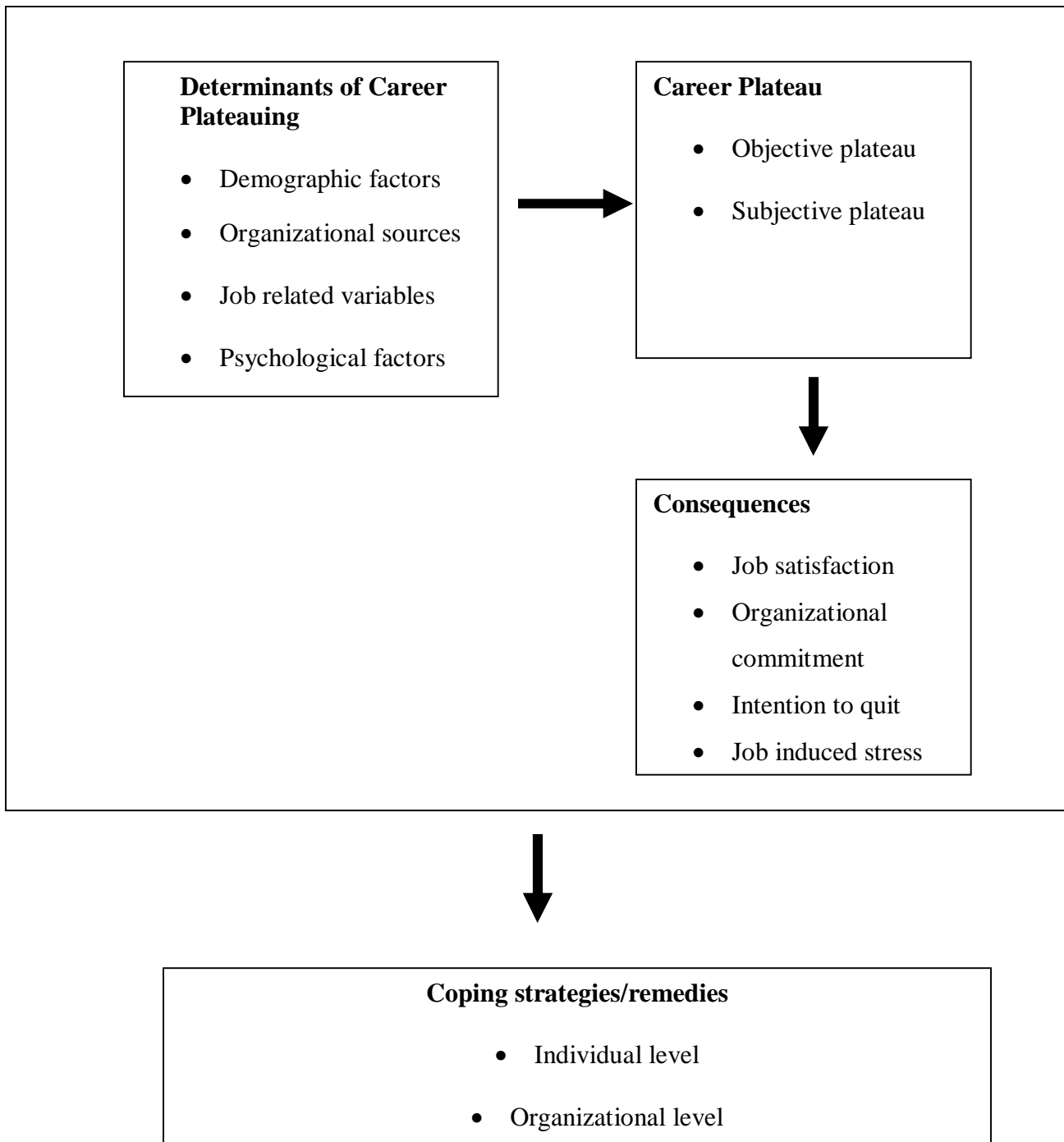
1.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1.1 explains the relevant concepts in this study and the type of relationship between the concepts.

Further, the conceptual framework explains an analytical model in a graphical representation based on theoretical foundations. As shown in Figure 1.1 career plateauing occur due to various contributing factors namely, organizational sources, demographic factors, job related variables, psychological factors. Under each four main variables, sets of sub variables were identified based on the career plateauing literature. For demographic variables basically, age, gender, marital status and educational level are taken in to consider. Organizational variables include organizational business strategy and less promotional opportunities due to pyramidal organizational structure. Role ambiguity, supervisory and peer support, intrinsic rewards, compensation systems and lack of training opportunities are classified under the job related variables. Finally, psychological factors consist of motivation to learn, high value for family obligation and career exploration and planning.

With the impact of these variables mainly two types of career plateauing would come up. They are Objective plateau, and Subjective plateau. More over, this model shows the relationship between career plateauing and its outcome. As shown in the framework key outcome variables are: Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Intention to quit and Job Induced Stress. Finally, this model put emphasis on identification of alternative solution to minimize the issue, from the view point of both individual and organization

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework



1.5.1 Definitions of Key Concepts

Career Plateau: “The point in a career beyond which further promotion is low” (FERENCE, Stoner and Warren, 1977, p.602).

“The likelihood of not receiving further assignments or increased responsibility” (Feldman and Weitz, 1988, p.70)

Objective Career Plateau: “Refers to structural and observable aspects and associated with the time spent in the current position” (Tremblay, M. and Roger, A. 1993, p.414).

Subjective Career Plateau: “The feeling of having been in one’s level for too long and of having reached a dead end in one’s progress” (Tremblay, M. and Roger, A.1993, p.414).

Job Satisfaction: “A collection of feelings that an individual holds toward his or her job” (Robins, S.P., 2005, p29).

“Degree to which an individuals feel positively or negatively about work”(Wood, et al., 1998, p.147).

Organizational Commitment: “A state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organization” (Robins, S.P., 2005, p.79).

Intention to Quit: “The voluntary and involuntary permanent withdrawal from an organization” (Robins, S.P. 2005, p.28).

Job Induced Stress: “An awareness of personal dysfunction, leading to an uncomfortable short-term psychological state such as anxiety, tension or depression caused by opportunities, constraints, or demands relating to potentially important work related outcomes” (Parker, & Cotiis, D.E., 1983, p.161).

1.6 Significance of the Study

In recent years the career plateau phenomenon has begun to receive some attention. Most of the studies in the literature of managerial plateauing have focused on analysis of the relationships between subjective and objective variables of plateauing and career plateauing outcomes in a specific industry at once. Career plateauing, however, expose to a wider spectrum of research phenomenon. This study unlike most of the prior studies attempts to address this issue with special attention to different industries in Sri Lankan labour market and suggests more specific strategic approaches to deal with career plateauing.

It is very hard to find studies conducted with the perspective of managerial career plateauing of Sri Lankan workforces. Although extensive literature exists on this aspect globally, the findings perhaps can not be easily applied in to Sri Lankan context due to different working patterns, working environment, industry and social structure. As such this study could fill the existing gap in the field of managerial plateau in Sri Lankan context.

1.7 Outline of the Study

Chapter two presents the extensive literature review in the field of career plateauing. This is necessarily an exploratory study of secondary data with respect to this aspects and the literature review will be done based on the published research and other sources produced for other purpose rather than focused on specific research. Initially, research articles, books and web sites have been reviewed in this section paying special attention to the variables presented in the conceptual framework. (Figure1.1)

Chapter three explains research methodology of the study. The Chapter specifically describe in detail the research approaches, sampling methods, data collection and analysis techniques used for the study.

Chapter four presents the results of the validity and reliability test of the study.

Chapter five present primary data collected through out the research process. Further, chapter five presents a deeper analysis of the primary data with the use of quantitative and qualitative

analytical tool. Further, in order to demonstrate the relationship and impacts of the variables portrayed in the conceptual framework, the chapter make a discussion on the each variable.

Chapter six summarizes and concludes findings and suggest individual and organizational level measures to cope with career plateauing.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

A number of limitations should be acknowledged here as reference for future research.

- The survey was conducted over a period of two months (February and March, 2008), which permitted only executives who attached to specific industries. Therefore, the respondents' views would only represent a particular set of industries and will not be representative of all industries. Sometimes findings of this study may vary with the views of unattended industries.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to present the underlying theoretical and methodological rationale for this study, throughout this chapter I examine the literature on career plateauing, determinants of managerial career plateauing, implication of the plateauing and finally both individual and organizational coping strategies. For this purpose theories related to managerial career plateauing will be explored through extensive review of books, journal articles and web pages. Each of the theories focused in this chapter will be used in the analyses in chapter four and five. Consequently they will be used to draw conclusions and suggestions at the end of the thesis.

2.1 Career Plateau

The definition and operationalization of career plateauing has evolved over the years. Initially, the most widely used definition of career plateauing was suggested by Ference, Stoner, and Warren (1977, p.602) who defined it as "the point in a career when the likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is very low".

Most of the definitions of career plateau are initially, based on absence or lack of vertical and horizontal promotional opportunities within an organization. Tan, et al., (1994) argued that, "in the 1980s, when corporate restructuring and reorganization became more prevalent, it was difficult to identify what actually constitute a promotion. Sometimes a promotion was a way to sidetrack an individual to kick employees upstairs in order to remove a perceived impediment to progress". Further they emphasized that, in addition to promotion, there is a widely held notion within the business community that plateauing is characterized by the absence of career movement in any direction. According to them this could be both vertical and horizontal movements in the employee's career. Considering both "promotion" and "meaningful career movement", Feldman and Weitz (1988, P.70) revised the definition of career plateauing in order to describe the condition in which "the likelihood of receiving further assignments of increased responsibility is low".

2.2 Types of Career plateau

Different types of career plateau are found in the career plateauing literature. Basically, Bardwick (1986, P.209) described three types of career plateauing.

1. *Structural plateauing*: “results from the combined effects of organizational structure (pyramidal) and birthrate fluctuations and is largely beyond the control of an individual employee”(Bardwick, 1986, P.209)
2. *Content plateauing*: “happens when an employee becomes saturated with all available job-related information and consequently lacks further challenge to expand vocational expertise” (Bardwick, 1986, P.209)
3. *Personal plateauing*: “centers on an employee's personal life and often corresponds to a period in one's life-stage development”(Bardwick, 1986, P.209)

Ference, et al., (1977, p.603) suggested four categories of managerial careers as shown in Figure 2.1 observing both individuals, who have reached a career plateau and those who have not.

Figure 2.1: Model of Managerial Careers

| Current Performance | Likelihood of Future Promotion | |
|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| | Low | High |
| High | Solid Citizens (effective plateauees) Organizationally Plateaued Personally Plateaued | Stars |
| Low | Deadwood (ineffective plateauees) | Learners (comers) |

Source: Thomas P. Ference; James A. Stoner; E. Kirby Warren, (1977), Managing the Career Plateau, *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 2, No. 4. p.603

- *Learners or comers*: “These individuals have high potential for advancement but presently perform below standard. Obvious examples are trainees who are still learning their new jobs and are not yet integrated into the organization’s culture. Also included are longer service managers who have recently been promoted to new positions which they have not yet mastered” (FERENCE, et al., 1977, p.603).
- *Stars*: “These persons presently do outstanding work and are viewed as having high potential for continued advancement. They are on the “high potential “fast track” career paths. They are a readily identifiable group in most organizations, and probably receive the most attention in development programs and managerial Discussions”(FERENCE, et al., 1977, p.604).
- *Solid citizens*: “Their present performance is rated satisfactory to outstanding, but they are seen as having little chance for future advancement. These individuals are probably the largest group in most organizations and perform the bulk of organizational work” (FERENCE, et al., 1977, p.604).
- *Deadwood*: “These individuals have little potential for advancement, and their performance has fallen to an unsatisfactory level. These people have become problems, whether for reasons of motivation, ability, or personal difficulty. Probably a small group in most organizations, they are often the recipients of considerable attention, either for rehabilitation or dismissal” (FERENCE, et al., 1977, p.604).

2.3 Contributing Factors of Career Plateauing

Various factors may contribute for employees becoming plateaued. Determinants of career progress or stagnation may be divided in to two broad categories: Individual and familial factors on one side and organizational factors on the other side (Tremblay & Roger, 1993, p.414). Further, Tremblay and Roger explain individual and familial factors are linked to the specific situations of the individuals themselves: Because of lack of skills, of will, of ambition, or because of certain external constraints, some may remain in their current job or at their current level despite job opportunities that may become available. On the other hand they argue that the organizational factors usually have little to do with the individual per se: These are contextual or structural factors that effectively block the chances for advancement and are reflected by a lack of job openings on higher levels.

2.4 Demographic Factors

Demographic variables can influence both form of plateauing. Other studies show that organizations develop norms or stereotypes about the age at which one may be promoted (Tremblay & Roger, 1993, p.414).

2.4.1 Age

Virtually every one plateaus at one time or another. Greenhaus et al., (2000, p.221) suggest that although plateauing can occur at any stage of a career, it is particularly relevant to employees older than 40.

Specific studies of the relationship between age and career plateau have provided only inconclusive results, but several researches have observed negative relationship between age and mobility (Kalleberg & Loscocco, 1983, p.83; Latack, 1984 p.310; Markham, south, Bonjean, & Corder, 1985 p.145). In this study expect age to be clearly and positively related to career plateau. In the light of the literature, the researcher in this study aim to identify the relationship between the age of the executives and managerial career plateauing.

2.4.2 Gender

Allen, T.D. et al., (1998, p.167) found that men were more likely to be classified as double plateaued (content and hierarchical plateauing) or non-plateaued than women. In contrast, they found that women were more likely to be classified as hierarchical or job content plateauing than men. Gallos (1989) found that greater percentage of women perceived that there were fewer advancement opportunities available to them than men and they may become plateaued sooner than men. In the light of the previous studies this study expects women will be more subjected to career plateauing than men.

2.4.3 Educational Level

Insufficient education can block vertical progression and restrict the possibilities of moving into a different position (Becker & Strauss, 1959, p.257).The effect of education on mobility will be felt throughout the entire career (Grandjean, 1981, p.1074, Grusky, 1966, p.501; Tuma, 1976, p.354). Education may serve as basic requirements for entry into a number of management positions in an organizational context. Considering the literature, the conclusions pertaining to the influence of education on career stability and plateau have been mixed, and some researchers

have observed no significant difference in the subjects studied (Veiga, 1981, p.567). Based on this, among the various determinants of the managerial career plateauing, educational level of the managers were considered in this study.

More over, Near, J.P (1985, p.186) revealed with the data from 199 managers, higher education for instance Master Degree, decrease the likelihood of becoming plateaued, and she suggest that managers should pursue higher level education in order to prevent negative consequences of career plateauing. In the light of these studies, in this study conceptualize educational level of the employees play a critical role towards career plateauing and aim to find the impact of employees educational level towards plateauing.

2.4.4 Job Tenure (Seniority within the same organization)

“Seniority within the same firm generally represents the most formal and most obvious criterion of mobility for employees” (Tremblay, & Roger, 1993, p.415). For managers, the years of experience within the firm are often considered informally, and one would expect seniority to improve the chances for advancement. Further, Tremblay, & Roger(1993, p.415) argue that most studies have found that the greater the time spent working for the same firm, and thus tenure or loyalty to this firm, the lower the chances for promotion. Studies of career plateau show that individuals who have reached a plateau have significantly more tenure than others (Gould & Penley, 1985, p.476)

2.4.5 Family Context

Recent research is dealing with the relationship between family situation and career advancement, since many employees may reject certain promotional opportunities due to the family obligations. Frone and Rice (1987, p.45) suggest that a satisfactory family life is important to facilitate perceived career achievement, whereas unsatisfactory family life may increase role conflict and stress. Further some authors suggest that family size is an asset in career progression. Staines, Pottick, & Fudge, (1986) have observed a weak relationship between high salary, number of promotions and a spouse working full time. However, Veiga (1983, p.74) found no link between the spouse’s situation and the time spent in a certain position. Concerning the literature it is clear that results of the link between family size and mobility are mixed. Although several authors discovered little or no relationship between these two variables, it

seems that a growing number of people refuse interesting promotion opportunities and plateaued with their positions primarily because of the impact such a change would have on their spouse's career (Kilpatrick, 1982, p.364). Therefore in this study, the researcher include family obligation or leisure under the psychological variables which contribute to managerial career plateauing.

2.4.6 Personality

Some researchers have looked at personality of the certain managers as a way of explaining difference in career success. "The influence of personality on mobility of the career may also come indirectly through anchors" (Bourgeois & Wills, 1987, p.537). Specially, employees' capabilities to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty or complexity can help career advancement (Berlew & Hall, 1966). As indicated in Trambly, et al., (1994. p.416), Abelson, Ferris, & Urban, (1988) argue that other traits such as aggressiveness, patience, fear of failure, and a propensity for risk can affect mobility. "Among the various personality traits that have been studied so far, locus of control as the main elements of the personality has been focused. The results concluded that the feeling of controlling one's fate (Internals) would have a greater tendency to be mobile and to be career and success oriented than externals". (Tremblay & Roger, 1993, p.416)

2.4.7 Previous career success

As indicated in Tremblay, et al., (1993, p.417), Wakabayashi and his colleagues (1992) show that performance during the early career years (previous career success) is a useful source of information explaining variations in career progress. Further, they explain that experiencing success in the early stage in a career may indicate the individual possesses the potential and the experience which are required for eventual promotions in the organizational promotional scheme.

2.5 Organizational factors

Career plateau does not occur only because of individual aspects. Some factors related with the organizational aspects may also make certain employees become plateaued.

2.5.1 Compressed Career Path

“These are contextual or structural factors that effectively block the chances for advancement and are reflected by a lack of job openings on higher levels” (Tremblay, M and Roger A, 1993, p.418). In accordance with Tan, et al., (1994) structural characteristics may limit career progression: for example, career paths that have few levels or stages offer fewer possibilities for advancement meaning that many employees have to struggle with few promotions.

2.5.2 Span of Control

“Managers placed in positions of greater responsibility in a supervisory position requiring them to manage people in their organization often experience a more rapid career progression” (Tremblay et al , 1993). Research studies concluded that span of control are to be negatively related to career plateau.

Considering literature on contributing factors of career plateauing, Tan and et al (1994) has identified six factors that may cause to career plateauing.

1. Organizational Sources
2. Impact of the Economic Environment
3. Organizational Posture
4. Organizational Culture
5. The Specific Job and Supervisor
6. Individual Employee Variables

Considering these first four factors is highly related to the organizational aspects.

2.5.3 Organizational Sources

Tan et al (1994) argued that career plateauing can result from either organizational factors or individual employee variables, but the pyramidal shape of an organization is clearly the most important source of career plateauing; fewer jobs are available with each incremental step up the organizational ladder.

Bardwick (1986) referred to the "rule of 99 percent" to point out that only 1 percent of employees will reach the highest level of corporate decision making due to the pyramidal shape

of organizational structure. Therefore, Bardwick reasoned, career plateauing is largely a function of impersonal forces or, more accurately, limited spaces in the organizational hierarchy. Further, many authors argued that career plateauing is no one's fault, neither good nor bad, but a reality that employees must face with the pyramidal organizational structure.

2.5.4 Organizational Posture

Internal strategic decisions, or even the nature of a corporation's business, can influence an employee's likelihood of becoming plateaued. Slocum, Cron, Hansen, and Rawlings (1985, p.151) reported more plateaued employees in what they called defender corporations than in analyzer corporations. "A defender corporation is more mature in its product lines, tends to be more entrenched competitively, and relies on increased efficiency and sound production methods to maintain profitability. In contrast, an analyzer corporation relies on new product development, expanded sales, and the development of new markets in order to be profitable"(Tan, Carol S., Salomone, and Paul R., 1994).

