



MEASURE OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' CAREER INTENTIONS: DESIGN AND VALIDATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

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Abstract:

Career intentions of employees reflect the organizational effectiveness and dynamism within the organization. To address the gap on the measure of career intentions, a questionnaire was developed and psychometrically tested. The items were generated based on the literature and interview with HR Heads and officers from the target organization. The content validity was established through the review of experts. While the internal reliability, construct and convergent validity was assessed using the confirmatory factor analysis. The statistical analysis showed that the developed questionnaire was found to be valid and reliable and may be utilized to gather and conduct future studies on career development.

Keywords: career intentions, career adaptability, questionnaire development

1. Introduction

Career intention is often defined as individual's desire to aim higher career in the organization (Li & Huang, 2017). It is driven by personal values, psychological needs, perceived career success, and work environment (Kessler et al., 2019; Chan et al., 2013; Mignonac & Herrbach, 2003). Employees with high level of career intentions positively reflects the organization's dynamic environment. It benefits the organization by generating positive organizational outcomes through employees' willingness to assume tasks and assignments.

Recent studies tackle a wider perspective on career intentions that involves gender profile, work values, preferences, and perception about oneself. It is typically measured using a one to two statements such as participants' ideal occupation, career expectations, career development interventions using either qualitative or quantitative method. One of the most common tools to measure the career intentions is the Career Aspiration Scale

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(CAS) developed by Gregor and O'Brien (2015). It aims to measure achievement, educational and leadership aspirations. Psychometric properties of CAS were first tested to adolescent, college, and post college samples that are mostly white women.

Based on available literature, several gaps have been noted that this paper aims to address. First, the view of career intention refers to promotion or higher position in the organization. It may also cover other career intentions such as signifying interest to new assignments or tasks. Second, the indicator of career intention of government employees in the Philippines. It is interesting to determine the level of career intentions of government employees as they are working in an organization that is driven by various informalities in the civil service (e.g. merit, kinship, personal relationships, bureaucracy) as described by Hodder (2010, 2014) and Brilliantes & Fernandez (2011).

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized the quantitative and qualitative research approach to develop and validate the career intentions questionnaire. Similar to the study conducted by Waeterloos et al. (2021), the study was implemented into two stages: 1) item generation and scale development and 2) testing. The items were developed through literature review and interviews conducted to key officers handling career development programs. The initial set of instruments was evaluated by four experts on human resources and behavioral psychology. Furthermore, test on internal consistency was employed.

Phase 1: Item Generation and Scale Development Phase

To generate the initial list of items and interview guide for key HR officers, the researcher identified sample items, themes, factors used by several researchers who conducted studies on career intentions and aspirations.

The semi-structured interview conducted to HR key officers provided a definition of what career intentions and career development is for the target organization. Interventions such as job rotation, cross posting, training and development, coaching are identified as developmental activities that employees may undergo should they want to aim for higher position or signify interest to accept bigger tasks in the organization. The initial draft of questionnaire was consisting of six items.

Phase 2: Testing Phase

At this stage, the questionnaire with the items that were identified as valid was rolled out to measure the psychometric properties of the Career Intentions Questionnaire. The questionnaire is composed of six items which measure employees' interest on career advancement such as promotion to higher/managerial position, interest to assume new/bigger responsibilities or tasks. The participants were asked to score a 5-point Likert scale based on their level of agreement on each statement (1= Untrue of me, 5= Very true of me). The items include "I aim for managerial/supervisory position in my

organization,” “I participate to capacity building initiatives to strengthen my competencies for future career advancements,” and “I apply whenever there is available career advancement opportunity.” In addition, data on the participants’ demographic profile such as age, gender, and years in service was also collected.

The informed consent form, which indicates the purpose and use of data, and questionnaire was sent through target participants’ email following the social distancing protocol due to the COVID pandemic. The conduct of the study followed an Ethics Committee guidelines and the data information classification protocol of the target employees’ organization.

2.2 Measure

In addition to the developed instrument on career intentions, demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and years in service were also collected.