2.5.5 Organizational Culture

"The organizational culture (as exemplify by performance standards and expectations), organizational climate (open and supportive vs. autocratic, tense, and stressful), and communication patterns all play a role concerning the organization's impact on career plateauing" (Slocum, Cron, & Yows, 1987, p.34). In addition, Tan, et al., (1994) pointed out that the manner in which an organization handles employee career movement, (lateral-internal reassignment, geographic transfer, or termination), affects the morale of all employees and may increase the difficulty of preventing solid citizens from deteriorating into deadwood.

Explaining more about impact of organizational culture toward career plateau, Tan, et al., (1994) explained that specific organizational operations, such as personnel selection processes, may fail to identify individuals with suitable capabilities who should move up in the organization or may select individuals with inadequate or inappropriate skills and potential. Later, training and job-enhancement opportunities may be insufficient or unreliable in preparing even well-qualified employees for advancement.

2.5.6 Impact of the Economic Environment

The consequences of an expected unstable economy or an actual merger or takeover, restructuring, dramatic downsizing or consolidations, may leave an organization dysfunctional, barely able to provide a minimally satisfactory work environment. Therefore employees in such situations are less likely to receive reassurances of security or the provision of advancement opportunities from their supervisors (or higher level management) than are those in stable work settings.

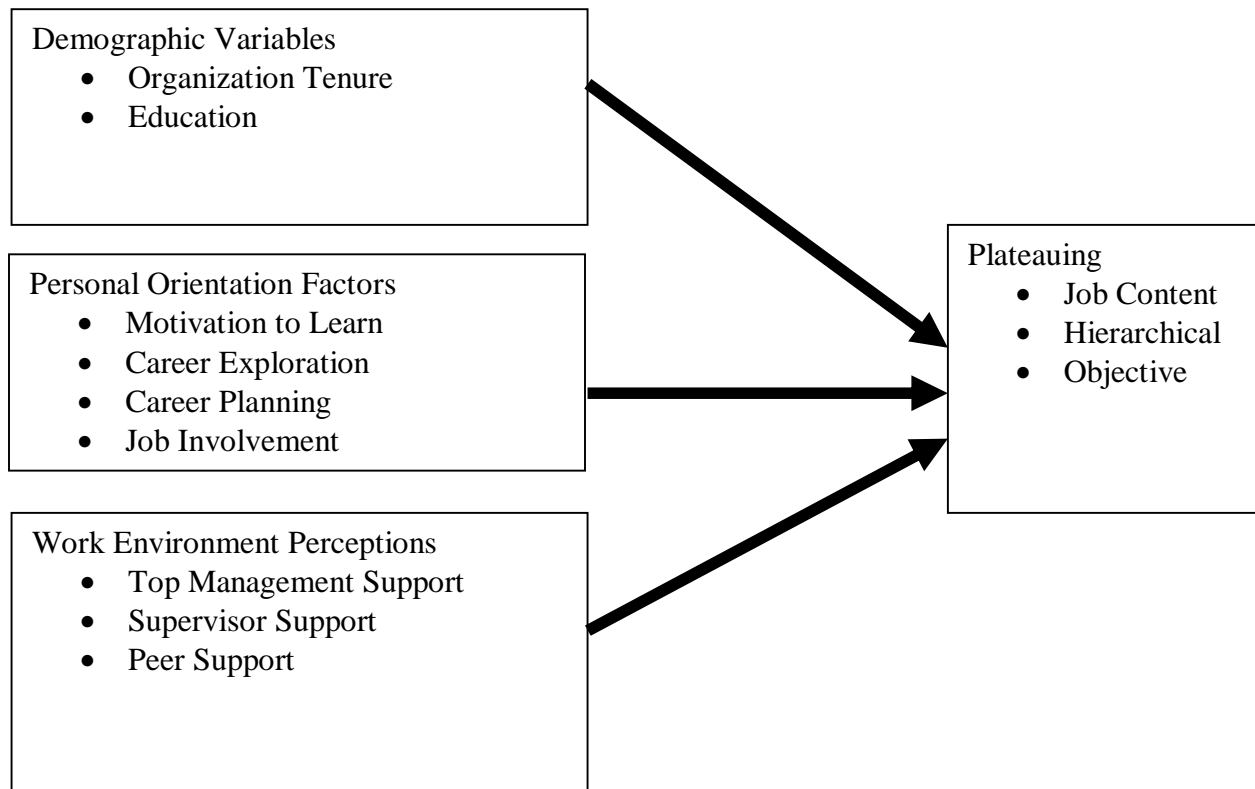
Feldman and Weitz (1988, p.71) developed a taxonomy based on the premise that career plateaus can result from three critical factors.

1. Individual level variables
2. Job-related variables
3. Organizational level variables.

According to Weitz, at the individual level, an employee's skills, abilities, needs, and values are related to his or her perceptions of being plateaued on the job, while at the job level, the lack of intrinsically-motivating job characteristics and extrinsic rewards are sources of career plateauing. Finally, they identified, at the organizational level, stress/burn-out and slow organizational growth as suggested sources of career plateauing.

The interesting study conducted by Allen, T.D. et al., (1999, pp.1113-1137) is illustrated in Figure 2.2. It focuses on theory from the employee learning and development literature in order to examine factors related to employees' perceptions of being job content plateaued and hierarchically plateaued. Results indicated that both types of plateauing were related to support from top management, career planning, job involvement, and education level. Furthermore, career exploration, motivation to learn, organizational tenure, and job tenure were related to perceptions of hierarchical plateauing, while supervisor support was related to job content plateauing.

Figure 2.2: Determinants of Career Plateauing



Source: Allen, T.D.et al, (1999), Learning and Development Factors Related to Perceptions of Job Content and Hierarchical Plateauing, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. 20, p.1117

Organizational Tenure

“Organizational membership characteristics such as, tenure have been found to be related to developmental activity” (Allen, T.D.et al., 1999, p.1118). Individuals with longer tenure within an organization are likely to have had more chances to participate in developmental opportunities which then lead to promotional opportunities within the organization.

Cited form Allen, T.D.T. et al.,(1999, p.1121) “Tremblay and Roger (1993, P.425) failed to find significant correlation between career plateauing and organizational tenure. However, using discriminant analysis, the authors found that organizational tenure differentiated between those classified into plateaued and non-plateaued groups such that those in the plateaued group had the longest tenure. Further, they suggest that seniority would be less likely to result in perceptions of

being job content plateaued since job boredom and poor growth opportunities may occur at any point during an individual's tenure within an organization.

Education Level

Attained education level of the employees may also be relevant to a continuous learning orientation and also has implications for career plateauing. “Intuitively, it would seem that individuals who have attained higher levels of education are more likely to have a stronger orientation toward learning and development than those with lower levels of education”(Allen, T.D. et al., 1999, p.1119). With regard to plateauing, Tremblay and Roger (1993, P.426) found that educational level was negatively associated with an objective measure of plateauing, but that education did not distinguish between those who subjectively perceived themselves as plateaued or non-plateaued. Further, these authors confirm that education could be used as a selection criterion when making promotional decisions among employees. Therefore, individuals who do not attain a higher level of education may be disadvantaged when competing for fewer advancement opportunities in an organization. Moreover, they argued that “The Educational level may also be used as a criterion for selecting individuals for challenging assignments which would in turn impact an individual's perception of being content plateaued in his or her job” (Allen, T.D. et al., 1999, p.1119). Also, they suggested that individuals with a higher level of education may have a wider skill-base which would provide greater opportunities for horizontal and vertical organizational mobility.

Based on this literature, in this study, I expect that the level of education will be related to both forms of career plateauing. That is, individuals with higher education will be less likely to feel plateaued.

2.6 Personal orientation factors (psychological Factors)

Allen, T.D. et al (1999, pp.1117) found that a number of psychological variables have been linked to career plateauing.

2.6.1 Motivation to Learn

As indicated in Allen, T.D. et al (1999, p.1117), Noe,(1986) describe motivation to learn as an enthusiasm, desire, or need for learning the content of training and development activities. Further, Noe and Wilk (1993) found that motivation to learn had a consistent, significant, and positive influence on employees' development activities and in turn lead to more promotional opportunities. They suggest that given the positive developmental outcomes accrued by individuals with a high degree of motivation to learn, it follows that motivation to learn should be negatively related to perceptions of career plateauing.

2.6.2 Career Exploration and Planning

Seeking additional career relevant information (Career Exploration) is also related to learning and development with resemblance to getting career movement. "Individuals who are more likely to engage in career exploration and career planning activities should recognize and be more aware of their own developmental needs and the importance of developing different skills" (Allen, T.D. et al.,1999, p.1118).Consequently individuals who are more concerned about career exploration activities have more opportunities to find attractive job opportunities than those who do not.

Considering subjective plateauing, awareness or self insight should serve to mitigate the likelihood of feeling like one has reached a job plateau. In fact, several studies (Chao, 1990, p.188) have reported a relationship between career planning and career exploration with the occurrence of subjective plateauing such that individuals who report engaging in more career planning and career exploration indicate that they are less likely to feel plateaued.

Considering about career plateauing literature in this study researcher expect a negative relationship between perceptions of both objective and subjective career plateauing, meaning that greater participation in career exploration and career planning activities minimize career plateauing while less consideration about career exploration would make people feeling high plateaued.

2.6.3 Job Involvement

Job involvement is another individual level variable that has been related to career plateauing. Job involvement has been described as the degree to which people identify with their jobs. Generally, the accepted principle refers to individuals who are more involved with their jobs are considered their work to be a primary aspect of their lives. Noe (1986, p.741) contended that job involvement could be useful to trainees' motivation to improve work skills. Some authors argue that individuals who place greater importance on work-related activities (more jobs involved) may be less likely to feel job plateaued.

2.6.4 Employees' Aspirations for Advancement

The level and nature of employees' aspirations for advancement may also impact their career success. "Studies on career plateau revealed that the impact of employees' career aspirations is not as clear as one might think". (Tremblay, M and Roger A, 1993, p.412). Interestingly, Near (1984) observed in her study that those employees on a plateauing position demonstrated a lower level of aspiration for advancement than those who were not on a plateau. Pinder & Walter, (1984) argue that the explicit or even indirect admission of a lack of ambition can reduce the chances for receiving promotion. In this study employees career exploration and planning activities and value of family responsibilities or leisure are taken into consideration together with more resemblance to executives' aspirations for advancement.

2.7 Job Related Factors

Perceptions of own work environment where employees are dealing with and task they are engaging with their jobs is also influence the subjective career plateauing. Allen, T.D.et al., (1999, p.1118), argued that top management, supervisory and peer support are paramount among the variables related with the working environment.

2.7.1 Supervisory and Peer Support

Social support for training activities and advancement has been identified as a vital factor that refers to facilitating a learning and development orientation among employees. Allen, T.D.et al., (1999, p.1118) argue that perceived social support from the top management, supervisors, and peers can reinforce the importance and value of learning and development activities and thus foster a positive learning environment among employees, and ultimately, it could lead to

decrease the subjective career plateauing among the employees. Further, they suggest that support from others in the work environment may also help with the identification of resources to help with specific problems and the clarification of career goals. “Moreover, if employees do not believe that they have social support, they may be less likely to believe that they have the network essential for movement within the organization” (Allen, T.D. et al., 1999, p.1118). Hence, this study proposes that both forms of career plateauing will be negatively related to supervisory and peer support. That is, the higher the perceived social support, the less likely employees will feel plateaued in their job.

Near, J.P. (1985, p.186) indicates that unsupportive supervisors may cause their subordinates to become plateaued or supervisors may become unsupportive for learning that their subordinates have become plateaued. Also this author recommends that managers should avoid supervisors who are not supportive to avoid becoming plateaued.

Since supervisors exert real and anticipated power to an extent achieved by few others, they can influence the quality of the work that employees perform as well as their attitudes about the job, Tan, et al., (1994). “Although supervisors do not directly cause or prevent career plateauing, their efforts can enhance worker satisfaction and promote career advancement” (Tan, et al., 1994). Not surprisingly, Near, (1984, p.77) found that managers who have not reached a career plateau reported better working relationships with their supervisors and longer job tenure than did their plateaued counterparts. With respect to the literature in this study, I intend to investigate the relationship between supervisory and peer supports under the job related variables explained in the conceptual framework. (Figure 1.1)

2.7.2 Compensation System

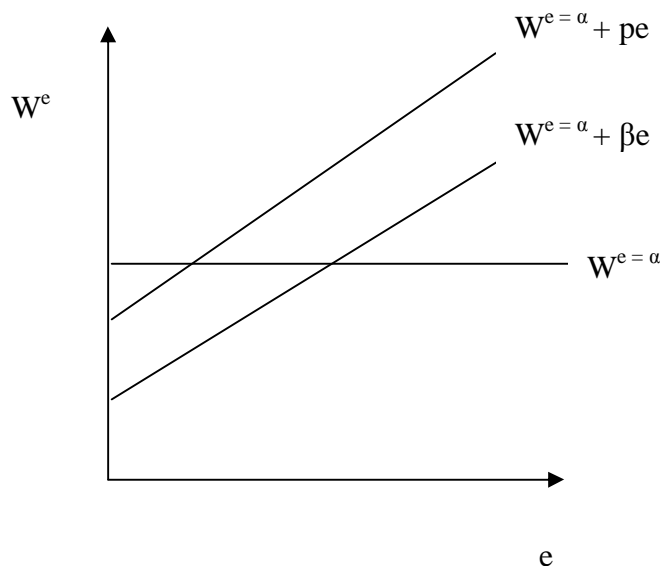
Compensation systems that organizations offer to the employees play a key role in increasing employee motivation (Milgrom, P. and Roberts, J. 1992, p.388), performance and productivity. Therefore, in today’s context, most organizations are very much concerned about establishing and maintaining the optimal compensation system.” Choosing an appropriate compensation mechanism is probably the core problem of human resource managers, and represents the heart of personnel economics” (Garibaldi, P, 2006, P.82). Further, he argues that compensation

packages must be consistent with profit maximization on the part of firms, but that they should also provide employees with the incentives to do as well as possible.

Garibaldi, P, (2006, P.83-84) classifies the compensation package into three major groups.

1. Purely Input Based Scheme
2. Bonus Scheme
3. Franchising Scheme

Figure 2.3: Different Compensation Schemes



Source: Garibaldi, P. (2006), *Personnel Economics in Imperfect Labour Markets*, Oxford University press, Oxford, P.86

Purely Input Based Scheme is the simplest one, and specifies a fixed payment per unit of time (a month, or a week, or a day) independently of the output produced and sold, while a bonus scheme is made up of a fixed component plus a variable bonus, that is proportional to the output. Finally, a franchising scheme refers to all the sales revenue, that he earns the job is given to the employee. The three main compensation systems can be illustrated by Figure 2.3.

Determining the feasible compensation system depend on many factors. Garibaldi, P. (2006, P.89), argues that the utility of the employee and risk aversion or taking are the more interesting

determinant. Most of the studies conducted in this aspect found that well designed incentive system can be very effective in motivating employees and extracting their efforts. Confirming this, Garibaldi, P,(2006, P.107) argue that a fixed wage scheme, where employee compensation does not depend on output, does not provide adequate incentive to the employee. As explained in the Principal Agent theory, this allows workers to behave according to moral hazard.

Many authors have conducted research on incentives schemes that can encourage employees to work hard and meet organizational goals by reducing adverse selection and moral hazard. (Garibaldi, P, 2006, P.111 and 115), describes the two critical pay for performance systems, such as: Fixed Wage with Minimum Output which refers to setting the minimum out put level with respect to fixed wage and bonus scheme entitle for employees who produce more than the minimum output and Performance Pay with Two-tire System.

The compensation system may also contribute to career plateauing. No literature was found in this respect. However, in this study I presume the compensation system may influence as the other job related variable and I aim to identify the association between compensation systems and career plateauing.

2.7.3 Training Opportunities

Training opportunities available within the organization also may be linked with the managerial career plateauing. Feldman and Weitz (1988, p.72) found that plateaued managers reported having received similar levels of training to that of fast-track managers. Criticizing this some authors pointed out participation in training activities does not capture an individual's interest in learning and development. This is because of training activities may be mandatory or cover content already mastered by the employees. Furthermore, individuals may not be psychologically ready for training. This study hypothesized the lack of training opportunities are positively related to the career plateauing.

2.7.4 Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity refers to ‘the extent to which a worker understands the requirements of his or her job’ (Rousseau, 1978) or ‘lack of clarity with respect to expected performance, to the methods to

be used to do the work, and to the consequences of the performance' (Graen, 1976). Many studies have concluded that employees often feel uncomfortable when they suffering from lack of precise knowledge of the duties, responsibilities and goal and objectives of their job.

Cited from Tremblay, M (2004, p.999) "several studies found that role ambiguity reduces satisfaction with the immediate supervisor, colleagues, salary, opportunities for advancement and with work itself" (Cummings et al., 1989). Rizzo et al. (1970), argues that when employees are ambiguous with their limits of their authority to decide what they must accomplish and how they will be evaluated, they are not comfortable enough to make decisions. This may cause to reduce the efficiency of the employees. Literature on role ambiguity also emphasize that the higher level of role ambiguity lead to decrease the motivation of making an effort.

In this sense it is obvious that reducing role ambiguity may create more favorable outcomes for instance, higher motivation, and increase productivity. Less studies conducted to understand the implication of role ambiguity towards career plateauing. Cited from Tremblay, M (2004, p.999) Feldman (1989) suggests that problems linked to career plateau can be solved by improving performance evaluation systems and providing better feedback. In this study role ambiguity was considered as the determinants of the managerial career plateauing.

2.7.5 Performance Evaluation

The performance evaluation system pursued by the organization can block employees' promotional opportunities and make them plateaued. Employees often believe that they have been in the same position due to the weaknesses of the performance evaluation system. "The relationship between career mobility and performance evaluation by the supervisor is not as clear cut as one would think" (Tremblay et al. 1993, p.417).The several studies have shown that workers who perform their jobs most effectively are not always the ones to get the promotions, and those who are promoted are not necessarily those with the best performance. There is little evidence that demonstrate the influence of performances on the career plateau. However, the performance evaluations study by Greenhaus, J. et al., (1990, p.79) concluded that performance had a direct but very weak effect on career plateau.

Greenhaus J. et al (2000, pp.221-222) explained different contributing factors that lead to employees become plateaued with their positions in the organizational career ladder. These factors are classified into three categories:

1. Organizational constraints
2. Management's Negative assessments of the individual
3. Internal reasons

Organizational Constraints

According to Greenhaus, J. et al., organizational constraints refers to the factors that are outside the employees' control. This category comprised with the variables: Pyramidal organizational structure, Organizational Business Strategy, Elimination of mandatory retirement, and Changes in technology.

Pyramidal Structure

Greenhaus, J. et al (2000, p.221) indicated that at the basic level, the pyramidal structure of most organizations provides fewer and fewer positions at higher levels of the hierarchy. Further, they explain that the higher a person rises in the organizational structure, the smaller the number of positions that are available for further advancement.

Organizational Business Strategy

Business strategies pursued by the organization also critically influence to increase the occurrence of the career plateauing among individuals. Greenhaus, J. et al., (2000, p.222) argue that the problem of career plateauing is aggravated in organizations that are growing slowly, not growing at all, or contracting their operations and work force. Further more, they indicated that a company's business strategy can affect the number and type of growth opportunities and, hence, the incidence of plateauing in certain career paths.

Elimination of Mandatory Retirement

"The virtual elimination of mandatory retirement can clog career paths and prevent younger employees from progressing in the hierarchy" (Greenhaus, J. et al., 2000, p.222).

Changes in Technology

Technology in nature is subjected to change and Greenhaus, J. et al., (2000, p.222) suggest that these changes in technology in the various industries may close certain career paths or open new paths for which employees are not prepared.

Negative Assessments of the Individual

In accordance with the Greenhaus, J. et al., (2000, p.222) classification of the reasons for career plateauing some employees may be plateaued with their job due to negative assessment made by the managers with respects to particular employees.

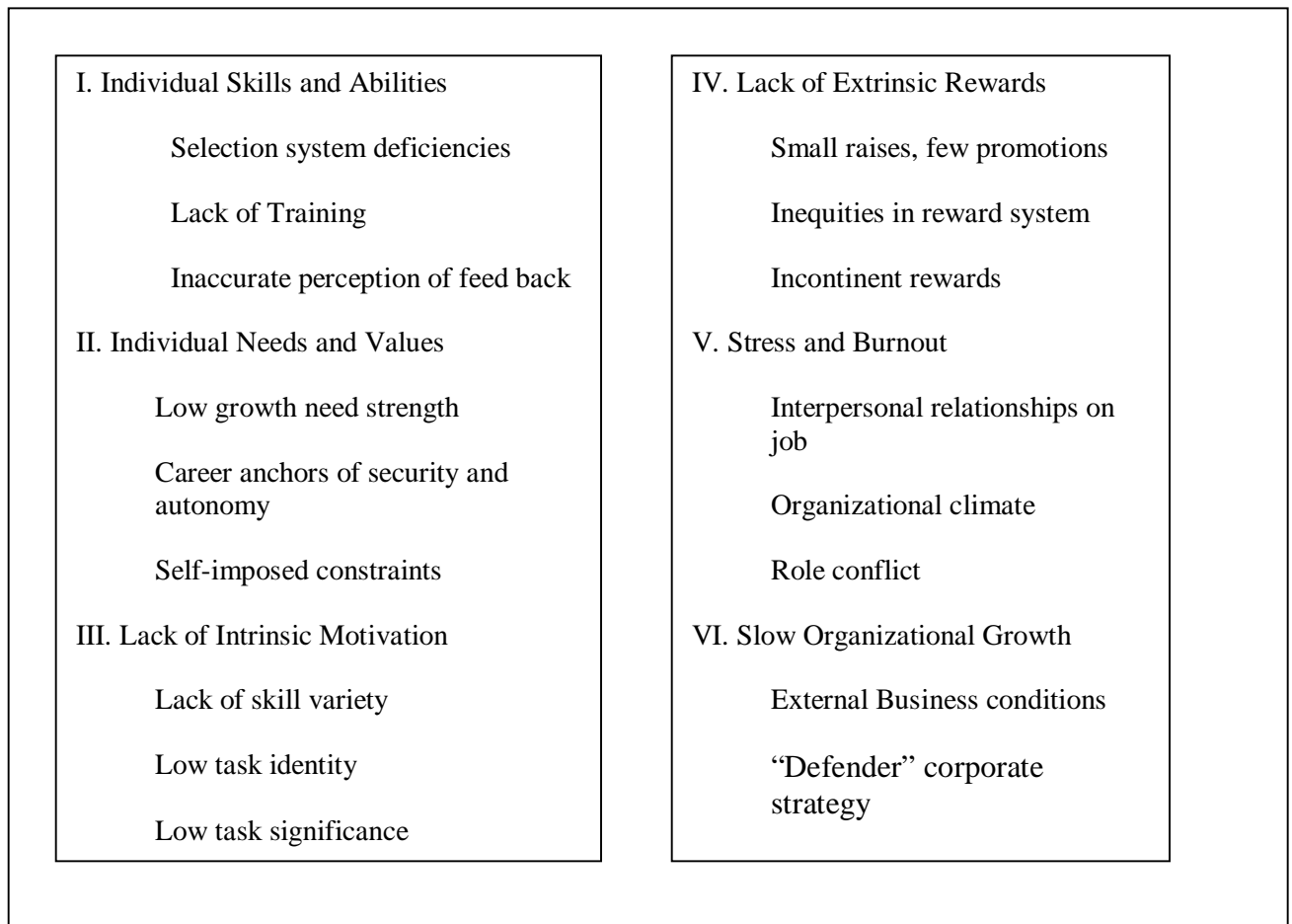
“Particular employees may be more likely to plateau because they are thought to be too valuable in their present position, lack technical or managerial skills to advance further, or lack career management skills required to develop a mobility oriented strategy” (Greenhaus, J. et al; 2000, p.222). Further, they indicate that some executives become plateaued due to problems with interpersonal relationships, a failure to meet business objectives, a failure to build and lead a team, and inability to change or adapt during a transition. As a result of these reasons management may feel that pushing forward such employees through promotion is not a successful decision, consequently those employees would become plateaued.

Internal Reasons

As most researchers identified, Greenhaus, J. et al., (2000, p.222) also found that feelings of the individual along with their personal values and beliefs could increase the likelihood of the plateauing. Specially, value for family obligation is paramount in this regard. “Reflecting the desire for more balanced life styles, an increasing number of employees make the organization aware that they do not wish to be considered for further advancement because of the potential conflicts with family or leisure commitments” (Greenhaus, J. et al ;2000, p.222).

Feldman D.C. and Weitz, B.A (1988, pp.69-80) identified different sources of managerial career plateauing as explained in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Sources of Career Plateauing



Source: Feldman, D. C. & Weitz, B. A. (1988), Career Plateaus, Reconsidered, *Journal of Management*, Volume 14, p.72.

2.8 Consequences of Career Plateauing

A number of studies have examined the consequences associated with career plateauing. This section explores the literature on both favorable and unfavorable consequences of the managerial career plateau. “Although not all studies have found negative outcomes associated with plateauing, there is considerable evidence indicating that plateauing is related to unfavorable job attitudes and behaviours” (Allen, T.D. et al., 1998, p.159). However there are few studies regarding consequences of career plateauing concluding that career plateauing creates favorable outcomes.

For an organization, the consequences of plateauing can represent difficult management challenges. As indicated in Greenhaus. J. et al,(2000, pp 222-223), Benson Rosen and Thomas Jerdee (1990) found five organizational consequences of plateauing, based on a study performed by means of questionnaire responses of 600 human resources managers. According to the survey results the five distinctive outcomes of career plateauing in order of prevalence are: clogged promotion channels, lower morale among co-workers and subordinates, lower overall productivity of the department or unit, hurt relationships with customers or clients, and increased absenteeism.

Further, as indicated in Greenhaus. J. et al., (2000, p.223), Chao, G.T. (1994), argue that the overall implication of being plateaued is that plateaued employees may become angry, frustrated, bored, stagnant, and less involved and motivated in their work. Further, they pointed out that ultimately, plateaued employees may exhibit deteriorated performance and cause a decline in the performance of their department and overall organization. Most of the studies on career plateauing concluded that individuals who perceived themselves as career plateaued exhibited lower levels of job satisfaction, company identification, and career planning activities compared with non-plateaued individuals.

2.9 Job Satisfaction

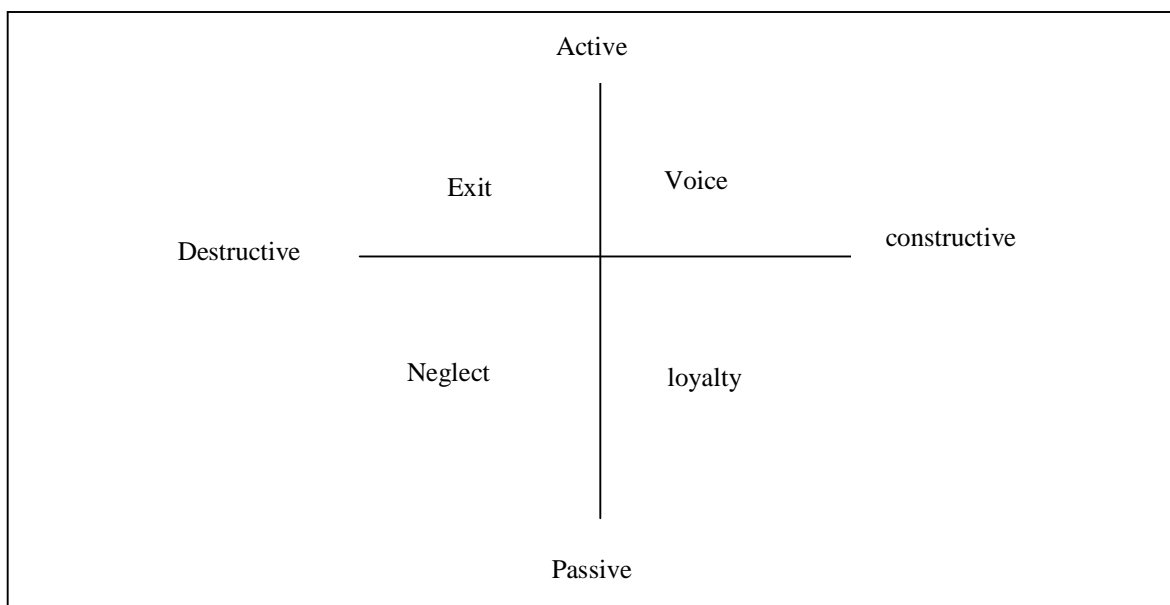
Job satisfaction is defined as “a collection of feelings that an individual holds toward his or her job” (Robins, S.P., 2005, p.29). Wood, et al., (1998, p.147) extend the definition as the degree to which an individuals feel positively or negatively about work. Robins S.P., (2005, p.29) argue that job satisfaction represents an attitude rather than a behaviour. Further, “Job satisfaction is likely to be higher for persons who perceive an inducement, contributions balance in their relationship with the employing organization” (Wood et al, 1998, p.147). More over Robins S.P. (2005, p.29) argue that satisfied employees are more productive than dissatisfied employees.

Employees’ assessment of how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with their job is a complex process since the person’s job is more than just one obvious activity. In the sense of that it would be a more complicated task to measure the job satisfaction of a certain employee. However, Robins S.P (2005, p.85) introduced two different approaches, “*single global rating*” and “*summation score*” in order to asses employees job satisfaction in a particular organization.

According to Robins explanation single global rating technique refers to asking individuals to respond to one questions such as “all things considered, how satisfied are you with your job” while the other approach tend to identify key elements in a job and ask for the employee’s feelings about each. Moreover, he argued, since job satisfaction is the concept which should be more broadly measured, the typical factors that should be included in the event of evaluating job satisfaction are nature of the work, supervision, present pay, promotional opportunities, and relations with core workers. As explained previously getting promotional opportunity with the career path is a vital element of measuring job satisfaction and the unavailability of the adequate promotions will causes to make employees plateaued and might in turn lead to job dissatisfaction. Many researches have concluded that there is a positive, strong relationship between career plateauing and job dissatisfaction.

Dissatisfied workers express their dissatisfaction in a number of ways. As in the explanation of Robins S.P (2005, p. 89) initial stage employees can complain, be insubordinate, steal organizational property, or shrink a part of their work responsibilities. Farrell, D. (1983) developed a model in order to illustrate the four responses of job dissatisfaction that differ from one another along two dimensions.

Figure 2.5: Responses to Job Dissatisfaction



Source: Robins, S.P. (2005), Organizational Behaviour, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, P.89

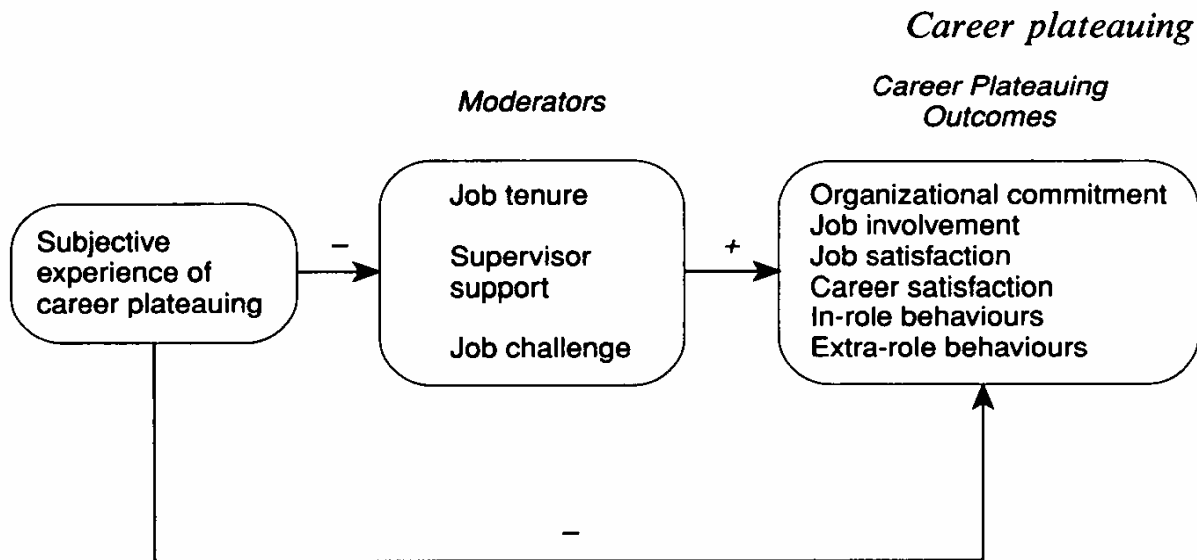
1. *Exit*: “Behaviour directed toward leaving the organization, including looking for a new position as well as resigning”.
2. *Voice*: “Actively and constructively attempting to improve conditions, including suggesting improvements, discussing problems with superiors, and some forms of union activity”.
3. *Loyalty*: “Passively but optimistically waiting for conditions to improve, including speaking up for the organization in the face of external criticism and trusting the organization and its management to “do the right thing”.
4. *Neglect*: “Passively allowing conditions to worsen, including chronic absenteeism or lateness, reduced effort, and increased error rate”. (Robins, S.P, 2005, p.89)

2.9.1 Career Plateauing and Job Satisfaction

Numerous studies have indicated that plateaued employees report lower level of satisfaction (Chao, 1990, P.191, Ettington, 1992). However, the findings of the research about career plateauing and job satisfaction are mixed. “While some researchers have reported significant differences between plateaued and non-plateaued managers in terms of job satisfaction and advancement satisfaction (Veiga, 1981, P.576), others have reported non-significant differences in terms of job satisfaction (Near, 1984, P.78; Slocum *et al.*, 1985, P.182) and satisfaction with need fulfillment”. Gerpott and Domsch (1987) reported that non-plateaued and professionals were more satisfied than their plateaued colleagues. Nicholson and West (1988) also reported that managers who felt they were 'stuck' in mobility terms were more careers dissatisfied.

Chay, Y.w et al (1995, p.67) examined the relation between subjective career plateauing and various plateauing outcome as shown in Figure 2.6, and they revealed that there is a negative relationship between career plateauing and job satisfaction.

Figure 2.6: Link between subjective Career plateauing and outcome variables



Source: Chay, Y.w et al., (1995), Career Plateauing: Reactions and Moderators among Managerial and Professional Employees, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 6:1, p.67

A study of faculty in schools of education, conducted by Patterson, et al., found that the individual's perception of having career mobility (i.e., not being plateaued) correlated positively with an overall sense of productivity and career satisfaction. Further, they emphasize that “Full or tenured professors (regardless of rank), who were more likely than their younger counterparts to see their careers as being plateaued, did not associate career plateauing with a diminished sense of productivity or satisfaction with career accomplishments. Continued productivity and work satisfaction appeared to be within the reach of plateaued as well as nonplateaued (career mobile) individuals”(Patterson, Sutton, and Schuttenberg, 1987).

Cited from Near, J.P. (1985, P.178), Grusky (1966) found that job satisfaction is significantly lower among less mobile (plareaued) managers. That is more the plateaued with the current position less the job satisfaction and vice versa. Evans M.G. and Gilbert, E (1984, p.100) argued that plateaued managers are likely to be frustrated in their current organizational roles with a

consequent reduction in motivation and performances. Further, managers are likely to receive fewer organizational rewards than their colleagues.

As indicated in Near, J.P. (1985, p.178) plateaued managers in general, may differ from nonplateaued managers in terms of job performance, job motivation, and effects on nonwork. Further, she argued that plateaued managers show less job satisfaction due to fewer intrinsic rewards, lack of autonomy, variety, opportunity to make decisions, within the same position.

The idea that plateaued employees have lower motivation and satisfaction was not supported by the findings of some of the studies. For instance the study conducted by Near J (1985, p.88) contended that plateaued employees were neither less motivated no less satisfied than their non plateaued peers. More over the same study revealed that plateaued persons have poorer attitudes and work behaviors than non plateaued colleagues.

Confirming the Near J.P notion Slocum, J.W.; Cron, W.L; Yowa, L.C, (1987, p.36) also found that plateaued employees in either firm showed higher satisfaction with immediate supervisors and the work itself than did non plateaued employees. This study expects that there is a negative relationship between career plateauing and job satisfaction.

2.10 Organizational Commitment

Robins, S.P., (2005, p.79) defined organizational commitment as “a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organization”. Further, he compares and contrasts job involvement and organizational commitment. High job involvement refers to identifying with one’s specific job, while high organizational commitment means identifying with one’s employing organization.

2.10.1 Career Plateauing and Organizational Commitment

A number of studies have indicated that hierarchically plateaued employees report lower level of organizational commitment (Chao, 1990, p.187, Tremblay et al., 1995). As for the same Davevport and Russel, (1994) found that job content plateauing is related to lower levels of organizational commitment.

There is research evidence that individuals who have experienced mobility tend to be more organizationally committed than those who have not (Chao, 1990, p.188, Grusky, 1966, p.494).

Gerpott and Domsch, (1987) contended based on their studies, the job involvement which is much more related to the organizational commitment and often measured in terms of number of hours worked per week report adverse relationship with career plateauing. Alen T.D et al (1998, P. 167) in their study found that double plateaued (both hierarchically and job content) managers were significantly less involved in their jobs than were hierarchically plateaued and non plateaued managers. In this study hypothesize career plateauing is negatively related to organizational commitment.

2.11 Intention to Quit

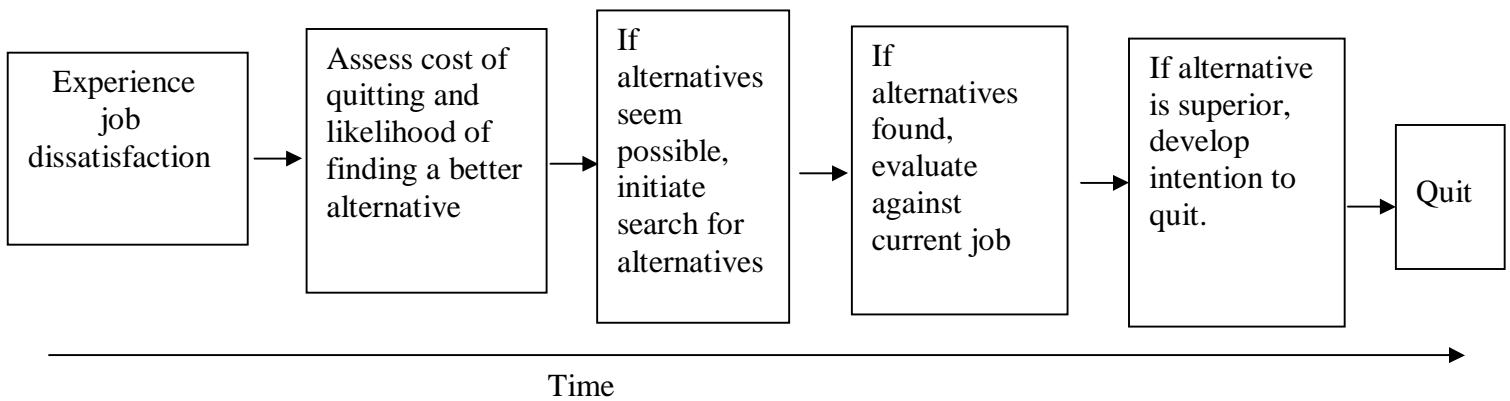
Robins, S.P. (2005, p.28) define turnover as “the voluntary and involuntary permanent withdrawal from an organization”.