2.3 Participants

A total of 3,655 permanent government employees occupying non-supervisory positions were emailed to invite them to participate in the study. Permanent employees were considered to be good sample to validate the career intention questionnaire because it was observed that they show higher professionalism and empowerment than contractual employees due job insecurity factor and they tend to focus on becoming a regular employee rather than career advancement in the organization (Faridi & Baloch, 2019). Of the 1091 employees who participated in the study, only 991 samples were considered after deleting the incomplete questionnaires. The demographic profile of the samples can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants (n= 991)

	n	% of participants
Gender		
Male	463	46.72
Female	528	53.28
Age (years)		
21 - 30	182	18.37
31- 40	480	48.44
41- 50	232	23.41
51 - 60	81	8.17
61 - 64	16	1.61
Years in Service		
Less than 10	501	50.55
10 - 19	340	34.31
20 – 29	74	7.47
30 above	76	7.67

2.4 Statistical Analysis

The research findings were presented in tables, graphs, and figures. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, standard deviation, percentage and Cronbach alpha coefficient were analyzed using the SPSS software. The confirmatory factor analysis result was generated using the WarpPLS software.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Content Validity

The content validity was determined by experts on the field of psychology and human resources both from private and government setting. They were asked to evaluate the relevance of the items on the constructs being measured using the five point Likert-type scale (1= Not relevant; 5= Highly relevant). The instrument got an average score of 4.5 with all items having a score greater than 3.00. Hence, the items are considered valid (Datta & Singh, 2018).

Table 2: Experts' evaluation per item (n=4)

		Mean
Q1	I signify interest to accept bigger roles and responsibilities than what is expected of my position.	5.00
Q2	I participate to capacity building initiatives to strengthen my competencies for future career advancements (e.g. training, cross posting, job rotation).	4.75
Q3	I possess the qualification requirements (e.g. educational requirement) of the next higher position I am currently holding.	4.00
Q4	I apply whenever there is available career advancement opportunity.	4.50
Q5	I see myself advancing on my career within the next 5 years.	4.75
Q6	I aim to hold a managerial position in the organization.	4.75

Minor suggestions and remarks were received from the experts, in particular, the item on the qualification requirements. One author included in the remarks that this item is relevant if the target participants are government employees as they follow the qualification standards being imposed by the Philippines' Civil Service Commission for government plantilla positions.

3.2 Item Convergent Validity

To establish the similarities of the construct being measured by the items of the questionnaire, the following constructs should be on agreement: factor loadings, composite reliability, and the average variance constructed (Ab Hamid et.al, 2018). Table 3 shows that the factor loadings of the items ranges from 0.723 to 0.829 are greater than 0.60 and significant at $p < .001$. The average variance extracted is greater than 0.50 at 0.59 and the composite reliability is greater than 0.70 at 0.90. The result indicates that items of the questionnaire have good discriminant validity (Huang et.al, 2013).

3.3 Internal Consistency

The questionnaire, incorporating comments from the experts, was subjected to analysis and was found to have a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.82, which is considered a very good level (Hulin et al., 2001). Also, the subsequent if-item-deleted analysis showed that deleting an item will not result to higher alpha value.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations per items
 of the Career Intentions Questionnaire (n=991)

	Mean	SD	Factor Loading
I signify interest to accept bigger roles and responsibilities than what is expected of my position.	4.00	0.81	0.73*
I participate to capacity building initiatives to strengthen my competencies for future career advancements (e.g. training, cross posting, job rotation).	3.97	0.81	0.72*
I possess the qualification requirements (e.g. training, experience, education, eligibility requirements) of the next higher position I am currently holding.	3.93	0.96	0.75*
I apply whenever there is available career advancement opportunity.	3.51	1.03	0.77*
I see myself advancing on my career within the next 5 years.	3.95	0.95	0.83*
I aim to hold a higher position in the organization.	3.72	1.04	0.80*

*Significant at $p < 0.001$

3.4 Career Intentions of Target Participants

Over-all, the participants got a mean score of 3.85 (Table 4) which indicates that they have above average level of career intentions. The results show that male scored slightly higher than female at 3.90. Women tend to signify interest to accept bigger roles and responsibilities more than what is expected of them and believe that they possess the qualification requirements for the next higher position. However, they are neutral on aiming for higher position or career advancement in the organization. On the other hand, males see themselves advancing their career in the next 5 years as they believe to possess the qualifications for the next higher position. Similar pattern was observed in the limited literature on women's career aspirations; the global scenario is that women tend to have low career aspirations due to gender roles and expectations influenced by their environment such as socio-cultural and family interactions (Sadolikar, 2019).