2.11.1 Reasons for Quitting

Intention to quit has been intensively studied for decades, and there are literally hundreds of studies of variables that help predict quitting. Fisher, and et al., (2003, p.755) classified causes to quit in to two layers: External and Internal factors. Further, they describe that *external factors* include the unemployment rate and employees’ perceptions of the external job opportunities available to them. Based on that, they concluded that the intention to quit is higher when unemployment in the labour market is low, due to the fact that alternative employment opportunities are readily available to job leavers. “*Internal factors* are usually based on the employees’ attitudes or perceptions with respect to the current job. The each of job satisfaction and organizational commitment are usually significant predictors of a decision to quit, with leavers being less satisfied and less committed than slayers” (Fisher, et al., 2003, p.755).

As indicated in Fisher, et al., (2003, p.755), Griffith, Hom, and Gaertner (2000) argue that employees are more likely to leave, if they believe that the organization treats them unfairly; if they have a poor relationship with their manager; if job requirements are conflicting, unclear, or stressful; or if opportunities for growth, skill development, and promotion are lacking. This proved that lacking promotional opportunities inside the organization could lead to employees becoming plateaued and ultimately intend to quit from the undesirable organizational context.

Figure 2.7: Traditional Model of Deciding to Quit



Source: Fisher, et al., (2003), Human Resource Management, Houghton Mifflin, USA, p.755

2.11.2 Decision Process of Quitting

The decision to quit can be made generally in different ways and in response to different stimulus. The traditional model of turnover (Figure 2.7) suggest that the decision to quit is made in a logical and step by step fashion, largely in response to dissatisfaction with the present job.

2.11.3 Career Plateauing and Intention to Quit

Weiner, et al., (1992, p.42) revealed through their study, plateaued managers were more willing to leave the organization for another job than were their non-plateaued peers. Slocum, J.W., Cron, W.L., Yowa, L.C, (1987, p.36) indicate that non-plateaued employees are more likely than plateaued employees to be willing to leave the company or take a geographic transfer if such a move involved promotion. Further, Slocum, J.W., Cron, W.L; Yowa, L.C, (1987, p.36) suggest that plateaued employees have higher absenteeism than non plateaued employees. In the light of this literature, this study formulate hypothesis that career plateauing is positively related to the employees' intention to quit.

2.12 Job Induced Stress

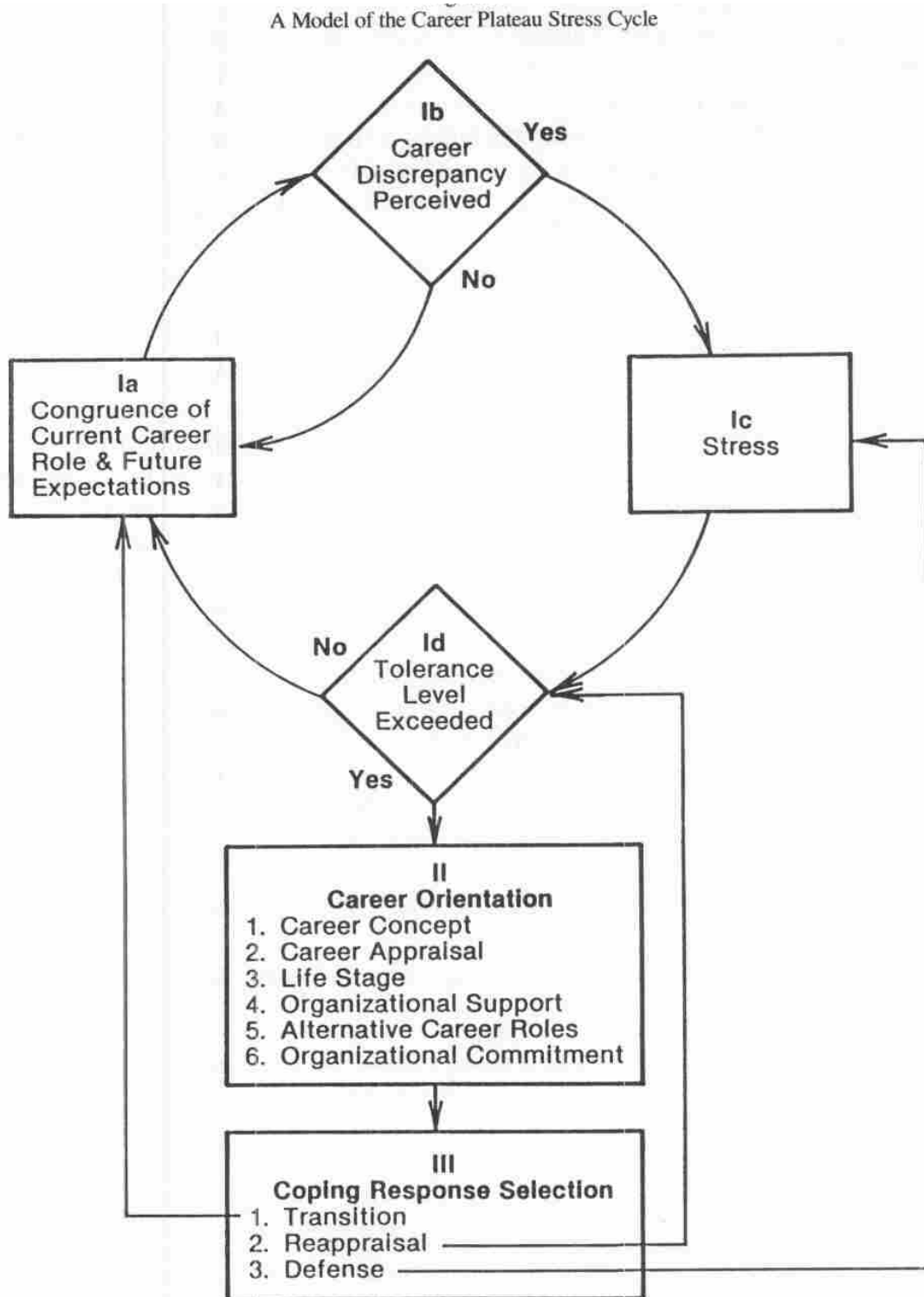
“A review of stress literature indicates that stress has been defined in many different ways, from a perceived stimulus to a response to a stimulus. Parker and Cotiis, D.E. (1983, p.161) defined stress is an awareness of personal dysfunction , leading to an uncomfortable short-term

psychological state such as anxiety, tension or depression caused by opportunities, constraints, or demands relating to potentially important work related outcomes”.

Priscilla, M. et al., (1989, p. 38) examined how the career plateauing situation leads to job stress and developed the model shown in Figure 2.8 based on there distinctive premises.

1. “The recognition of a career plateau is a sources of stress to many individuals”(Priscilla M. et al, 1989, p. 38)
2. “Coping responses are developed by individuals as a result of the career plateauing stress. These responses can be behavioural responses. These responses can be behavioural responses (changing jobs, learning new skills, increasing absenteeism) or cognitive response, (rationalization, withdrawal or denial of the plateau)” (Priscilla M. et al, 1989, p. 38)
3. “The personal and organizational variables unique to each individual will moderate the selection of specific coping responses to the plateau” (Priscilla M. et al, 1989, p. 38)

Figure 2.8: Model of the Career Plateau Stress Cycle



Source: Priscilla M. et al., (1989), Individual Response to Stress of Career Plateauing, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 15, p. 39

Priscilla M. et al, (1989, p. 40) further examined the coping responses to stress associated with career plateau from the perspective of the organization in terms of transition, reappraisal and defense and came up with the distinctive results as illustrated in the Figure 2.9.

Figure 2.9: Positive and Negative Coping Responses to career Plateau Stress

| | Transition | Reappraisal | Defence |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|
| Positive Responses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning new job skills - Lateral transfer - Participation in task force | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acting as mentor to younger employees - Find reward in task success rather than personal advancement | |
| Negative Responses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leave the organization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blame the plateau on the organization; feelings of alienation, or powerlessness or hostility - Psychological withdrawal from the job | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absenteeism - Alcohol, drugs - Poor work performance |

Source: Priscilla M. et al., (1989), Individual Response to Stress of Career Plateauing, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 15, p. 40

2.12.1 Career Plateauing and Stress

Few studies were found in the field of career plateauing and stress. Near, J (1985, p.187) found plateaued employees report slightly poorer health than non-plateaued employees. Allen, T.D. et al., (1998, p.167) conclude that in their study, non plateaued managers demonstrate lower level job stress than plateaued managers. Therefore, this study expect positive relationship between career plateauing and job induced stress.

Figure 2.10: Career Plateauing Implications

| Source of Career Plateaus | Impact on Performance and Attitudes |
|---|---|
| I Individual skills and Abilities Selection system deficiencies Lack of training Inaccurate perceptions of feed-back | Poor performance Poor job attitudes |
| II Individual Needs and Values Low growth need strength Career anchors of security and autonomy Self-imposed constraints | Solid performance Good job attitudes |
| III Lack of Intrinsic Motivation Lack of skill variety Low task identity Low task significance | Minimally acceptable job performance Declining job attitudes |
| IV Lack of Extrinsic Rewards Small raises, few promotions Inequities in reward systems Incontinent rewards | Poor performance Poor job attitudes |
| V Stress and Burnout Interpersonal relationships on job Organizational Climate Role Conflict | Poor performance Poor job attitudes |

Source: Feldman, D. C. & Weitz, B. A. (1988), Career Plateaus, Reconsidered, *Journal of Management*, Volume 14, p.72.

2.13 Other Consequences

Instead of job satisfaction, organization commitment, intentions to quit and stress that are taken into consideration in this study, some researchers attempted to find the other consequences with respect to career plateauing. More often many researchers have examined the link between career plateauing and employee productivity and job performances. Camazza, et al., (1981) noted that, while there are many possible behavioural implications of having reached a career plateau, the organization's main concern is the person's level of performance. Feldman D.C. and Weitz, B.A (1988, p.72) found several outcome concerning with managerial career plateauing and those consequences are illustrated in Figure 2.10

2.14 Favorable Consequences of Career Plateauing

Most of the studies' findings have concluded that career plateauing often create the unfavorable outcomes both from the employees and employer perspectives. However, there are some career management literatures that speak of favorable consequences of career plateauing scenarios.

As indicated in Greenhaus, J. et al., (2000, p.223), Howard, A. and Bray, D.W (1988) conducted an extensive study of managers, and concluded that the absence of further promotional opportunities is not necessarily seen as a personal tragedy. "It was observed that many managers might not strongly desire further advancement because of possible geographic relocation and potential pressure and politics. This confirms that plateauing is not a negative aspect for all employees.

Further, researches have also concluded that the career plateau can be functional for individuals, both in a professional and a personal sense (Feldman, D.C. and Weits, B.A. (1998, p. 72). Further, Stout, S.K. and Slocum, J.W. and Cron, W.L. (1988, p.86) argue that a leveling off period (as represented by a career plateau) can have a positive influence on individual development and personal growth. Because a career plateau can master new skills, pursue a more predictable family/personal life, and can replenish psychic energy. Confirming the positive outcome of career plateauing, Near, J.P (1984, p. 77) also have observed that most managers adapt to their career plateau without too much trouble.

2.15 Coping Strategies

Dealing with career plateauing has now become a severe issue for both plateaued employees and human resources practitioners. There are some alternative solutions that can be pursued in order to minimize the unfavourable consequences of plateauing. In this section I explore the literature on how to deal with career plateauing considering both from individual and organizational perspectives.

2.15.1 Organizational Interventions

Near, (1985); Slocum et al, (1985) recognize *education* is probably the most beneficial option an organization can make to educate employees regarding the prevalence and career implications of career plateauing. Further Near (1984, p.78) argues that in doing so, the problem becomes demystified because, clearly, an informed worker is one of the best protections against unproductive plateauing.

“Concurrently, the adoption of a new attitude of education and open communication with employees regarding their status and future career potential would send a message of confidence and empowerment to the work force” (Slocum, et al., 1985).Tan, Carol S., Salomone, and Paul R., (1994) pointed out that open communications with employees should include information and assistance regarding second-career development and midlife career change. Further, “such openness between organizational leaders and employees could also offset potential feelings of disloyalty toward the organization resulting from the necessity to make preparations for another career”. (Tan, Carol S., Salomone, and Paul R., 1994)

Educating employees about plateauing is only a first step in dealing with career plateauing. Organizations should focus more on additional alternative strategies that could lead to effectively address the issue of managerial career plateauing. Tan, et al., (1994) argue that organizational leaders need to be aware of the ineffectiveness of the current, singular emphasis on upward mobility given its decreasing applicability to the great majority of workers. In this sense they suggest that providing *different types of rewards and recognition* for exceptional employee performance will be most successful.

In addition to the above mentioned organizationally sponsored coping strategies, Tan,et al., (1994) in their study suggest that following distinctive interventions.

- Job redesign
- Job enrichment programs
- Work projects
- Lateral transfers
- Mutual job switches (temporary or permanent)
- Paid sabbaticals

Second-Career Expectations

Tan, et. al., (1994) explain that prior anticipation of a second career requires planning for and developing skills that are needed for success in the new career as well as psychological preparation for the transition period. More over, they describe such an expectation may induce the current work organization to provide training or continuing educational opportunities to overcome being plateaued in the current position in organization.

“Some organization may offer an early retirement plan for reducing the negative repercussions of the career plateauing. There may also be an incentive to make *early retirement or supported resignation packages* available to plateaued individuals” (Tan,et al., 1994).

Encouraging Further Education

Currently, some organizations provide continuing education, although it is usually in career-related areas only. Connor and Fielden (1973) suggested that “it is actually less expensive for the organization to subsidize educational options related to launching a second career than to continue underwriting the salary of large numbers of deadwood employees. Although continuing education offers no guarantee of avoiding plateauing, it may help to delay it.

2.15.2 Individual Level Coping Interventions

Karp (1989) investigated the different reactions/responses of the plateaued employees and categorized them into four levels.

1. *The immune*: “Employees who do not want or need promotion, and values the work in and of itself”.

2. *The adapters*: “Employees who accept the reality of their situation and look to the system, including their immediate supervisor, for help and support in modifying their expectations and de-emphasizing promotion as an index of value”.
3. *The deniers*: “Employees who reject the reality of being plateaued in order to disprove the lurking truth, they redouble their efforts, work longer hours, but essentially are no more productive than before”.
4. *The internalizers*: “Employees who view the problem as a personal deficiency, which in turn tends to lower their self-esteem and ultimately diminishes productivity” (Karp, H.B.1989, pp35-40.).

Career Goal Reassessment

“As with other career counseling populations, counselors need to help plateaued clients to reexamine their earlier career choices (including the congruence of those choices with their value systems) and to make career plans that incorporate a range of options and alternatives” (Tan,et al.,1994). Knowledge of the early signs of plateauing can alert both workers and counselors to the need for preventive activities (i.e., upgrading skills and diversifying interests) and for imaginative and daring long-term career planning.

Refocused Learning Goals

Counselors can assist plateaued employees to adopt and to internalize alternative forms of reward and recognition. “This may be particularly important when counseling employees with very strong motivations for upward mobility who, when career plateaued, may experience diminished workplace involvement and personal investment in the organization” (Mael, 1991).

As indicated Tan et al, Bardwick (1986) suggested “a shift in the employee's motivation for learning from the recognition one gains from others, to learning for oneself as a way of perpetuating challenge and satisfaction in the current organization”. Thus, a plateaued worker may accept a role as a mentor in order to enrich job satisfaction and work diversity and, unexpectedly, to discover or to develop a talent for teaching, which, in turn, may lead to other career options.

Loss and Transition

“Counseling interventions should include the opportunity to deal with (a) loss of one's idealized career and personal goals, (b) anger concerning real or perceived negative circumstances or supervisory experiences, and (c) apprehension about the likelihood of future opportunities”.(Tan, et al.,1994).

Weiner A, et al, (1992, P. 45) emphasized the some proactive and reactive strategies as shown in Figure 2.11 to effectively deal with managerial career plateauing.

Figure 2.11: Proactive and Reactive Strategies for Career Plateauing

| | <i>Proactive</i> | <i>Reactive</i> |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Organizational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redesign the organization - Change organizational climate through education - Change personnel policies - Plan for career and retirement - Develop job loading and cross training strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop special projects, events - Offer awards, dinners - Present courses, seminars workshops (to include exercise/recreation program) - Provide discharge/outplacement services - Develop recognition programs |
| <i>Managerial</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observe and assess employee attitudes/opinions - Develop honest and equitable performance appraisal recognition and feedback - Present positive models of plateaued employee - Manage by walking around | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide counselling for the plateaued employee - Refer to Employee Assistance Programs |

Source: Weiner, A., Remer, R., & Remer, P. (1992), “Career Plateauing: Implications for Career Development Specialists”, *Journal of Career Development*, Vol. 19, No.1, pp.37-48

Feldman D.C. and Weitz, B.A (1988, p.71) developed some alternative coping strategies to deal with career plateauing and summary of suggestion depicted in Figure 2.12.

Figure 2.12: Coping strategies of Career Plateauing

| Source of Career Plateaus | Impact on Performance and Attitudes | Managerial Interventions |
|--|--|---|
| I Individual Skills and Abilities Selection system deficiencies Lack of training Inaccurate perceptions of feedback | Poor performance Poor job attitudes | Redesign of selection system Improved training Improved performance appraisal and feedback systems |
| II Individual Needs and Values Low growth need strength Career anchors of security and autonomy Self-imposed constraints | Solid performance Good job attitudes | Continue to reward, contingent c no downturn in performance Career information systems |
| III. Lack of Intrinsic Motivation Lack of skill variety Low task identity Low task significance | Minimally acceptable job performance Declining job attitudes | Combining tasks Forming natural work units Establishing client relationships Vertical loading Opening feedback channels |
| IV. Lack of Extrinsic Rewards Small raises, few promotions Inequities in reward systems Uncontingent rewards | Poor performance Poor job attitudes | Redesign of compensation system Redesign of promotion policies Encourage highly dissatisfied to leave |
| V Stress and Burnout Interpersonal relationships on job Organizational climate Role conflict | Poor performance Poor job attitudes | Job rotation Preventive stress management Sabbaticals, off-site training |
| VI. Slow Organizational Growth External business conditions "Defender" corporate strategy Inaccurate personnel forecasts | Continued good performance in short-run Declining job attitudes | Provide "stars" with increased resources Provide poorer performers with incentives to leave or retire |

Source: Feldman, D. C. & Weitz, B. A. (1988), Career Plateaus, Reconsidered, *Journal of Management*, Volume 14, p.72.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the methodology of the study comprising the design of the study, the sample selection, the methods and procedures that were used for primary and secondary data collection, and also a description of the way in which data were analysed. The methodology used to gather data is described in the beginning of the chapter. Then, it continues with a discussion of the key components in the research design: research approaches, contact methods, sample plan, contact medium and data analysis.

3.1 Methodology

This study used the combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The qualitative research was primarily used to gain an initial understanding of attitudes, and behaviour of the managers about the career plateau. Quantitative research method was used for the purpose of understanding the relationship between contributing factors of the managerial career plateau (independent variables) and plateauing outcomes: Job satisfaction, Organizational commitment, Intention to quit, and job induced stress (dependant variables). This chapter presents research method for this study highlighting the following key elements.

- Definition of research objectives and problems
- Research approaches
 - § Pilot Study
 - § Survey
- Contact methods
- Sample plan
- Contact medium
- Data analysis

3.2 Research Approaches

In the beginning an extensive review of articles selected by authors in the field of career plateau, was conducted by exploring the published research articles, books and web sites. Further, central bank report of Sri Lanka was used to gather data related to employment statistics in Sri Lanka. Online search of secondary data is facilitated by search engines like Google and Yahoo.

Basically, the purpose of collecting secondary data was to formulate the research question and develop research objectives. Reading relevant literature is helped to build the conceptual framework which is graphically illustrated in Figure 1.1., for the entire research study. As such, primary data sources play a significant role here to answer the research question more specifically to Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study was heavily depending upon the primary data. Initially, survey method is used to collect data from the managers related to relevant concepts in the framework (Figure 1.1). In addition the interview method was used to gather data from the selected managers.

3.2.1 Pilot Study

After performing literature review and formulating research objectives a pilot study was carried out to assess the practicability of the study. The interviewing method was used to conduct the pilot study. Using personal network of the author, twelve managers were selected from the southern province of Sri Lanka, comprising, Matara, Galle and Hamabanttota districts. Managers from different industries such as: Banking, Insurance, Agriculture, Manufacturing and Education, were selected to perform the pilot study.

A Semi structured interview was conducted to gather exploratory data related to the attitudes, reaction and intended measures for the managerial career plateauing. This usually began as an un-structured style of interview, which later turns to semi structured through focusing on specific issues. The interviews were conducted among twelve managers at the offices of the respective managers and interviews lasted half an hour. During the interview, the interviewer written down information and if needed, the managers were contacted via telephone for further information. With the help of information received from the pilot study, the final survey questionnaire was designed.

3.2.2 The Survey

A structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from the sample of 195 managers. The variables presented in the conceptual framework in Figure 1.1 were tested using a structured questionnaire by means of self administered sample of 195 managers in the significant industries of Sri Lanka: Agriculture, Banking and insurance, Textiles, Tourism, Education and

Transportation. The sample selected from population was directly surveyed in order to get maximum information in which researcher is going to focus in the questionnaire. Twelve managers of the sample were interviewed directly by author and the rest of the sample was surveyed, via E-mailing, direct contact and posting letter with stamped envelope.

3.3 Contact Methods

For the purpose of the survey, a structured questionnaire was used for managers in the sample. Questionnaire used for the survey comprised both open-ended and closed questions, and it covered the variables explained in the conceptual framework in Figure 1.1. A five point rating scale (Likert scale) was used to obtain overall ratings. Open ended questions were used to avoid leading the responses, and to allow for a wide variety of feedback.

In addition to the questionnaire, an interview check list was used to conduct the interview with the selected 12 managers. In this process open ended questions were asked from the interviewer.

3.4 Sample Plan

Convenient sampling method was used to select the sample from the population. The sample of 200 managers was selected covering different industries: Agriculture, Banking, Insurance, Textiles, Hotel and Tourism, Education, Food Processing, Health and Care, Engineering and Transportation. Following criteria were taken in to account when selecting managers.

- Remaining in the same position for more than three years
- Over and above twenty five years of age
- Subordinate per manager is more than five

The managers for the survey and interview were selected using the personal network in Sri Lanka. In the survey, 195 managers were contacted in February- March 2008, and the questionnaires were delivered using E-mail (n = 63), post (n = 94), and direct contact (n = 31). After accounting for refusals, and badly filled out questionnaire and a working sample of 160 (82% response rate) were produced. The workable sample of managers consists of different industries: Agriculture (n = 13), Banking (n =23) , Insurance (n =16), Textiles (n =19), Hotel and Tourism(n = 16), Education (n= 20) , Food Processing (14) , Health and Care (12),

Engineering(n = 16) and Transportation (n = 11).The sample (surveyed and interviewed) comprises managers who belong to the age category of over twenty five. This was due to the fact that most managers who are practising in Sri Lankan organizations are over age of twenty five.

3.5 Measuring Instruments

The study was based on the responses to a questionnaire that aim to identify the factors that might lead to career plateauing and its implications. Variables of the study were measured using different valid and reliable scales. The survey questionnaire is found in appendix I.

3.5.1 Career Plateau

Objective Career Plateau

The number of years in the current position was used to measure the objective plateauing. Based on the literature, initially, the managers who have been in the same position more than five years (OP-5) were treated as objectively plateaued and rest of them considered as non-plateaued. After feeding data in to SPSS programme, simple t- test was performed to verify whether the five years or six years (OP-6) explain the objective plateau more precisely. The results found that stagnate in same position more than six years is more precisely explain objective plateau than five years.

Subjective Career Plateau

Subjective plateau was measured with items based on five-point Likert scales (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). Respondents’ answers to initial four questions were assessed for determining the possibility for subjectively plateauing. The results of the factor analysis revealed only three items were accurately measured the concept. The questions asked to measure subjective plateauing consist “I believe that I have been in the same level for much too long, “I believe that I am not getting ahead in the organization”, and” I believe that my promotion opportunities have been limited in my organization”.

3.5.2 Demographic Variables

Respondents were supposed to answer demographic questions regarding their age, gender, marital status, and educational level. Age was obtained through a scale encompassing five categories, starting from under 25 to over 54 years. Educational level of the respondents were

collected through six groups, ranging from primary level = 1 to professional level = 6. In order to measure marital status two categories were used. Married = 1 and Single = 2. (See appendix I)

3.5.3 Organizational Variables

Lack of Promotional Opportunities

Lack of promotional opportunities was measured by five point Likert scale items varying from strongly agree to strongly disagree. “There is not enough promotional opportunities in my organization”, “Current organizational structure in my organization block my promotions”, were the examples for the items used in the study. Cronbach’s Alpha measurement was used to test the internal consistency reliability of the concept. The internal consistency reliability estimate for this scale was 0.65.

Organizational Business Strategy

Business strategy was measured by five point Likert scale items and the items used in the questionnaire include, “Top management often formulates business strategy after some problem occurred”, “Organizational strategy focuses on growth rather than survival in the industry”, “My organization tries to differentiate from others through the employee of the company”

3.5.4 Job Related Variables

Role Ambiguity

In order to measure the role ambiguity, three items were used from the instruments developed by Rizzo et al. (1970). Based on the results of the validity test all three items retained for further analysis (e.g. “I feel certain about how much authority I have at work”, “I know what my responsibilities are at work”, “Clear, planned goals and objectives exist for my job”). The alpha reliability for this scale in the present study is 0.743.

Supervisory and Peer Support

A 5 item scale was used to measure supervisory and peer support. Response options ranged from (1) “strongly disagree” to (5) “strongly agree”. Sample items include “My supervisor informs me about different career opportunities in the organization”, “I have a close relationship with other

employees of this company”. The internal consistency reliability estimate for this scale was 0.738.

Intrinsic Reward

Intrinsic reward was measured by five point Lickert scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (5) “strongly agree”. Sample of items include “My job requires creativity”, “My job helps me to develop special abilities”. The alpha reliability for this measure in the present study is 0.726.

Compensation System

Compensation system was measured with two items scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (5) “strongly agree”. A varimax rotated factor analysis was performed to confirm the validity of scale. The items used in the study consist “I do not want to take promotion due to no significant difference in salary level”, “I do not want to be promoted because my effort in the new job will not be compensated by higher wage”. The cronbach`s alpha of the scale is 0.924.

Training Opportunities

Existence of less training opportunities was measured by 5 point scale with four items. Factor analysis performed to confirm the validity of the items and only two items retained for further investigation. (e.g. “There is not enough training opportunities for me inside the organization”, “I am not interested in taking outside training because the training cost”). The alpha reliability for this measure in the present study is 0.582.

3.5.5 Psychological Variables

Motivation to Learn

Motivation to learn was assessed with three items modified from scales used in past research (Baldwin and Karl, 1987). The scale was ranged from “strongly agree (5)” to “strongly disagree (1)”. (e.g., “I often expect additional responsibilities in my job”, “I value my leisure higher than promotions”). The internal consistency reliability estimate for the present scale is 0.601.

3.5.6 Consequences of Career Plateauing

Four consequences resulting from career plateauing were used in this study. The measuring instruments for job satisfaction, Organizational commitment, Intention to quit and Job induced stress described by following section.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment was measured by five point scale varying from strongly agree to strongly disagree consisting three Lickert scale items, adapted from Mowday, et al, (1979) Organizational Commitment Scale. Sample of items were, “I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful”, “I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization”. Cronbach`s alpha for the scale is 0.524.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured by 6-item scale adopted from Tremblay et al (1995). Response options ranged from (1) “Strongly Disagree” to (5) “strongly agree”. Only five items were identified with strong factor loading values by the factor analysis. A sample items are “I am satisfied with salary level”, “I am satisfied with supervisory support”. The internal consistency reliability estimate for the present scale is 0.681

Intention to Quit

Intention to quit from the organization was measured by a 5-point scale varying from ‘Strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. In this respect four items used, (e.g.: “I am ready to change companies to get better opportunities for promotion”, “I am searching for outside job opportunities”, and “I have already applied for outside jobs”). Cronbach`s alpha of scale is 0.799.

Job Induced Stress

5 items scale adapted from House and Rizzo (1972) was used to measure the job induced stress. Responses were on a 5-point scale that ranged from (1) “strongly disagree” to (5) “strongly

Agree”. Factor analysis outcome came up with only three items encompassing strong factor loading over 0.5. Sample items include “I work under great deal of tension”, “I have felt nervous as a result of my job”. The internal consistency reliability estimate for the present scale is 0.797.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data collected by means of the survey and interviews was first, coded and then feed into the SPSS analytical programme.

ANOVA was used to analyse the factors for any significant differences between the means of objective and subjective career plateauing with respect to the respondents’ demographics, such as age, gender, marital status and educational level.

Factor analysis was preformed to asses the validity of the items, which used to measure the determinants of the career plateauing and its consequences. Further, Cronbach’s Alpha measurement was used to test the reliability of the concepts which were focused in this study.

In order to determine the relationship between contributing factors of the career plateauing and subjective plateauing, a Multiple Regression Analysis was performed. Based on the sign and magnitude of the beta coefficient, the direction of the relationship and its impact for subjective plateauing was determined.

The relationship between objective career plateauing and its various contributing factors was estimated by means of Logit Regression Analysis. The beta coefficient and Exponentiated Beta coefficient were used to find out the direction and implication of the relationship.

In order to find the most critical factors which may contribute to two types of career plateauing, in this study different significance level was used. Initially two hypothesis are formulated in the study regarding contributing variables for career plateauing, null hypothesis (i.e. contributing factors has no effect for the career plateauing), and alternative hypothesis (i.e. there is an effect to career plateauing). By chance the rejection may be wrong with a very small probability. The significance level tell about the degree of certainty by which researcher can reject the null hypothesis that is no effect toward career plateauing. Thus, this study uses 10 percent, 5 percent and 1 percent significance level throughout the analysis of the relationships.

In order to identify the relationship between career plateauing (Independent Variable) and its consequences: Job satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Intention to Quit and Job Induced Stress (Dependant Variables), a Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients and partial correlation coefficients were calculated. In the event of identifying the most strong correlation between career plateauing and its consequences, this study uses 10 percent, 5 percent and 1 percent significance level throughout the analysis of the relationships.

The analyses of the open ended questions were based on the grouping of similar responses from the questions and the categorizing of various descriptions provided by the respondents. These questions were used to identify what actions managers suggest to minimize unfavourable outcome of the career plateauing. Listing out and prioritizing was performed to recognize the most prominent strategic solutions to minimize career plateauing.

CHAPTER 4: VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY TEST

4.1 Validity Test

In social sciences, researchers are never completely certain that they are measuring the variable for which they designed their measurement procedure. According to Hair and et al., (2006), validity is concerned with how well the concept is defined by the measure, whereas reliability relates to the consistency of the measure. A factor analysis technique was used, in this study, to measure the validity of the items of the key concepts. Factor analysis is a multivariate statistical technique that can summarize the information from large number of variables into a much smaller number of factors (Hair, et, al, 2003, p.358). The purpose of factor analysis is to summarize the information contained in a large number of aspects of factors (Zikmund 2003). Further, by identifying the latent relationships and combining variables into a few factors, a factor analysis simplifies the understanding of the data. Factor loadings by various items are displayed based on cutoff loading score which is 0.5 (absolute value). If factor loadings are greater than 0.5, they are displayed in component matrix and, if the score is less than 0.5, they are not displayed.

Through the literature review, key variables were identified that influence the managerial career plateau, mainly organizational, job related, psychological and demographic characteristics. Sub variables identified under the main four variables are illustrated in Table 4.1. Factor analysis was performed to measure the validity of the variables to list out the more vital questions.

Table 4.1: Determinants of Career Plateau

| Demographic Variables | Organizational Factors | Job Related Factors | Psychological Factors |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Age | Pyramidal organizational structure | Role Ambiguity | Motivation to Learn |
| Gender | Business Strategy | Supervisory and Peer Support | Value for family obligation or leisure |
| Marital Status | | Intrinsic Reward | Career Exploration and Planning |
| Education Level | | Compensation System | |
| | | Training Opportunities | |

After feeding the data, collected from 172 respondents, the factor analysis was performed for the three main contributing factors (i.e. Organizational, Job related and psychological factors) separately to identify which items (questions) were more closely related with each of the contributing factors. The SPSS package was used to carry out the factor analysis.

4.1.1 Factor Analysis for Organizational Factors

Seven items (questions) were used to measure the Pyramidal Organizational Structure and Business Strategy. Before implementing the factor analysis using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed in terms of Kaiser Meyer Oklin Value (KMO) and Barlett’s Test of Sphercity. The correlation Matrix shows the existence of many coefficients of 0.3 and above. Further, KMO value for each variable exceeds the 0.6 which is recommended. For the organizational Factors KMO value was 0.631.

Results of the factor analysis using PCA revealed the presence of two components contributing to organizational factors. This selection was carried out based on the Kaiser’s criterion which means the selection of components with an eigenvalue above 1. Two components were identified eigenvalue exceeding 1, explaining 35.5 percent and 20.2 percent variance, respectively. After extracting the components, these two components were rotated using the varimax method and the rotated component results are illustrated in Table 4.2. As in the Table 4.2, both components

show the factor loadings above 0.5. Organizational factors explained a total of 55.7 percent of the variance, with component 1 contributing 29.3 percent and components 2 contributing 26.4 percent. Results of the factor analysis categorized these attributes in to two components:

(1) Pyramidal organizational structure (PS) and (2) .Business Strategies (BS).

Table 4.2: Rotated Component Matrix for organizational Variables

| Items | Component | |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| | 1 (PS) | 2 (BS) |
| Not enough promotional opportunities in the organization | -0.833 | |
| Promotions opportunities are blocked | 0.779 | |
| Reduction of cost by cutting employees' wages and benefits | 0.641 | |
| Organizational strategy aim towards growth rather than survival | | 0.821 |
| Differentiation from other organizations through the human resources | | 0.733 |
| Formulation of strategies after some problems occurred | | -0.524 |
| % of Variance | 29.28 | 26.44 |
| Cumulative % | 29.28 | 55.72 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

4.1.2 Factor Analysis for Job Related Factors

Based on the literature seventeen items (questions) were used to measure the job related aspects. Prior to performing PCA the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of 0.5 and above. The Kaiser Meyer Oklin Value (KMO) was 0.63., exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 and the Barlett's Test of Sphercity reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Results of the PCA revealed the presence of five components and the selection of components was carried out based on the Kaiser's criterion. Outcome of the factor analysis with PCA the job related factors identified five components which satisfy the Kaiser's criterion. Based on the Kaiser's criterion, these five components were used in the further investigation. After extracting the components they were rotated using the varimax method and the rotated results are illustrated in Table 4.3. The five components identified in the table explained a total of 68.3 percent variance. Each component contributes 17.24, 14.55, 14.31, 13.09 and 9.7 percent respectively. The results shown in the rotated component matrix (i.e. Table: 4.3) exhibit five components: (1) Supervisory and Peer Support (SS), (2) Compensation System (CS), (3) Role Ambiguity (RA), (4) Intrinsic Reward (IR), and (5) Training Opportunities (TO) respectively.

Table 4.3: Rotated Component Matrix for Job Related Factors

| Items | Component | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 1(SS) | 2(CS) | 3(RA) | 4(IR) | 5(TO) |
| Supervisor likes to promote me to the next position | 0.796 | | | | |
| Supervisor informs me about career opportunities | 0.693 | | | | |
| Peers do not like to see others being promoted | 0.688 | | | | |
| Have freedom to decide how to do work | 0.574 | | | | |
| Exist close relationship with employees | 0.565 | | | | |
| Do not want to be promoted due to effort will not be compensated | | 0.911 | | | |
| Do not want to take promotion due to no significant difference in salary level | | 0.907 | | | |
| Certain about authority | | | 0.875 | | |
| Exist clear, planned goals and objectives | | | 0.728 | | |
| Know well about responsibilities | | | 0.675 | | |
| My job requires creativity | | | | 0.832 | |
| Job helps to develop special abilities | | | | 0.824 | |
| Not interested in taking outside training due to the huge cost | | | | | 0.794 |
| Not enough training opportunities inside the organization | | | | | 0.693 |
| % of Variance | 17.24 | 14.55 | 14.31 | 13.09 | 9.67 |
| Cumulative % | 17.24 | 31.79 | 46.10 | 59.19 | 68.86 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

4.1.3 Factor Analysis for Psychological Factors

Eight items were used to measure the psychological factors, and the items were subjected to factor analysis with principal components analysis using SPSS. Factorability was assessed using KMO value and inspection of the correlation matrix. Correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of 0.5 and above. The Kaiser Meyer Oklin Value (KMO) was 0.63, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 and the Barlett's Test of Sphercity reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Table 4.4: Rotated Component Matrix for Psychological Factors

| Items | Component | |
|--|---------------|--------------|
| | 1(ML) | 2(VFO) |
| Value leisure higher than promotions | 0.811 | |
| Sacrifice some training and promotion opportunities due to family obligation | 0.699 | |
| Expect additional responsibilities | -0.689 | |
| Not interested to learn through job rotating | -0.533 | 0.712 |
| Number of hours in the job does not hamper family obligation | | 0.635 |
| Utilize all entitled paid leaves | | 0.589 |
| % of Variance | 35.07 | 22.56 |
| Cumulative % | 35.07 | 57.63 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

PCA revealed the presence of two components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 37.39 percent and 20.25 percent of the variance respectively. Using Kaiser's criterion, it was decided to retain two components for further investigation. To aid in interpretation of these two components, the Varimax rotation method was performed. The rotated solution (presented in Table 4.4) shows two components showing many strong loadings. The outcome of the factor analysis classified psychological factors into two components (i.e. (1) Motivation to Learn and

(2) High Value for Family Obligation or Leisure) and also two items were considered as not important.

4.2 Summary of Determinants of Career Plateauing Attributes

Based on these results of the validity tests of the items for this concept, three items were removed and, Table 4.5 illustrates the summary of removed item through the factor analysis. At the first step seven items were used to measure the validity of the organizational factors. According to results of factor analysis one item was removed and rest of the items kept remain for further analysis. In order to measure job related factors seventeen items were used and three items removed. Eight items were used to asses the psychological factors and six items were remained for further investigation.