Common factor that may explain respondents' level of career intention in terms of age, gender, years in service, and entry positions is the work values observed by Lechner et al. (2018) in the study they conducted on young adults entrepreneurial and leadership aspirations. Among the work values, they found out that extrinsic rewards and security work values are the most powerful predictor of career aspirations. Young adults who place importance on security work values demonstrate low leadership aspiration and those who is motivated with extrinsic motivation shows higher level of leadership aspiration.

Consistent on these findings, the result shows that extrinsic reward such as promotion and higher pay influence the young adults career intention score at 4.03 and got the highest score on the question whether they see themselves advancing their career in the next 5 years. The results show a decreasing career intention score pattern as the employees gets older. Likewise, as the employee gets older, they are less likely to apply for available career advancement opportunities and aim higher position in the organization.

Table 4: Respondents' mean scores when grouped according to demographic profile

	n	Career Intentions	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Over-all Score	991	3.85	4.00	3.97	3.93	3.51	3.95	3.72
Gender								
Male	463	3.90	4.05	4.04	3.97	3.66	3.99	3.73
Female	528	3.80	3.97	3.92	3.90	3.39	3.91	3.71
Age (years)								
21 - 30	182	4.03	4.07	3.98	3.99	3.64	4.34	4.14
31- 40	480	3.87	3.98	4.01	3.91	3.55	4.02	3.73
41- 50	232	3.84	4.07	4.00	4.02	3.49	3.82	3.66
51 - 60	81	3.45	3.82	3.63	3.75	3.15	3.25	3.12
61 - 64	16	3.37	4.19	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.69	2.81
Years in Service								
Less than 10	501	3.95	4.04	4.03	3.93	3.62	4.18	3.91
10 - 19	340	3.80	3.96	3.94	3.97	3.45	3.84	3.64
20 – 29	74	3.84	4.10	4.00	4.04	3.49	3.78	3.61
30 above	76	3.40	3.90	3.71	3.68	3.09	3.04	2.97

In terms of years of service, respondents with less than 10 years got the highest score at 3.95 while employees with 30 years above scored lowest at 3.40. Employees with lesser years in service tend to focus on adjusting to new environment and developing their competencies to perform new tasks (Faridi & Baloch, 2019). Moreover, employees on entry positions look forward to career advancements but do not focus yet on achieving higher position in the organization. While senior officers believe they possess the qualifications for the next higher position however they are less likely apply to career advancements.

4. Conclusion

Managing human resources has been one of the most affected function in the organization during the pandemic. New normal practices were established giving least priority on career development. This paper aimed to develop a questionnaire to measure employees' career intentions, particularly government employees.

The study was able to describe the development and psychometric properties of the developed career intentions questionnaire. The six items are developed based on definition, career initiatives, and other indicators of career intentions. The questionnaire

adds a significant value on career development literature as a valid and reliable instrument that is first to develop suited to Philippine government employees. The developed tool includes an item on the qualification standards/requirements that is unique to civil service as it is being used to sift through the most qualified and competent applicants for the position.

Also, the research was able to determine the employees' career intentions of a government agency to serve as sample participants for the initial implementation of the developed instrument. The result established the difference between career intentions of employees when group according to gender, age, and years of service.

5. Limitations

While the validity and reliability were established, several limitations have been noted. First, regarding the sampling, convenience sampling was employed to only one target government agency. This limits the generalizability of the findings. Hence, wider participation of various government agencies will further test the psychometric properties of the instrument. Another is for to strengthen the validity of the instrument is to conduct validity tests and correlate result with other standard tests with similar constructs such as career aspiration scale and career decision-making.

Declaration of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

About the Authors

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