Table 4.5: Summary of Removed Item

| Category | First Step | Last Step | Removed Items |
|------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| Organizational Factors | 7 | 6 | 1 |
| Job Related Factors | 17 | 14 | 3 |
| Psychological Factors | 8 | 6 | 2 |

4.3 Validity Test for Subjective Plateau

Two dependant variables: objective plateauing and subjective plateauing are used in this study. In order to measure the subjective plateauing four Lickert scale items were used. The factor analysis technique was used to asses the validity of the items. In order to asses the factorability of the items, KMO value of the scale was calculated and it was 0.517. Although this value did not meet the required standard (0.6), it was decided to proceed factor analysis. Results of the PCA revealed the one component which indicates eigen value greater than 1 explaining 56.4 percent of total variance. Since only one component exceeds the eigen value greater than 1, rotation was not performed. Table 4.6 shows the results of the factor analysis for subjective plateauing.

Table 4.6: Factor Analysis for Subjective Plateauing

| Items | Component |
|---|-----------|
| | 1 |
| Been in the same level for much too long | 0.871 |
| Not getting ahead in the organization | 0.686 |
| Promotion opportunities have been limited by organization | 0.681 |
| % of Variance | 56.43 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

4.4 Validity Test for Consequences of Career Plateauing

As illustrated in the conceptual framework (Figure 1.1), this study aim to identify the relationship between career plateauing and its consequences. Mainly, four consequences, such as: Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Intention to Quit and Stress were taken in to consideration. In order to test the validity of the items used to measure ach consequences, factor analysis techniques was used.

Twenty items used for measuring the consequences of the career plateauing. Prior to performing the factor analysis the suitability for factor analysis was assessed by means of Kaiser Criterion. The KMO value of the items was 0.749 and Barlett’s Test of Sphercity reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the items. Based on the principal components analysis six items were revealed the eigan value exceeding 1. For the purpose of identifying each component, they were rotated using the Variamax option and the rotated solution depicts in Table 4.7. As in the Table 4.7, four components were extracted. The four components can be recognized as, (1) Intention to Quit (IQ), (2).Job Satisfaction (JS), (3) Stress (STR), and (4) Organizational Commitment (OC). Four components identified in the table explained a total of 58.6 percent variance, each component contributing 20.1, 17.13, 11.72, and 9.65 percent, respectively.

Table 4.7: Rotated Component Matrix of consequences of Career Plateauing

| Items | Component | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1(IQ) | 2 (JS) | 3 (STR) | 4(OC) |
| Satisfied with work itself | -.540 | | | |
| Satisfied with promotional scheme | -.578 | | | |
| Satisfied with salary level | | -.690 | | |
| Satisfied with supervisory support | | -.590 | | |
| Satisfied with colleagues | | -.612 | | |
| Satisfied with the firm | -.603 | | | |
| Willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected | | | | .608 |
| Accept almost any type of job assignment | | | | .662 |
| Individual values and the organization's values are very similar | | | | .727 |
| Take very little change in present circumstances to cause to leave | | | | |
| Ready to change organization to have a better chance for pro: | .739 | | | |
| Definitely quit the job | .741 | | | |
| Never quit the job | | | | |
| Searching for outside job opportunities | .769 | | | |
| Already applied for outside jobs | .660 | | | |
| Working under great deal of tension | | | .620 | |
| Feeling nervous as a result of the job | | | .839 | |
| If had a different job, health would probably improve | | | .795 | |
| Frustrated with large amount of work expected to do | | .813 | | |
| Too much work to do in job | | .771 | | |
| % of Variance | 20.10 | 17.13 | 11.72 | 9.65 |
| Cumulative % | 20.10 | 37.23 | 48.95 | 58.60 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

4.5 Reliability Test

4.5.1 Reliability Test for Determinates of Career Plateauing Items

Measuring reliability is important to ensure the consistency of the items of the concept. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure reliability. Table 4.8 depicts the Cronbach's alpha value for ten independent variables and one dependant variable. According to the reliability values, compensation systems denoted the highest internal consistency. Two variables: Business strategy and Training opportunities recorded relatively low reliability. Although these two variables are associated with the Cronach's alpha value lower than the standard value (i.e. 0.6), these were taken into consideration for further investigation. Dependant variable (Subjective Plateau) recorded the Cronbach's alpha value 0.611, which is greater than the standard value of 0.6.

Table 4.8: Cronbach's Alpha Value of Independent and Dependant variables

| Variables | Cronbach's alpha |
|--|-------------------------|
| <i>Independent Variables</i> | |
| Lack of promotional opportunities | 0.657 |
| Business Strategy | 0.578 |
| Role Ambiguity | 0.743 |
| Supervisory and Peer Support | 0.738 |
| Intrinsic Reward | 0.726 |
| Compensation System | 0.924 |
| Training Opportunities | 0.582 |
| Motivation to Learn | 0.601 |
| Value for Family obligation or Leisure | 0.630 |
| <i>Dependant Variable</i> | |
| Subjective Plateau | 0.611 |

4.5.2 Reliability Test for Consequences of Career plateauing Items

The reliability of the items used in measuring career plateauing consequences was also tested in terms of Cronbach's alpha value. Table 4.9 shows the reliability statistics. First, three variables meet the standard value of the 0.6 while organizational commitment did not. Even though organizational commitment did not satisfy the required standard of the Cronbach's reliability value, it was decided to make use of the variable for further investigation.

Table 4.9 Cronbach's Alpha Value of the Consequences of Career Plateauing

| Variables | Cronbach's alpha |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Intention to Quit | 0.799 |
| Job Satisfaction | 0.681 |
| Job Induces Stress | 0.797 |
| Organizational Commitment | 0.524 |

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In order to draw general conclusions to answer the research questions of this study, this chapter analyzes the data from surveys, interviews and secondary sources. The conceptual framework of the study will comprehensively be analyzed in the discussion later.

The chapter begins with an analysis of respondent demographic profiles. Consequently, the analysis focuses on contributing factors of managerial career plateauing as independent variables for subjective career plateauing (dependant variable). This is followed by presenting the results of the multiple regression analysis. Next, the analysis of the relationship between determinants of career plateauing and objective plateauing will be analysed using a Logistic Regression Analysis. Then, the relationship between managerial career plateauing and its implications will be analyzed in terms of Pearson and partial correlation. This is comprised with an analysis of the link between career plateauing and Job satisfaction, Organizational commitment, Intention to quit (turn over) and finally Job induced stress. The chapter ends with a discussion of both individual and organizational level coping strategies to overcome the negative consequences of the managerial career plateauing.

5.1 Respondents' Profile

This section analyses the profile of respondents in terms of demographic variables. This section initially intends to provide a general picture of the managers who represented the sample. The demographics of the sample are described by age, gender, marital status, and educational level.

5.1.1 Age of the Managers

Table 5.1 shows that most of the managers are (33.7 percent) in the age category of 35-44, while 30.2 percent are in the age category of 45-54. Managers in the sample between the ages of 25-34 represent 29.7 percent. The balance of 6.4 percent belonged to the category of over 54 years.

Table 5.1: Frequency Distribution of Managers' Age

| Age category (Years) | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 25-34 | 51 | 29.7 |
| 35-44 | 58 | 33.7 |
| 45-54 | 52 | 30.2 |
| 55 and above | 11 | 6.4 |
| Total | 172 | 100.0 |

5.1.2 Gender of the Managers

The majority of respondents are male (58.1 percent) while remaining 41.9 percent are female.

Table 5.2: Frequency Distribution of Managers' Gender

| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| Male | 100 | 58.1 |
| Female | 72 | 41.9 |
| Total | 172 | 100.0 |

5.1.3 Marital Status of Managers

Table 5.3 shows that most of the managers (79.7 percent) are married while 20.3 percent are single.

Table 5.3: Marital Status of Managers

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Married | 137 | 79.7 |
| Unmarried | 35 | 20.3 |
| Total | 172 | 100.0 |

5.1.4 Educational Level

Respondents, classified by educational level in Table 5.4 shows that 34.3 percent obtained Master Degree and more than one fifth (25.6 percent) belonged to category of Bachelor Degree. Most of the executives (29.7 percent) have gained professional qualifications like, ICA (Chartered Accountancy), CIMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants), CIM, (Chartered Institute of Marketing) SLIM (Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing), DBF (Diploma in Banking & Finance), and so on. Doctoral Degree (5.8 percent) and Secondary education (4.7 percent) represents the residual percentage of the respondents.

Table 5.4: Educational Level

| Education Level | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Secondary Education | 8 | 4.7 |
| Bachelor Degree | 44 | 25.6 |
| Master Degree | 59 | 34.3 |
| Doctoral Degree | 10 | 5.8 |
| Professional qualification | 51 | 29.7 |
| Total | 172 | 100.0 |

5.2 Career Plateaus

Since managerial career plateau is the prominent phenomenon which is focused in this study, this section aims to present and analyse the distribution of plateaued and non plateaued managers of the sample. This study mainly addresses the two kinds of plateauing: Objective and Subjective. Objective career plateau is measured by the time period being in the same position by employees in their career ladder. For the purpose of measuring objective career plateaus various researchers have used different period of time. In this study I apply six years as the measure to ensure whether a particular manager is objectively plateaued. Table 5.5 shows the distribution of the plateaued and non plateaued managers of the present study. 40.7 percent of managers belong to plateaued category while rest of the 59.3 percent represent the non-plateaued.

Table 5.5: Distribution of Objectively Plateaued and Nonplateaued Managers

| Objective Plateauing | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Non plateaued | 102 | 59.3 |
| Plateaued | 70 | 40.7 |
| Total | 172 | 100.0 |

5.3 Regression Analysis

A multiple Regression analysis was used to test and examine the relative contribution of each of the independent variables (Demographic, Organizational variables, Job related variables and Psychological variables) toward explaining variance in the dependant variable (Subjective Plateau, See Figure 1.1). The SPSS package is used to run the multiple regressions. A regression model is used where by researcher retaining complete control over the regression variate in terms of both prediction and explanatory variables.

Table 5.6 depicts the summary of the overall model fit. The adjusted R square of 0.503 describes that the regression model explains 50 percent of the variance of subjective plateauing variable. Standard error of estimation is 0.705. The ANOVA analysis provides the statistical test for the overall model fit in terms of the F ratio (Hair, et. al, 2005, p.238). The F- ratio is 10.6 with a significance level of .000, so the model is significant at 1 percent level.

Since the majority of the variables studied were psychological and were measured simultaneously, the tolerance and the variance inflation factor (VIF) were used to assess the degree of multicollinearity among the variables. The tolerance value is the amount of an independent variable's predictive capability that is not predicted by the other independent variables in the model (Hair, et. al, 2005, p.241).Tolerance for a given independent variable is equal to one minus its squared multiple correlations with the rest of the independent variables. The higher the correlation of one variable with the rest of the independent variables, the closer to 0 is the tolerance. In the present study tolerance ranged from 0.410 to 0.731 (See Appendix III). VIF has been described as a measure of the muticollinearity among independent variables in the equation and generally accepted level of VIF is up to 10 (Hair, et. al, 2005, p.233). In this study

the VIF for each of the independent variables ranged from 1.53 to 2.43 (See Appendix III), which is well below the rule-of-thumb suggested by Hair, et al., which states that the largest VIF should not be larger than 10. The results of these diagnostic indicators suggest that multicollinearity is not a serious issue of concern in the study.

Table 5.6: Summary of Model Fit

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|--------------|----------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | 0.745 | 0.555 | 0.503 | 0.705 |

5.3.1 Regression Analysis: Subjective Career Plateau and Demographic Variables

First, the impact of the demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, marital and educational level) toward subjective plateau is measured and Table 5.7 shows the results. The standardized regression coefficients from the regression results are examined to support for the framework in Figure 1.1. Managers representing age category of 45-54 are considered as the reference group for age while having attained a mater degree qualification is considered as the reference group for educational level. The reference group for gender is male. Since married managers are the large group, they are considered as the reference group for the marital.

Subjective plateauing was negatively related to managers who belongs to age category of 25-34 ($\beta = -0.363, P \leq 0.01$). Consistent with the career plateauing literature the managers who belongs to the age group over 54 is positively related to subjective plateauing ($\beta = 0.210, P \leq 0.01$). This means that young managers are less likely to perceive themselves as plateaued compared to matured managers. Further, a significant positive relationship is found between women managers and subjective plateauing ($\beta = 0.152, P \leq 0.05$). This means that women managers are more susceptible to being subjectively plateaued than male managers. As in Table 5.7, managers who attained professional educational qualification are positively related to subjective plateauing ($\beta = 0.221, P \leq 0.01$). Attained secondary education also negatively and significantly related to the subjective plateauing ($\beta = 0.107, P \leq 0.10$). No significant relationships are found between

subjective plateauing and managers belongs to age category of 35-44 years ($\beta = -0.072$, n.s), married managers ($\beta = 0.055$, n.s), bachelor ($\beta = 0.045$, n.s) and Doctoral educational level ($\beta = -0.103$, n.s).

Standardized beta coefficient reflects the relative impact on the dependant variable of a change in one standard deviation in either explanatory variable (Hair et al., 2005, p.225). Comparing the standardized beta coefficients of the different age group it can be concluded that managers who belong to age groups over 54 years are markedly more plateaued than the other age category ($\beta = 0.210$, $P \leq 0.01$). As far as the managers' educational level concerned, those who have attained professional educational qualification ($\beta = 0.221$, $P \leq 0.01$) are more influenced by a feeling of subjective plateauing compared to other educational qualification. Based on the multiple regression analysis, it can conclude that the managers' age is the most significant contributing factor among the demographic variables, leading to managers' subjective plateauing. Secondly, the type of education plays a significant role of determining the subjective plateauing. Third came up the managers' gender. Finally, employees' marital status is marginally important at best in concluding managers' subjective plateauing.

Table 5.7: Results of regression analysis

| Independent Variables | B | Standardized Coefficient | Standard Error | t-Value | Significance Level (p) |
|---------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Demographic Variables</i> | | | | | |
| Age 25-34 | -0.792 | -0.363*** | 0.195 | -4.066 | 0.000 |
| Age 35-44 | -0.153 | -0.072 | 0.153 | -1.001 | 0.319 |
| Age 45-54(Ref. Group) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Age over 54 | 0.857 | 0.210*** | 0.288 | 2.979 | 0.003 |
| Gender | 0.308 | 0.152** | 0.137 | 2.240 | 0.027 |
| Male (Ref. Group) | | | | | |
| Marital | 0.135 | 0.055 | 0.167 | 0.807 | 0.421 |
| Married (Ref. Group) | | | | | |
| Secondary | 0.508 | 0.107* | 0.286 | 1.775 | 0.078 |
| Bachelor | 0.103 | 0.045 | 0.152 | 0.673 | 0.502 |
| Master (Ref. Group) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Doctoral | -0.438 | -0.103 | 0.284 | -1.540 | 0.126 |
| Professional | 0.481 | 0.221*** | 0.155 | 3.099 | 0.002 |
| <i>Job related variables</i> | | | | | |
| Supervisory & Peer Support | -0.129 | -0.129* | 0.078 | -1.661 | 0.099 |
| Compensation System | -0.130 | -0.130* | 0.068 | -1.914 | 0.058 |
| Role Ambiguity | -0.123 | -0.123* | 0.071 | -1.741 | 0.084 |
| Intrinsic Reward | 0.074 | 0.074 | 0.070 | 1.051 | 0.295 |
| Training Opportunities | 0.133 | 0.133** | 0.063 | 2.101 | 0.037 |
| <i>Organizational variables</i> | | | | | |
| Pyramidal Structure | 0.443 | 0.443*** | 0.084 | 5.264 | 0.000 |
| Business Strategy | -0.132 | -0.132* | 0.071 | -1.858 | 0.065 |
| <i>Psychological variables</i> | | | | | |
| Motivation to Learn | -0.020 | -0.020 | 0.068 | -0.292 | 0.771 |
| Value for Family obligation | -0.344 | -0.344*** | 0.082 | -4.214 | 0.000 |

*** $p \leq 0.01$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.10$

5.3.2 Regression Analysis: Subjective Career Plateau and Job Related Variables

The impact of the five job related aspects (supervisory and peer support, compensation system, role ambiguity, intrinsic reward, training opportunities) towards determining the variation of the subjective plateauing is measured and the regression results are reported in Table 5.7 in the above part.

Considering the sign of the beta coefficient the direction of the relationship can be determined. In accordance with Table 5.7 it can be concluded that compensation system, role ambiguity, and supervisory and peer support are negatively related to the subjective plateauing while intrinsic reward is positively associated with. Consistent with findings of prior studies, the lack of training opportunities are positively associated with the managerial subjective plateauing ($\beta = 0.133, P \leq 0.05$). This provides insight that the lack of training programs inside the organization causes managers to limit their scope, and it further impacts to disqualify them for competing for higher level position in the same organization or outside the organization. In line with the previous studies, this study found a significant relationship between supervisory and peer support ($\beta = -0.129, p \leq 0.10$), compensation systems ($\beta = -0.130, p \leq 0.10$), role ambiguity ($\beta = -0.123, p \leq 0.10$) and the subjective plateau. As opposed to prior studies this study fails to identify significant association between subjective plateauing and intrinsic reward ($\beta = 0.074, n.s$).

Comparing standardized beta coefficient of each variable, it is possible to identify the relative importance of job related variables toward subjective plateauing. Lack of training opportunities is the most critical factor while intrinsic reward is the least important variable for determining the subjective plateauing.

5.3.3 Regression Analysis: Subjective Career Plateau and Organizational Variables

The results of the regression analysis between subjective plateauing and organizational variables are depicted in Table 5.7. Not surprisingly, consistent with the career plateauing literature the pyramidal organizational structure was positively related with the subjective plateauing ($\beta = 0.443, P \leq 0.01$). This means that if the organizational structure is of a more pyramidal shape, it causes managers to compete for fewer upper level positions. In turn it leads to increase

the feeling of being plateaued among managers who stagnated in the same position. Additionally, a significant negative relationship was observed between organizational business strategies and subjective plateauing ($\beta = -0.132$, $p \leq 0.10$).

5.3.4 Regression Analysis: Subjective Career Plateau and Psychological Variables

The results of the regression analysis among the psychological factors and subjective career plateauing shown in the Table: 5.7. A high value for family obligation or leisure shows a significant negative relationship with subjective plateauing ($\beta = -0.344$, $P \leq 0.01$). The motivation to learn was not significantly contributing to explain the variation of subjective plateauing ($\beta = -.020$, n.s). Motivation to learn, however, is negatively correlated with the subjective plateauing.

Table 5.8 provides a summary of the results for each measure of subjective plateauing. Overall, the results for all four major sets of independent variables indicated that the independent variables of the study accounted for a significant amount of variance.

Table 5.8: Summary of Regression Results

| Variable | Significance of the Coefficient | Direction of the Impact |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| <i>Demographic Variables:</i> | | |
| Age 25-34 | Significant | (-) |
| Age 35-44 | | (-) |
| Age over 54 | Significant | (+) |
| Women (Male, Ref) | Significant | (+) |
| Single (Married, Ref) | | (+) |
| Secondary (Master, Ref) | Significant | (+) |
| Bachelor | | (+) |
| Doctoral | | (-) |
| Professional | Significant | (+) |
| <i>Job Related Variables:</i> | | |
| Supervisory and Peer Support | Significant | (-) |
| Compensation System | Significant | (-) |
| Role Ambiguity | Significant | (-) |
| Intrinsic Reward | | (+) |
| Training Opportunities | Significant | (+) |
| <i>Organizational Variables:</i> | | |
| Pyramidal structure | Significant | (+) |
| Business Strategy | Significant | (-) |
| <i>Psychological Variables:</i> | | |
| Motivation to Learn | | (-) |
| Value for Family Obligation | Significant | (-) |

5.4 Logistic Regression Analysis

The relationship between objective career plateauing and its potential determinants was analysed by Logistic Regression Analysis. Logistic regression is an attractive alternative to discriminant analysis whenever the dependant variable has only two categories (Hair et. al. 2005, p.368). The two categories of dependant variables, in this study are, being plateaued and not being plateaued in the current job position.

The SPSS package was used to run the logistic regression analysis. In making an assessment of the overall fit of the logistic regression model, three approaches can be used (Hair et. al., 2005, p.372): Statistical measure of overall model fit, R^2 measures and classification accuracy. Logistic regression measures model estimation fit with the value of -2 times the log of the likelihood value, referred to as -2LL or -2 log likelihood. Minimum value for -2LL is 0, which corresponds to a perfect fit. Thus, the lower the -2LL value, the better fitting the model (Hair et. al., 2005, p.361). According to Hair, et al., the smaller value of the -2LL measure indicates better model fit compared to the base model. In this study, -2LL of the base model was 207.355, and it significantly decreases to 128.05 in the last logistic regression model. This increase in model fit was statistically significant at the .000 level. A Cox & Snell R-Square, Nagelkerke R-Square, Pseudo R-Square can also be used asses the overall model fit (Hair et. al., 2005, p.372). Cox & Snell R Square of the model indicate 0.369 while Nagelkerke R Square report 0.527. In combination, this indicates that the logistic regression model accounts for about one half of the variation between the two groups of the managers.

The results of the logistic regression are shown in Table 5.9. In order to asses the direction of the relationship between dependant and independent variables, original logistic coefficients (B) or the Exponentiated coefficients (Exp (B)) can be used (Hair et.al. 2005, p.376). In line with the career plateauing literature, pyramidal organizational structure is positively related to objective career plateauing ($\beta = 0.869$, $P \leq 0.05$). Intrinsic reward ($\beta = 0.654$, $P \leq 0.05$), lack of training opportunities ($\beta = 0.433$, $P \leq 0.10$) and Motivation to learn ($\beta = 1.424$, $P \leq 0.01$) also indicate significant positive relationships with objective career plateauing. Three variables, supervisory and peer support ($\beta = -1.008$, $P \leq 0.01$), role ambiguity ($\beta = -0.956$, $P \leq 0.01$), and organizational business strategy ($\beta = -0.785$, $P \leq 0.01$) provide a significant negative contribution towards

objective plateauing. Among the career plateauing predictors the compensation system and individuals' high value for family obligation do not significantly contribute to make managers plateaued or not.

Exponentiated coefficients directly reflect the magnitude of the change in odds value (Hair et. al., 2005, p.365). In the logistic regression, the non-metric variables (Dummy variables) were used for the demographics. The managers belonging to age category of 45-54 are treated as reference group for age variables. Reference group for gender was male. Married managers were considered as the reference group for the marital, and finally, master educational qualification was taken into account as the reference group for educational level. Considering Exp (B) coefficient for each variable the following conclusion can be drawn. The managers whom belong to age category 35-44 have a 12 percent lower probability to become objectively plateaued than the managers representing the age 45-54. On the other hand, the managers' age category of over 54 has 61 percent higher possibilities to be objectively plateaued compared to age group of 45-54. Women has 71 percent higher probability of being objectively plateaued with the present position than male managers all else equal. Being married has 53 percent higher likelihood of being plateaued than being unmarried. Considering the educational level of the managers, having a master degree qualification has 91 percent, 92 percent, 65 percent and 79 percent less odds of being plateaued than encompassing secondary, bachelor, doctoral and professional qualification respectively.

Table 5.9: Logistic Regression Analysis

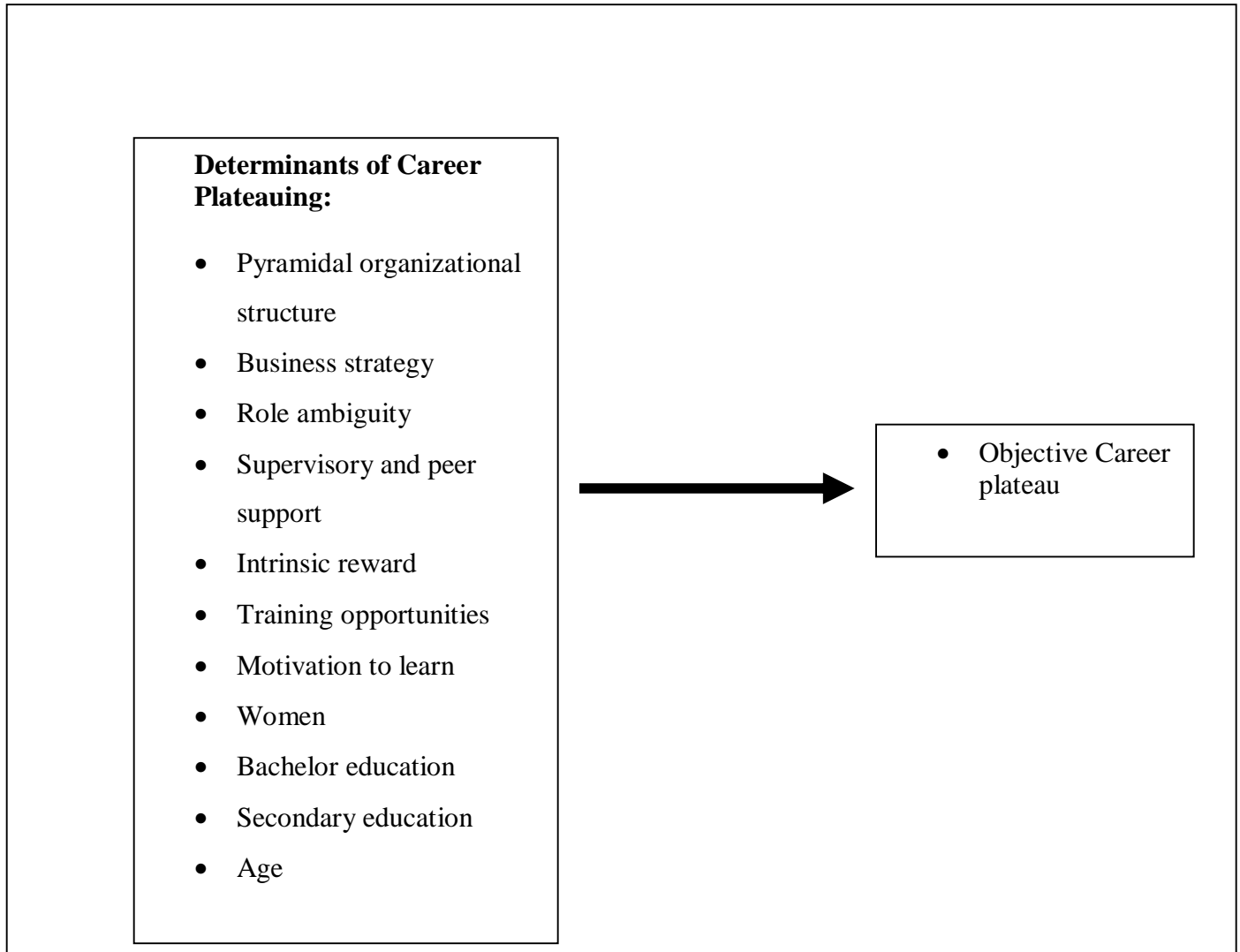
| Variables | B | S.E. | Sig. | Exp(B) |
|--|-----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| <i>Organizational variables</i> | | | | |
| Pyramidal Structure | 0, 869** | 0,408 | 0,033 | 2,192 |
| Business Strategy | -0,785*** | 0,324 | 0,016 | 0,419 |
| <i>Job related variables</i> | | | | |
| Supervisory and Peer Support | -1,008*** | 0,332 | 0,002 | 0,365 |
| Compensation System | -0, 334 | 0,326 | 0,306 | 0,716 |
| Role Ambiguity | -, 956*** | 0,380 | 0,012 | 0,385 |
| Intrinsic Reward | 0,654** | 0,324 | 0,044 | 1,923 |
| Training Opportunities | 0,433* | 0,262 | 0,098 | 1,541 |
| <i>Psychological variables</i> | | | | |
| Motivation to Learn | 1,424*** | 0,377 | 0,000 | 4,153 |
| Value for Family Obligation | -0, 262 | 0,353 | 0,457 | 0,769 |
| <i>Demographic variables</i> | | | | |
| Age over25 less34 | -0, 951 | 1,150 | 0,409 | 0,386 |
| Age over35 less44 | 0,113 | 0,620 | 0,855 | 1,120 |
| Age over45 less 54 (Reference Group) | | | | |
| Age over 54 | 5,142*** | 1,184 | 0,000 | 171,009 |
| Gender | 0,536 | 0,580 | 0,355 | 1,710 |
| Male (Reference Group) | | | | |
| Secondary Education | -2,489* | 1,464 | 0,089 | 0,083 |
| Bachelor Education | -2,555*** | 0,833 | 0,002 | 0,078 |
| Master Education (Reference Group) | | | | |
| Doctoral Education | -1,072 | 1,165 | 0,358 | 0,342 |
| Professional Education | -1,549** | 0,738 | 0,036 | 0,212 |
| Single | 1,836** | 0,839 | 0,029 | 6,270 |
| Married (Reference Group) | | | | |
| Constant | 0,908 | 3,335 | 0,785 | 2,480 |

*** $p \leq 0.01$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.10$

Considering the magnitude of the exponentiated coefficients for the metric variables the following key conclusions can be made. Two organizational level variables (i.e. Pyramidal organizational structure and business strategy) create two different impacts towards the variation of odds of the dependant variable. A one unit change in the pyramidal organizational structure will increase the odds of being objectively plateaued by 119 percent while one unit change in organizational business strategy reduce the likelihood of being plateaued by 58 percent. The impact of the job related variables towards odds of objective plateauing were mix. One unit change in supervisory and peer support, compensation system and role ambiguity will reduce the probability of being objectively plateaued by 64 percent, 28 percent and 61 percent respectively. A one unit change in intrinsic rewards and lack of training opportunities are expected to increase the possibility of becoming plateaued by 92 percent and 54 percent, respectively. Eventually, two psychological variables create two different implications towards the odds of the objective plateau. One unit change in motivation to learn variable will tend to increase the likelihood of being plateaued by 325 percent where as a one unit change in value for family obligation or leisure lead to reducing the possibility of become plateaued by 23 percent.

Based upon the Logistic analysis, the conceptual framework tested in this study (Figure 1.1) can be edited “highlighting” most important variables and ignoring less significant variables which contribute to the objective career plateauing. (See Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Revised Conceptual Framework



5.5 Consequences of Career Plateauing

According to the conceptual framework (see Figure 1.1), career plateauing is expected to impact job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to quit and job induced stress. Consequences associated with managerial career plateauing are analyzed in this section by means of Pearson Product Movement Correlation coefficient (r). The key variables considered in this study are: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to quit and job induced stress. Further, partial correlation was used to explore the relationship between objective career plateauing and career plateauing consequences, while controlling for scores on subjective

plateauing. Finally, partial correlation was performed to investigate the relationship between subjective career plateauing and career plateauing consequences, while controlling for scores on objective plateauing.

5.5.1 Objective Career Plateauing and Plateauing Consequences

Objective plateauing is measured by being in the present position six years and longer. Table 5.10 presents the Zero order correlation coefficients and partial correlations (controlling for subjective plateauing), for each of the dependant variables examined this study. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a significant, positive, partial correlation ($r = 0.235$, $n = 172$, $p < 0.01$) between objective career plateauing and job induced stress. An inspection of the Zero order correlation ($r = 0.281$, $p < 0.01$) suggested that controlling for subjective plateauing had very little effect on the strength of the relationship between these two variables.

Table 5.10: Correlation Matrix- Objective Career Plateauing and Plateauing Consequences (Controlling for Subjective Plateauing)

| Variables | Objective Plateauing | Objective Plateauing |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Correlation measures | Zero Order Correlation | Partial Correlation |
| Job Satisfaction | -0.174** | -0.110 |
| Organizational Commitment | 0.022 | 0.078 |
| Job Induced Stress | 0.281*** | 0.235*** |
| Intention to Quit | 0.253*** | -0.061 |

*** $p \leq 0.01$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.10$

As in the Table 5.10, observing zero order correlation it can be said that objective career plateauing was significantly, negatively correlated ($r = -0.174$, $p < 0.05$) with job satisfaction while intention to quit is significantly positively correlated ($r = 0.253$, $p < 0.01$). However, considering partial correlation, no significant relationship is found (except stress) between objective plateauing and its consequences.

5.5.2 Subjective Career Plateauing and Plateauing Consequences

Subjective plateau is measured with items based on five-point Likert scales (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). Respondents’ answers to initial four questions were assessed for determining the possibility for subjectively plateauing. (See Appendix I). After performing preliminary analyses to make sure the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity were satisfied, the partial correlation (Controlling for Objective Plateau) was carried out. The result of the partial correlation depicts in Table 5.11.

There was a significant, negative, partial correlations between subjective career plateauing and job satisfaction ($r = -0.253$, $n = 172$, $p < 0.01$), and organizational commitment ($r = -0.220$, $n = 172$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, significant and positive partial correlation ($r = 0.245$, $n = 172$, $p < 0.01$), was observed between objective plateauing and intention to quit and job induced stress ($r = 0.176$, $n = 172$, $p < 0.05$). An inspection of the Zero order correlation as indicated in Table 5.11, suggested that controlling for objective plateauing had very little effect on the strength of the relationship between these three variables.

Table 5.11: Correlation Matrix: Subjective Plateauing and Career Plateauing Consequences (Controlling for Objective Plateauing)

| Variables Correlation measures | Subjective Plateauing Zero Order Correlation | Subjective Plateauing Partial Correlation |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Job Satisfaction | -0.285*** | -0.253*** |
| Organizational Commitment | -0.207*** | -0.220*** |
| Job Induced Stress | 0.234*** | 0.176** |
| Intention to Quit | 0.238*** | 0.245*** |

*** $p \leq 0.01$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.10$

5.6 Career Plateauing Coping Strategies

The preceding sections analyzed the survey data with reference to contributing factors and impact of career plateauing. Lastly, this section analyze how the executives cope with career plateauing and what actions the organization should take to minimize the negative consequences of the career plateauing.

5.6.1 Coping Strategies for Managers

In order to find out what managers think about possible alternative solutions, from their perspective, to minimize consequences from the career plateauing situation, one open end question was asked in the questionnaire(See Appendix I).. All 172 managers did not answer this question, and only 68 responded. Also the results from the interviewing 12 managers before conducting comprehensive survey revealed almost same responses in this regard. Both interview and survey responses are summarized and presented in a point form as follows:

Educational Aspects

- Pursuing higher educations
- Continuous learning towards expertise in the subject

Networking Strategies

- Maintaining good relationship with top management and peers and build up more contacts with head office

Skill Development Strategies

- Improve leadership qualities
- Improve communication, presentation skills and personality qualities
- Prepare to accept more responsibilities
- Accept challenges
- Develop job related skills especially managerial level qualities
- More focus on time management

Own Career Planning Strategies

- Emphasis more on target achievement in due time
- Maximize performance in current position
- Refocus career goals and formulate new career strategies

As far as the alternative actions mentioned by respondents, it is obvious that many managers believe that maintaining and marinating tight relationship with top management without making

damages is identified as the prominent option. Apart from that, many managers considered that demonstrating exceptional, impressive performance in the present position lead to minimization of being plateaued. Pursuing higher education is a must for getting promotion opportunities. This is really considered as proactive approach. However, the results of the survey found that educational level is not the most important predictor of career plateauing. Finally, but most importantly, upgrading the range of skills including communication, presentation, leadership, and personality qualities is recognized as the viable options.

5.6.2 Organizational Level Coping Strategies

Dealing with career plateaus is not only a responsible for employees. From the organizations side there is an inevitable obligation to minimize the unfavourable outcomes of plateauing and create more conducive work environment inside the organization. This study also addressed this phenomenon and made an attempt to find out what plateaued employees suggest that management could undertake to deal with career plateaus. The findings from the interviewing and surveying managers are listed below. These strategies can be sorted out into two groups: Human resources policy and Business strategy.

Human resources policy

- Transfer plateaued employees to the most relevant sections
- Plan for career and retirement
- Change the present performance appraisal system
- Design proper career path for employees
- Introduce mentoring system
- Perform fair evaluation by supervisors
- Provide adequate training and developments opportunities

Business Strategy

- Launch new product areas
- Develop new roles
- Expand new channels and sections
- Establish and practice transferable and flexible communication system
- Change the target given by head office
- Undertake structural changes

- Carry out horizontal expansion
- Formulate and actual implementation of growth business strategies
- Focus on decentralization and employees empowerment

Previous career plateauing studies have suggested two forms of organizational level coping strategies: proactive and reactive. Consistent with previous studies, not surprisingly, in this study also found that the same kinds of solutions. First and foremost, many managers emphasized the importance of undertaking structural changes. If possible, horizontal expansion might be the most interesting actions that can be undertaken by the organization. Not only these structural changes, emphasizing more on decentralization and empowering employees could also play a critical role in getting rid of adverse impact of plateauing to a greater extent. According to their explanation many have plateaued because of the less organization sponsored training and developments opportunities available. Therefore, they listed that providing adequate training opportunities may contribute to overcome career plateauing incidents to a greater extent.

Especially, the interview conducted with 12 managers revealed more interesting findings pertaining to the coping strategies. Many managers believed that career plateauing occurred due to the fact that less promotional opportunities and then they emphasized the necessity of designing and launching new product areas, new distribution channels, and new roles. Altering present performance system, conducting fair evaluation by supervisors also was treated as important coping activity. Eventually, introduce mentoring system, establish and practice transferable and flexible communication system and plan for career and retirement in essence, were more interesting findings of the survey.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter consists of three main parts such as, discussion, conclusions, and suggestions for future research. Within the discussion section, the chapter discusses the significances of research findings of this study. Conclusions review the contributions with respect to the objectives of the thesis. In the final section suggestions for future researches are offered.

6.1 Discussion

This study aimed at examining first, the relationship between contributing variables of the career plateaus and two forms of managerial career plateauing: objective and subjective. Second, the link between managerial career plateau and its implications was studied, and finally the individual and organizational career plateauing coping strategies were discussed.

6.1.1 Demographic Aspects

Results confirm the findings of Greenhaus, et al., (2000, p 221) showing that prolonged tenure in the same position leads to reduce the chance of further advancement. As Greenhaus et, al., (2000, p.221) found in their study that plateauing is particularly relevant to employees older than 40. This study confirms that mature managers are more subjected to become objectively plateaued than the younger managers. Certain career plateauing literature explain that age and career plateauing is negatively correlated (Kalleberg & Loscocco, 1983, p.83; Latack, 1984 p.310; Markham, south, Bonjean, & Corder, 1985 p.145). In line with these findings, this study results come up with positive correlation between matured managers and career plateauing while the younger managers are negatively correlated with the career plateau.

Gallos (1989) found that a greater percentage of women perceived that they had fewer advancement opportunities available to them than men, so that women may become plateaued sooner than men. As expected, the present study also revealed that women are more likely to be objectively and subjectively plateaued than men. The results from interviewing managers revealed that the main reason for women managers being plateaued rather than male managers was that intense family responsibilities they are involved in.

The educational level is also linked to the career plateauing. Considering educational level, as Near, J. P. (1985, p.186) identified that the length and type of the education influence the

likelihood of becoming plateaued, these survey results conclude that education has an inverse influence on career plateauing. Inconsistent with the previous studies' findings, this study found that secondary, bachelor and professional education have significant impact toward career plateauing. Compared to the master level of education many managers believe that the degree of education has a profound effect on receiving attractive promotions and challenging assignments. During the interview session with twelve managers, they state that human resource policies of the organizations and the type and length of educational qualification as an important consideration when making promotions decisions. This, proved that the close relationship between educational level and career plateauing.

6.1.2 Organizational Aspects

Pyramidal organizational structures is found to be positively related with subjective career plateauing. As commonly accepted, the pyramidal shape of the organization structure invites employees to compete with each others to capture the fewer promotional opportunities. This study confirms those results of a number of authors (Tremblay, M. and Roger, A. 1993) who have shown the existence of a strong relationship between career plateauing and pyramidal organizational structure. Not surprisingly, this survey results found that the Pyramidal organizational structure is significantly and positively related to objective and subjective career plateauing.

Business strategies pursued by the organization may also critically increase the occurrence of the career plateauing among individuals. Greenhaus, et al., (2000, p.222) argue that the problem of career plateauing is aggravated in organizations that are growing slowly, not growing at all, or contracting their operations and work force. Further more, they indicated that a company's business strategy can affect the number and type of growth opportunities, and hence, the incidence of plateauing in managerial career paths. As expected, the survey results confirm that the defender types of business strategies lead to an increase in the likelihood of being plateaued among managers.

6.1.3 Job Related Aspects

Allen, T.D. et al., (1999, p.1118), and Near, J.P.(1985, p.186) emphasized that prolonged and strong supervisory and peer support reduce the possibility of being plateaued. This study finds that supervisory and peer support significantly contributes to reduce managers' subjective plateauing. This study finds a significant relation between supervisory and peer support and objective plateauing as well. Availability of adequate training opportunities and managers' willingness to enroll in training critically influences to the degree of employees' plateauing. Feldman and Weitz (1988) found that plateaued managers reported having received similar levels of training to that of fast-track managers. The survey results reject Weitz's finding and found that lack of training opportunities received, increased the change of being subjectively plateaued. According to the analytical results, there is a significant positive relation between lack of training opportunities and objective career plateauing. Fewer studies have been conducted to investigate the influence of the role ambiguity towards career plateauing. This study finds a significant relation between role ambiguity and both form of career plateauing. Even though intrinsic rewards are a significant predictor for determining objective plateauing, it is not significantly related to subjective plateauing. On the other hand, the type of compensation is significantly related to the subjective plateauing, while it is not significantly linked with the objective plateauing.

6.1.4 Psychological Aspects

The importance of motivation to learn towards the career plateauing provides interesting findings. Motivation to learn has a consistent, significant, and positive influence on developmental activity, and in turn it leads to reduce the likelihood of being plateaued (Noe & Wilk., 1993). Consistent with the literature a significant contribution is observed between motivation to learn and objective plateauing. In contrast, no significant relation is identified with subjective plateauing. High value for family obligation was considered as vital factor determining the career plateau in the previous studies. Greenhaus et al (2000, p.222) found that internal feelings of the individual encompassing with the personal values and believes could tend to increase the likelihood of the plateauing. In order to maintain a balanced life style, an increasing number of employees, at present, do not wish to accept further advancement. Many studies confirmed this notion and explain that this basically, occurred because of the potential

conflicts confronting new promotions family or leisure commitments. Not surprisingly this research also came up with the identical conclusion that the high value for family obligation significantly influenced to objective career plateauing. However, this study fail to identify a significant relation between objective career plateauing and managers' value for family obligations.

6.1.5 Consequences of Career Plateauing

This study attempts to investigate the relationship between two types of career plateauing and its consequences. The career plateauing consequences concerned in this study are: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job induced stress and intention to quit. Several interesting conclusions can be drawn about the consequences of career plateauing. It is not surprising that the job related attitudes are negatively related to both forms of plateauing. This study found that managers who were classified as plateaued both objectively and subjectively had less favourable attitudes towards job satisfaction. Even though the previous research findings provide mixed results pertaining to career plateauing and job satisfaction, this study explicitly finds a significant, negative relationship between those two variables. In the career plateauing literature most of the authors (Weiner, et al., 1992, p.42; Slocum, J.W.; Cron, W.L; Yowa, L.C, 1987, p.36) concluded that plateaued managers were more willing to leave the organization for another job than non-plateaued peers. Consistent with these findings, the present study concludes that subjective career plateauing is positively related with respondents' intention to quit from their organizations.

Job induced stress is treated as the prominent outcome variable in the career plateauing literature and several studies found that plateaued managers were working under a great deal of stress compared to non-plateaued employees. For instance, Near, J (1985, p.187) found that plateaued employees report slightly poorer health than non-plateaued employees. In line with the prior studies, this study fails to observe a positive correlation between plateauing and stress. Consistent with findings of Chao(1990, p.188) and Ettington (1992) the results confirm that organizational commitment was significantly and negatively correlated to the subjective career plateauing. This further explains that plateaued managers are less involved with putting a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected, and unlikely to accept almost any type of job assignments. However, this survey results show a weak negative relationship between subjective

plateauing and organizational commitment, while a positive correlation between objective plateauing and organizational commitment.

6.1.6 Career Plateauing Coping Strategies

As far as the findings of coping strategies are concerned this study confirms the findings of previous studies. As Weiner A, et al, (1992 p.45) suggested survey result found that launching structural changes, developing honest and equitable performance appraisal system, planning for career and retirement, offering more training and development opportunities, changing personnel policies facilitate to successfully deal with a career plateau. Further, considering individual level alternative solutions, undertaking higher education and obtaining greater experience, engaging with continuous learning, developing and maintaining good rapport with top management and performing well in present position are paramount.

6.2 Conclusions

This study attempts to identify the most significant factors which may cause career plateauing. In the end, based on the primary and secondary data analysis, the following interesting conclusion comes up. The principal contribution of this study probably lies in showing that the independent variables of career plateauing vary according to the operationalization of objective career plateau. This study measures the objective plateau by the number of years a particular employee has been in the same position in a firm. Several researchers used a different number of years as the measuring instruments of objective plateauing while this study used divider between five and six years as the criteria.

Age, gender, professional and secondary educational level, pyramidal organizational structure, less training opportunities, compensation system, role ambiguity, supervisory and peer support, and value for family obligation are the variables that showed significant importance in determining subjective managerial career plateauing. However, gender, pyramidal organizational structure, business strategies, supervisory and peer support, role ambiguity, intrinsic rewards, lack of training opportunities, motivation to learn are the best predictors of objective managerial plateauing.

The study concludes that career plateau influence managers' attitudes and intended behaviour at work. This study concludes that both objective and subjective career plateauing tend to decrease

employees job satisfaction while increasing employees intention to quit from the organization. Finally, this study draws the following conclusions regarding the remedies for unfavourable outcomes of the career plateauing. Launching structural changes, developing honest and equitable performance appraisal system, planning for career and retirement, offering more training and development opportunities, changing personnel policies play a critical role in preventing negative consequences of the career plateauing. Last, but not the least, based on the survey results and interviewing managers, undertaking higher education and obtaining greater experience, engaging with continuous learning, developing and maintaining good rapport with top management and performing well in present job are the best individual level coping strategies.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

This study aimed to identify the significant factors that contribute to managerial career plateauing and its implication towards employees' attitudes and behaviours to some extent. However, this research is limited to the measures of some few independent variables, which may cause managerial career plateauing. Some variables are measured using two or five questions limiting the reliability of the scales. Therefore, it is important to note that incorporating more independent variables in the model and, measuring them with an in-depth scale is essential.

This study attempted to interview and survey managers in different industries. Since this has become a severe issue in organization, it is necessary to find the best alternative solution to minimize the negative repercussion of the managerial career plateauing. This study did not focus on these options, thus comprehensive studies are needed to explore the applicability of the alternative solutions to lessen the unfavourable consequences.

Finally, this research is limited in scope of time span and sample size and to Sri Lanka. Thus, this does not allow generalizing the results to a significantly different cultural context. Then, it may be important to make comparisons of the attitudes and behaviours of the plateaued managers in different cultural settings.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Survey Questionnaire

This research is organized by B.L. Galhena, Master of Science student of University of Agder, Norway to fulfill the requirements of the master thesis. I would kindly ask you to participate in this research. This research is confidential and anonymous.

Part 1

1.1 Demographic variables

1. Age

| | |
|----------|----------------------|
| Under 25 | <input type="text"/> |
| 25-34 | <input type="text"/> |
| 35-44 | <input type="text"/> |
| 45-54 | <input type="text"/> |
| Over 54 | <input type="text"/> |

2. Gender

| | |
|--------|----------------------|
| Male | <input type="text"/> |
| Female | <input type="text"/> |

3. Are you?

| | |
|-----------|----------------------|
| Married | <input type="text"/> |
| Unmarried | <input type="text"/> |

4. Education level

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Primary Education | <input type="text"/> |
| Secondary Education | <input type="text"/> |
| Bachelor Degree | <input type="text"/> |
| Master Degree | <input type="text"/> |
| Doctoral Degree | <input type="text"/> |
| Professional Qualification | <input type="text"/> |

1.2 Organizational sources

| <i>Hierarchical Structure</i> | <i>Your attitudes</i> | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
| There is not enough promotional opportunities in my organization | | | | | |
| Current organizational structure in my organization block my promotions | | | | | |
| My organization often launches organizational structural changes | | | | | |

| <i>Organizational Business Strategy</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Top management often formulates business strategy after some problem occurred | | | | | |
| Organizational strategy focuses on growth rather than survival in the industry | | | | | |
| Top management reduce | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| the cost by cutting employee wages and benefits | | | | | |
| My organization try to differentiate from others through the employee of the company | | | | | |

1.3 Job related variables

| <i>Role Ambiguity</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| I feel certain about how much authority I have at work | | | | | |
| I know what my responsibilities are at work. | | | | | |
| Clear, planned goals and objectives exist for my job | | | | | |

| <i>Supervisory and Peer Support</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| My supervisor informs me about different career opportunities in the organization | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| I have a close relationship with other employees of this company | | | | | |
| My supervisor likes to promote me than his position | | | | | |
| My peers do not like to see me being promoted than their positions | | | | | |

| <i>Intrinsic Reward</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| My job requires creativity | | | | | |
| I have freedom to decide how to do my work | | | | | |
| My job helps me to develop special abilities | | | | | |
| I am satisfied with rewards and incentives I received | | | | | |

| <i>Compensation System</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I do not want to take promotion due to no significant difference in salary level | | | | | |
| I do not want to be | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| promoted because my effort in the new job will not be compensated by higher wage | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| <i>Training Opportunities</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| There is not enough training opportunities for me inside the organization | | | | | |
| There is outside training opportunities related to my next promotion | | | | | |
| I am not interested in taking outside training because the training cost | | | | | |
| I will have to pay the cost will not be compensated by promotional benefits | | | | | |

1.4 Psychological Factors

| <i>Motivation to Learn</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I am not interested to learn about jobs through rotating in different jobs | | | | | |
| I often expect additional responsibilities in my job | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| <i>Value for Family Obligation or Leisure</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|---|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| I utilize all my entitled paid leaves | | | | | |
| I value my leisure higher than promotions | | | | | |
| I sacrifice some training and promotion opportunities due to my family obligation | | | | | |
| In the current period of time my job does not hamper my family obligations | | | | | |

| <i>Career Exploration and Planning</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|--|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| I have well established my own career plan | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| I often review my career plan | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

Part 2: Career Plateau

2.1 Objective Plateau

- How many years have you been in the current position?

2.2 Subjective Plateau

| | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I believe that I have been in the same level for much too long | | | | | |
| I think that I have already gained the last position in my field or profession (dead-end position) | | | | | |
| I believe that I am not getting ahead in the organization | | | | | |
| I believe that my promotion opportunities | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| have been limited in my organization | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

Part 3 Implications

3.1 Job Satisfaction

| | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I am satisfied with work itself | | | | | |
| I am satisfied with promotional scheme | | | | | |
| I am satisfied with salary level | | | | | |
| I am satisfied with supervisory support | | | | | |
| I am satisfied with colleagues | | | | | |
| I am generally satisfied with the firm | | | | | |

3.2 Organizational Commitment

| | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful. | | | | | |
| I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization. | | | | | |
| I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar | | | | | |
| It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave. | | | | | |

3.3 Intention to Quit

| | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I am ready to change organization in order to have a better chance | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| for promotion | | | | | |
| I will definitely quit my job | | | | | |
| I will never quit my job | | | | | |
| I am searching for outside job opportunities | | | | | |
| I have already applied for outside jobs | | | | | |

3.4 Stress

| | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I work under great deal of tension | | | | | |
| I have felt nervous as a result of my job | | | | | |
| If I had a different job, my health would | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| probably improve | | | | | |
| I am frustrated with large amount of work | | | | | |
| I have too much work to do in my job | | | | | |

Coping Strategies:

What action would it take to minimize negative outcomes of the career plateau?

- What actions do you think you should take for getting next promotion for you

1.
2.
3.

- What changes should your organization take to create the next promotion for you

1.
2.
3.

Thank you very much for your kind assistance!

Appendix II: Data Analysis Tables

Table 7.1: Mean Comparison of Respondents' Demographic Profile

| Variable | N | Mean (%) |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Age: | 172 | 100 |
| 25-34 | 51 | 29.7 |
| 35-44 | 58 | 33.7 |
| 45-54 | 52 | 30.2 |
| >55 | 11 | 6.4 |
| Gender: | 172 | 100 |
| Male | 100 | 58.1 |
| Female | 72 | 41.9 |
| Marital Status | 172 | 100 |
| Married | 137 | 79.7 |
| unmarried | 35 | 20.3 |
| Education Level | 172 | 100 |
| Secondary Education | 8 | 4.7 |
| Bachelor Degree | 44 | 25.6 |
| Master Degree | 59 | 34.3 |
| Doctoral Degree | 10 | 5.8 |
| Professional Qualification | 51 | 29.7 |

Table 7.2: Mean Comparison of the Variables

| Variable | Min | Max | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Not promotional opportunities | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Structural Changes | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Formulation of strategies after problems occurred | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Strategy towards growth rather than survival | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Reduction of cost by cutting wages and benefits | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Differentiation from other organizations through employees | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Certain about authority | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Know well about responsibilities | 3 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Exist Clear, planned goals and objectives | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Supervisor informs me about career opportunities | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Exist close relationship with employees | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Supervisor likes to promote me to next position | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Peers do not like to see others being promoted | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Creativity job | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Have freedom to decide how to do works | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Job helps to develop special abilities | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Satisfied with rewards and incentives received | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Do not want to take promotion due to no significant difference in salary level | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Do not want to be promoted due to effort will not be compensated | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Not enough training opportunities inside the organization | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Existence of outside training opportunities | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Not interested in taking outside training due to the huge cost | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Training cost is not compensated by promotional benefits | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |

| Variable | Min | Max | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Not interested to learn through job rotating | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Expect additional responsibilities | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Utilize all entitled paid leaves | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Value leisure higher than promotions | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Sacrifice some training and promotion opportunities due to family obligation | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Current period of time of the job does not hamper family obligation | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Exist well established own career plan | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Often review career plan | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Time period in current position | 1 | 11 | 4.25 | 2.21 |
| Been in the same level for much too long | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Been in a dead end position | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Not getting ahead in the organization | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Promotion opportunities have been limited by organization | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Satisfied with work itself | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Satisfied with promotional scheme | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Satisfied with salary level | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Satisfied with supervisory support | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Satisfied with colleagues | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Satisfied with the firm | 2 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Accept almost any type of job assignment | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Individual values and the organization's values are very similar | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Take very little change in present circumstances to cause to leave | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |

| Variable | Min | Max | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Ready to change organization to have a better chance for promotion | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Definitely quit the job | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Never quit the job | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Searching for outside job opportunities | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Already applied for outside jobs | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Working under great deal of tension | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Feeling nervous as a result of the job | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| If had a different job, health would probably improve | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Frustrated with large amount of work expected to do | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |

Table 7.3: Collinearity Statistics

| Model | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|-------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | | |
| | FA- Pyramidal Structure | .410 | 2.438 |
| | FA- Business Strategy | .579 | 1.728 |
| | FA-Supervisory and Peer Support | .481 | 2.077 |
| | FA-Compensation System | .631 | 1.584 |
| | FA-Role Ambiguity | .584 | 1.713 |
| | FA-Intrinsic Reward | .591 | 1.691 |
| | FA-Training Opportunities | .731 | 1.369 |
| | FA-Motivation to Learn | .638 | 1.569 |
| | FA-Value for Family Obligation | .435 | 2.298 |
| | Age 25-34 | .365 | 2.741 |
| | Age 35-44 | .555 | 1.803 |
| | Age over 54 | .584 | 1.712 |
| | Women | .630 | 1.588 |
| | Secondary | .797 | 1.254 |
| | Bachelor | .654 | 1.530 |
| | Doctoral | .652 | 1.533 |
| | Professional | .574 | 1.742 |
| | Marital | .623 | 1.605 |

Appendix III: Statistics of the Sri Lankan Economy

Table 7.4: Changes in Price Indices in Sri Lanka

| Index | Average Index | | | Point to point Percentage Change Percentage Change | | Annual Average percentage change | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------|---------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006(a) | Dec- 2005/Dec- 2004 | Dec- 2006/Dec- 2005(a) | 2005/2004 | 2006/2005(a) |
| CCPI | 3,632.8 | 4,055.5 | 4,610.8 | 8.0 | 19.3 | 11.6 | 13.7 |
| CDCPI | 148.5 | 163.1 | 176.6 | 4.3 | 14.5 | 9.8 | 8.3 |
| APCPI | 158.5 | 172.8 | 188.9 | 3.4 | 16.4 | 9.0 | 9.3 |
| MLCPI | 151.6 | 166.6 | 82.3 | 4.6 | 16.9 | 9.9 | 9.4 |
| MRCPI | 147.2 | 157.2 | 169.3 | 2.1 | 16.0 | 6.8 | 7.7 |
| SLCPI | 170.9 | 189.1 | 207.2 | 3.6 | 17.9 | 10.6 | 9.5 |
| WPI | 1,889.0 | 2,105.9 | 2,351.6 | 1.7 | 17.3 | 11.5 | 11.7 |
| GDP Deflator | 183.6 | 201.8 | 222.6 | - | - | 9.9 | 10.3 |

(a)Provincial

Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka

Table 7.5: Unemployment Rate (Unemployed as a Percentage of Labour Force)

| Category | | | | 2006 | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|------------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| | 2004(a) | 2005(b) | 2005(b)(c) | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Annual |
| <i>All</i> | 8.3 | 7.7 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 6.3 | 6.4 | 6.3 | 6.5 |
| <i>By Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 6.0 | 5.5 | 5.3 | 5.5 | 4.9 | 4.6 | 4.3 | 4.7 |
| Female | 12.8 | 11.9 | 10.7 | 10.1 | 8.7 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 9.7 |
| <i>By Age Group</i> | | | | | | | | |
| 15 - 19 | 28.3 | 30.8 | 33.2 | 31.3 | 23.3 | 20.7 | 20.3 | 23.1 |
| 20 - 29 | 19.2 | 17.2 | 16.0 | 16.8 | 15.3 | 16.4 | 15.9 | 15.9 |
| 30 - 39 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 2.9 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.3 |
| 40 and above | 1.3 | 1.2 | 2.4 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 1.4 |
| <i>By Education Level</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Grade 4/Year 5 and below | 2.0 | 1.8 | ... | ... | ... | .. | ... | ... |
| Grade 5-9/ Year 6-10 | 6.9 | 6.3 | 6.1 | 6.5 | 5.9 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.8 |
| GCE(O/L)/ NCGE | 12.3 | 11.5 | 10.6 | 10.0 | 10.3 | 9.9 | 9.2 | 9.9 |
| GCE(A/L)/HNCE and above | 16.8 | 13.8 | 12.2 | 12.1 | 10.6 | 11.3 | 12.0 | 11.6 |

(a) Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts were excluded for 2004 annual estimates.

(b) QLFS was conducted as a one-off survey in August 2005.

(c) Data exclude both Northern and Eastern provinces

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka