



Organizational Career Growth: Literature Review and Future Agenda

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Abstract: Organizational Career Growth (OCG) is an innovative human resource construct which strengthens the employer-employee relations. Studies had conversed the importance of the role of the organization in their employees constant development as it is critical to both the effective growth of organization and its employees. The literatures presented discuss on the development and concept of OCG. Sources for each studied variable were collected and evaluated from literature. To that effect, key words and phrases were entered in specific online databases. Moreover, sources that were found relevant to this study were summarized, analyzed, and evaluated in literature mapping. Finally, a synthesis was done to identify the research gap. The references used in this section were chosen based on selected criteria. The first criterion was recency. Most selected studies were from 2009 to 2020 time bracket. Several earlier seminal and relevant research studies on each variable were also integrated in the study. These studies were selected to provide historical and theoretical development of the constructs. The second criterion was quality. All were peer reviewed publications. The third criterion was accessibility. All selected articles were chosen based on their availability. This paper is organized into several sections. Each section and its related subsections examines histories, definitions, theories, concepts, and researches relevant to understanding the construct under scrutiny. This closes with research gap and future research agenda.

Keywords: OCG, career development and advancement, career success, organizational productivity, intrapersonal and interpersonal growth

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INTRODUCTION

There is a need by every organization to invest in comprehensive career-development process which helps attract and retain high-performing employees (Garavan, Morley, Gunnigle, & Collins, 2001; Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). It is indeed vital to instill a mindset of continuous improvement through learning and enhancement leading to employee satisfaction with optimum opportunities for career growth (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Unfortunately, diminutive attention has been paid to the definite ways in which employees might indicate their chances for advancement and development (Jans, 1989). Then recently, the construct had been shifted to relating it as a support unit to help the employees experience training and development to maximize their worth. In the late 2000s, the term and definition of OCG was introduced by Ho, Chang, Shih, and Liang (2009). Considering that it has only been developed lately, this human resource management construct is still in its initial stages.

Over the last ten years since the term have been established, I have instituted five focal concepts of OCG based

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on recent scholarly literature as presented in Figure 1. This section will thoroughly discuss and explore these OCG concepts.

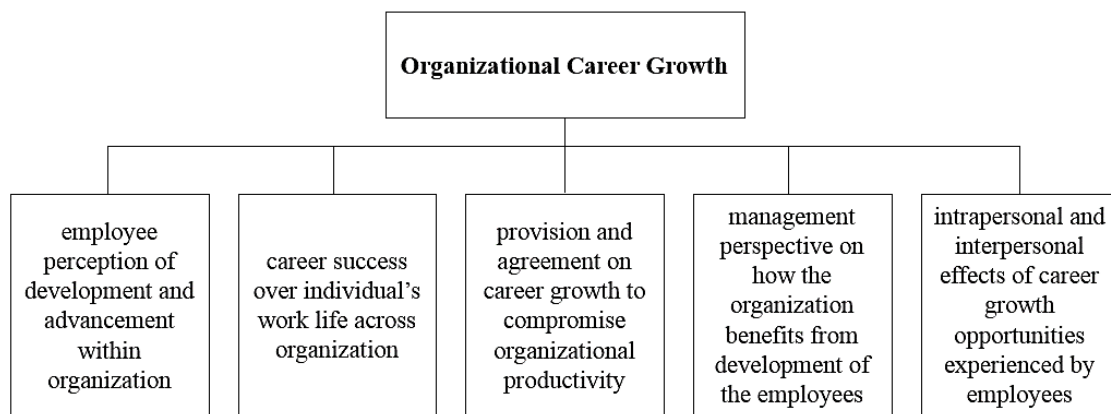


Figure 1 *Concept Map of OCG*

LITERATURE REVIEW

OCG as Employee Perception of Development and Advancement within Organization

Majority of recent studies on OCG is focused on the lens of the employees and how to maximize their worth in the organization they belong to. OCG is measured by the career development and advancement provided by their present organization (Biswakarma, 2016; Nouri & Parker, 2013; Vande Griek, Clauson, & Eby, 2020; Q. Weng & McElroy, 2012; Q. D. Weng, 2018; Yang, Liu, Liu, & Zhang, 2015). It is the overall support the management had given and has been giving its employees for internal advancement. It is believed that through these growth provisions, individuals become psychologically attached to their employees (Daud, 2014; Karavardar, 2014; Kaothan, 2018; Liu, Liu, & Wu, 2010; McElroy & Weng, 2016). Thus, it significantly increases their belief and engagement on their organization (Nouri & Parker, 2013). Likewise, employees are able to understand that the development the management had offered results to pleasant relationship between desires for career opportunities resulting to employees positive attitudes toward their current management (Q. Weng & McElroy, 2012). Strengthening the OCG potentially elicits effective behavior from its people.

Furthermore, employees consider OCG as career-advantageous knowledge for their unrelenting service with their employer (Inkson & King, 2011). This elucidates that they have confidence in continuous development to help them build their careers within the organization (McDonald & Hite, 2015). Employee-driven career growth is beneficial to workforces (Yang et al., 2015). Personnel tend to stay longer as long as their career aspirations are in line with their management endeavors. Also, OCG reveals to be enhancing the qualities, abilities and talents of the staffs to ready them for future job or position within the organization (Rawashdeh, 2013). Therefore, all these career advancements are organizations willingness to reward all of their employees efforts for optimum growth (C. Chen, 2016; Q. Weng & McElroy, 2012). As a result, individuals who have access to career growth tools, resources, and processes tend to feel supported by their organization.

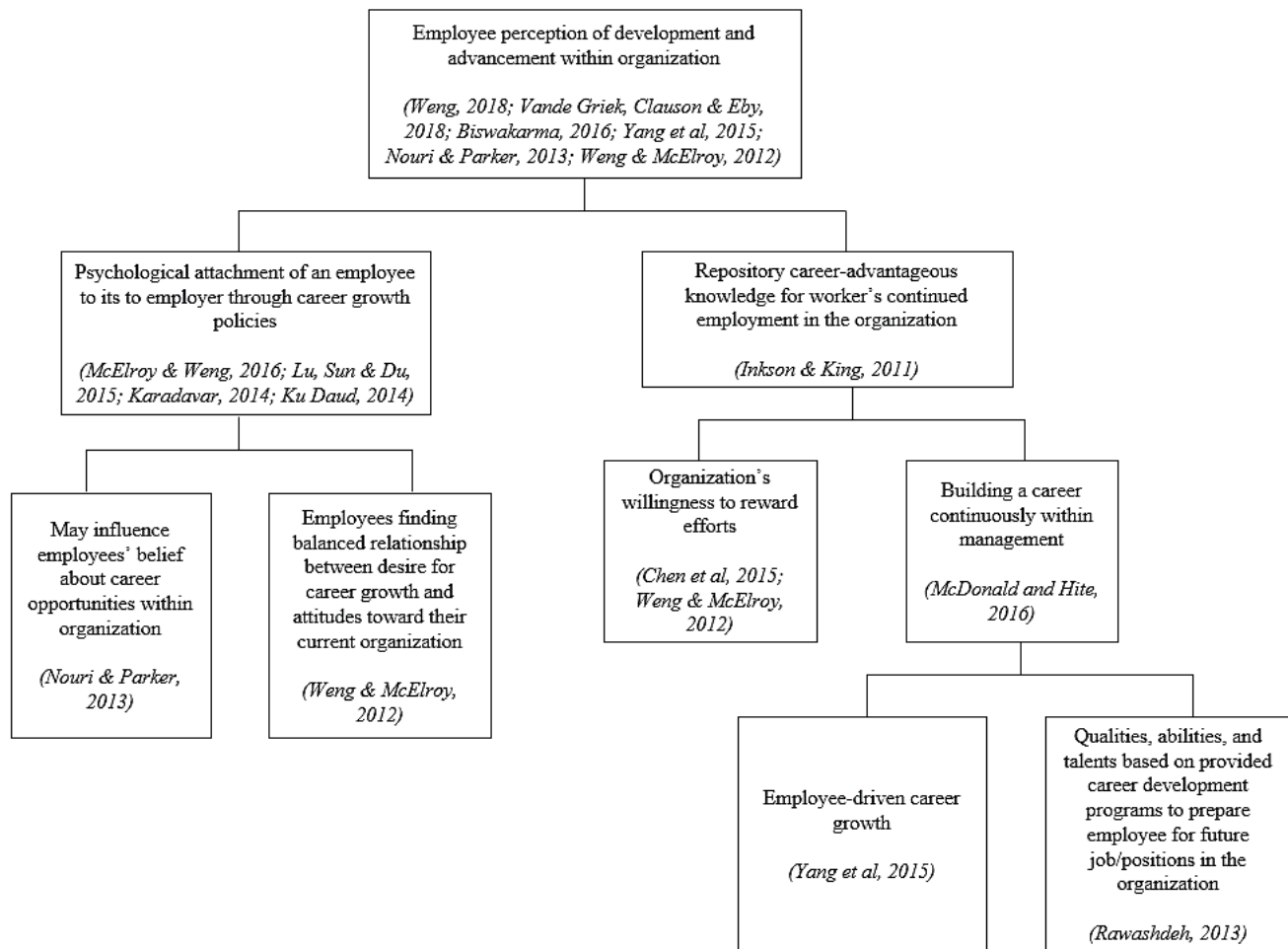


Figure 2 Concept Map of OCG as Employee Perception of Development and Advancement within Organization

OCG as Career Success Over Individuals Work Life Across Organization

In the early 2000s, researchers measure career growth of an employee by entirety regardless of the number of organizations he had been connected with. This illustrates that OCG is employees perceived overall career growth (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007; Garavan et al., 2001; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). Although, some recent studies still emphasize on this explanation (Biswakarma, 2016; Spagnoli & Weng, 2019; Zhou, Siriboonchitta, Yamaka, & Maneejuk, 2020). OCG is defined as the totality of personal and professional growth of an employee that he has acquired through working in different companies (Li, Ning, Long, & Duo, 2017). This experience equips them with overall progression. As employees strive for advancement in career, they believe that working in various organizations can help achieve their career goals and objectives (M. S. Nawaz & Pangil, 2016). Providing such career growth opportunities will eventually develop organizational outcomes (McElroy & Weng, 2016). For that reason, good career planning encourages and inspires the employees to reach personal development through career experience enrichment.

Moreover, having relevant career growth experience helps one develop work and general management awareness. This denotes that the calculative employee skills and knowledge serve as a strong voice in negotiating terms of exchange with the management (Biswakarma, 2016). Employees are the existent source of value in any organization; hence, it is fundamental for them to benefit from workplace growth and diversity in their various career stages. The skills and knowledge that employees have assimilated are essential in any working environment which are considered as highly valued by the employers.

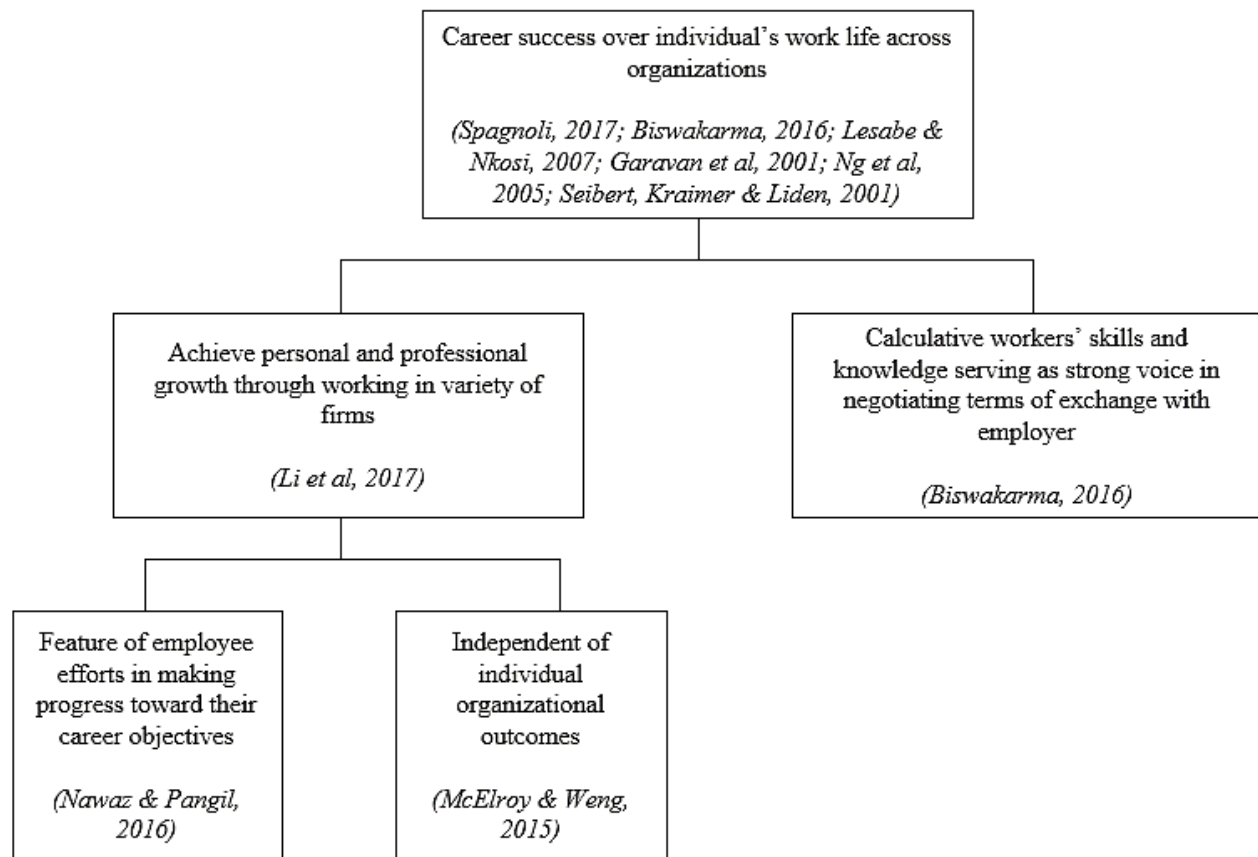


Figure 3 Concept Map of OCG as Career Success Over Individuals Work Life Across Organization

OCG as Provision and Agreement on Career Growth to Compromise Organizational Productivity

OCG, as a human resource practice, is a strong instrument that helps the employees to become an operative part of organizational success. It makes sense to balance the potentials and strengths of the employees where they are encouraged to build skills and professional options to improve workforce wellbeing. Finding harmony between provision of career growth opportunities by the management and satisfaction on career growth by the employees is significant (Inkson & King, 2011; McDonald & Hite, 2015). Enabling career planning shows the employees that the employer looks after their human resources through helping them meet their personal aspirations with organizational career framework. Thus, there is understanding in the employee-employer relationship (Guan et al., 2014; McDonald & Hite, 2015; McElroy & Weng, 2016; Wang, Weng, McElroy, Ashkanasy, & Lievens, 2014; Q. Weng, McElroy, Morrow, & Liu, 2010). Among the best practices considered in OCG are building platform for immediate and long-term objectives and work for both parties; and generating employee long-term commitment to achieve sustained organizational competitive advantage (Inkson & King, 2011). To achieve these practices, offering of various career development courses for employees are of optimum importance (Kanwal & Tariq, 2016).

In addition, communicating the expectation and needs of both the management and its people is of highly significance (Inkson & King, 2011). This is about empowering employees to understand the key career drivers, generating motivating career pathways linked to current roles and goals aligned to their aspirations and values while ensuring the organization has the right people and resources for sustainable future of the organization. For say, concentrating on the establishments needs supplemented with the ways how every employee can help attain those needs leading to organizational success (McDonald & Hite, 2015). Moreover, incorporating collaboration in constructing employer-sponsored career workshop can build commitment among employees (Inkson & King, 2011). Likewise, maintaining a strong employer-employee relationship through OCG serve as key to organizational productivity. Hence, the career efforts of individual employee and the willingness of organization to reward such efforts work as formula for this strength (van Osch & Schaveling, 2020). OCG is described as finding stability between employee career growth

and organizational improvement (Kim et al., 2016). Similarly, organization should constantly provide career growth mechanisms as part of their company investment to foster strong rapport with its workforce (Biswakarma, 2016).

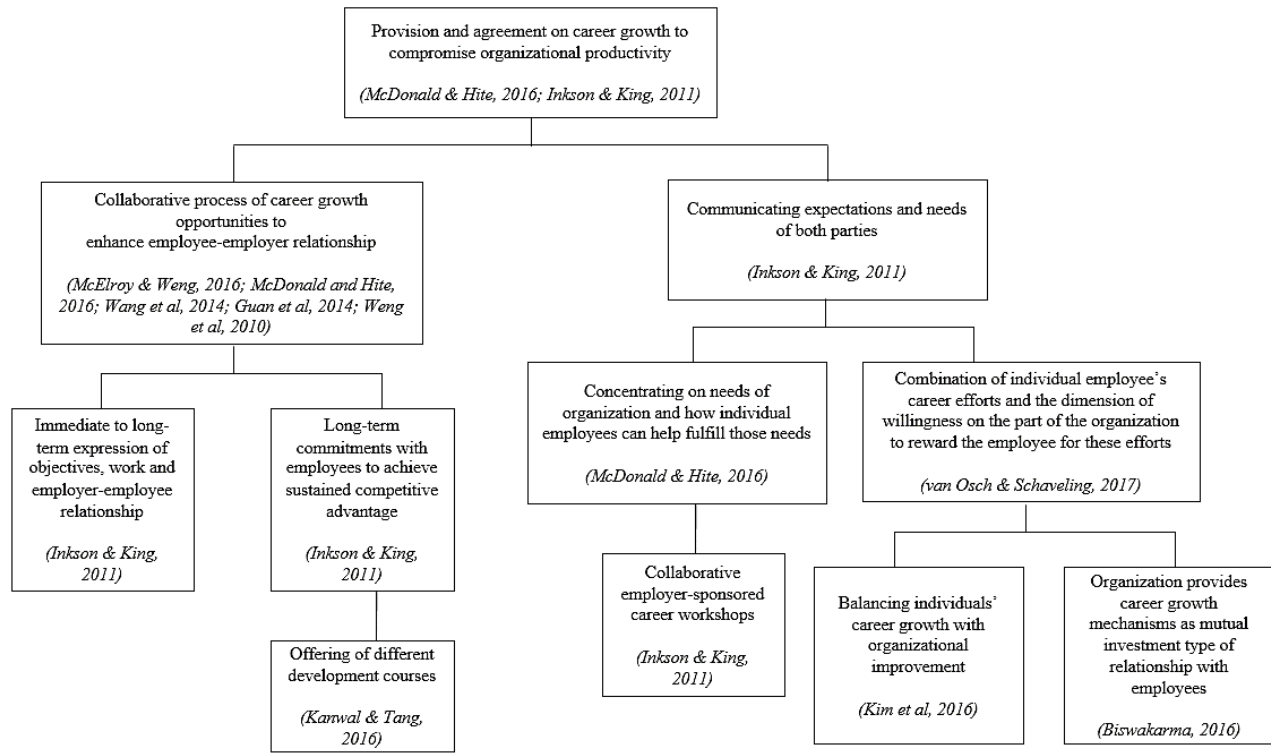


Figure 4 Concept Map of OCG as Provision and Agreement on Career Growth to Compromise Organizational Productivity

OCG as Management Perspective on How the Organization Benefits from Development of the Employees

Recent studies on OCG are now focusing on the perspective of the organizations management. This shift in focus finds an emphasis on the specific subject of career growth among the organizations workers. Likewise, this shift in focus is also a symbiotic relation to the organization. There is the school of thought where the organization can benefit from the development of its employees. In many cases, OCG is the preference by the management of many companies as part of staff retention (McDonald & Hite, 2015; Nouri & Parker, 2013).

The preference for OCG by many organizations is exemplified by the organization putting more concentrated efforts in assessing workers and their potential within the company (Agba, Nkpoyen, & Ushie, 2010). These efforts can manifest in different activities or programs. There is designing and implementing the career path of employees (Agba et al., 2010). In this method, shaping an employees career path serves as a recognition for employees that they are an asset of the organization. Supplementing them with a career path helps employee/worker productivity in addition to a more significant commitment to the organizations goals. A specific example is creating challenges in career growth expectation (D. Okurame, 2012).

Another effort is to emphasize the role of the organization in managing an individuals career and choices (Spagnoli & Weng, 2019). In this effort, the organization can create a competitive management program for employees (Juhdi, Pa'wan, & Hansaram, 2013).

Building development courses is another by-product or effort by the management. These courses aim to enhance the competitive advantage needs of the organization (Inkson & King, 2011). By focusing on competitive advantage needs, the organization uses the employees career growth progress to improve the organizations image (Nouri & Parker, 2013). A boost to the organization image or high level of organizational prestige augments employee beliefs about career growth opportunities and leads to a higher level of commitment and lower turnover intentions. With a sizeable organizational image or prestige, there is less chance of losing experienced and talented employees. Besides, this can buffer or negate any negative image of the firm. There is also a lower reduction in employee quality and productivity (Umar, Shaikh, & Tahir, 2016).

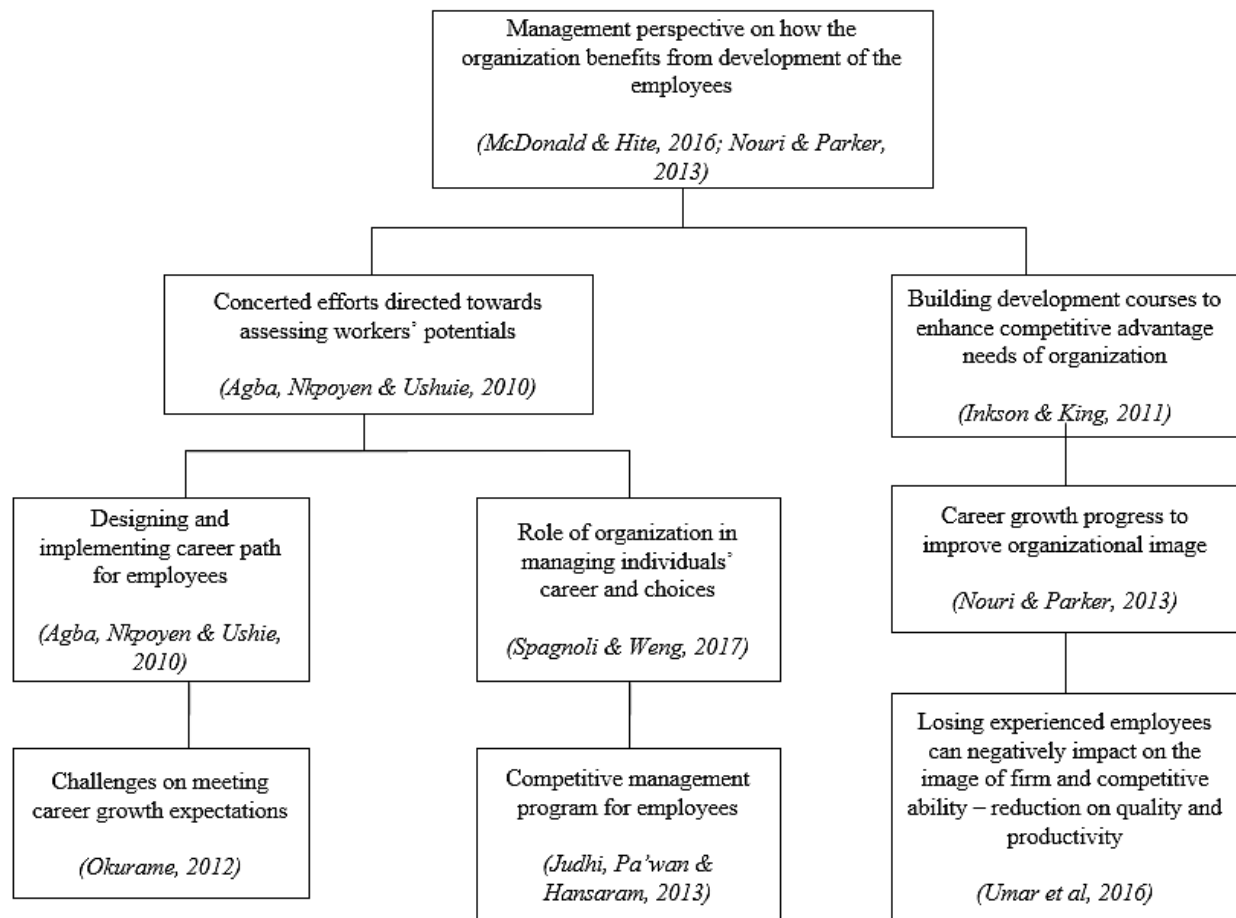


Figure 5 Concept Map of OCG as Management Perspective on How the Organization Benefits from Development of the Employees

OCG as Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Effects of Career Growth Opportunities Experienced by Employees

Another perception of OCG is the employee's experience of interpersonal and intrapersonal effects from career growth opportunities (Liu et al., 2010; Q. Weng et al., 2010). It was found that those employees with high interpersonal skills also possess high political skill within the organization. Supervisors who see employees who engage in more social and political behaviours are rated with greater and better career growth potential (Liu et al., 2010).

One effect from this perception is employees taking proactive roles. These proactive roles, in return, influence other employees and events in the workplace. This initiative for a proactive role is based on these employees' personal career development. As previously stated, the more social an employee is, the more political they are. From a supervisors' point of view, these employees are seen as more capable in their work and acquire more career growth potential compared to their peers. Once employees take a proactive role, they are not making the role for themselves; other employees with lower political power or behaviour support them. This support translates handling power to employees that are more political and the latter to exert influence towards the remaining workers (Liu et al., 2010).

When employees take proactive roles in their workplace, they experience personal level career development. It implies that an employee's level of career development is tied to his or her level of activeness in the workplace. Once an employee is proactive, this attitude also translates to the employee's mindset and psychology. They also emphasize their proactive career planning (taking the initiative to prepare for one's career) and proactive career enacting or taking the initiative to act on career plans (Agba et al., 2010).

Also, there is enrichment brought by diversity, work-life balance and ethics. People with more politic and influence can introduce more variety and innovation in the workplace. These can include implementation of ethics, diversity and work-life balance. The workplace remains as one of the battlegrounds for equal opportunity among populations and demographics, with merit in mind rather any physical attributes. Work-life is also a novel but an emerging option

for many employees, resulting from employees demanding flexibility in work hours and output. Ethics is also a significant part in the workplace, with emphasis on fostering ethical conduct and relationship between workers as well as management and employees (McDonald & Hite, 2015).

Another effect is that employees take ownership of their careers instead of letting the management control it. The working environment has changed drastically, and recent trends suggest that more workers are more open to expanding their horizons by a career change or moving to other areas for work. Thus, the age of employees staying for five years and above in the same company is no longer the norm (Biswakarma, 2016).

As such, more emphasis is given on the process of the employee’s career path rather than on the results (Kim et al., 2016). As careers paths have no specific blueprint, timetable or an attached industry, it serves the view that individual can choose their path in any organization, field or industry without sacrificing their career values. The less imposition or importance placed upon the position or job title gives modern employees flexibility to carve their path instead of relying on the organization to do it for them. The overall view also resonates with employee concern within and outside the organization.

Besides, there are employee concerns or issues that can influence an employee to stay or leave an organization. It alludes to employee retention and employees’ organizational commitment. A mix of the organization’s human resource and employee’s career-related factors play a part in the employee’s decision to stay or to leave. If the tight factors are satisfied, an individual employee may stay within the organization and making their career path within. The reverse is also true if these factors are not met, an individual can set their path in another company (M. S. Nawaz & Pangil, 2016).

Employee attitudes and behaviour grounded by career progression is the last effect. Career progression does not happen in a vacuum. Much of its drive and path are fueled by the individuals attitude and behaviour in the workplace. Many employers m expect individual temperament from their employees. Those who exceed expectations are seen as people who are progressing in the workplace and their career path. Many individual behaviours and attitudes are the results of intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions in the workplace. The two factors create the impression, interactions and relationships within workers and between management and an employee (Q. Weng et al., 2010).

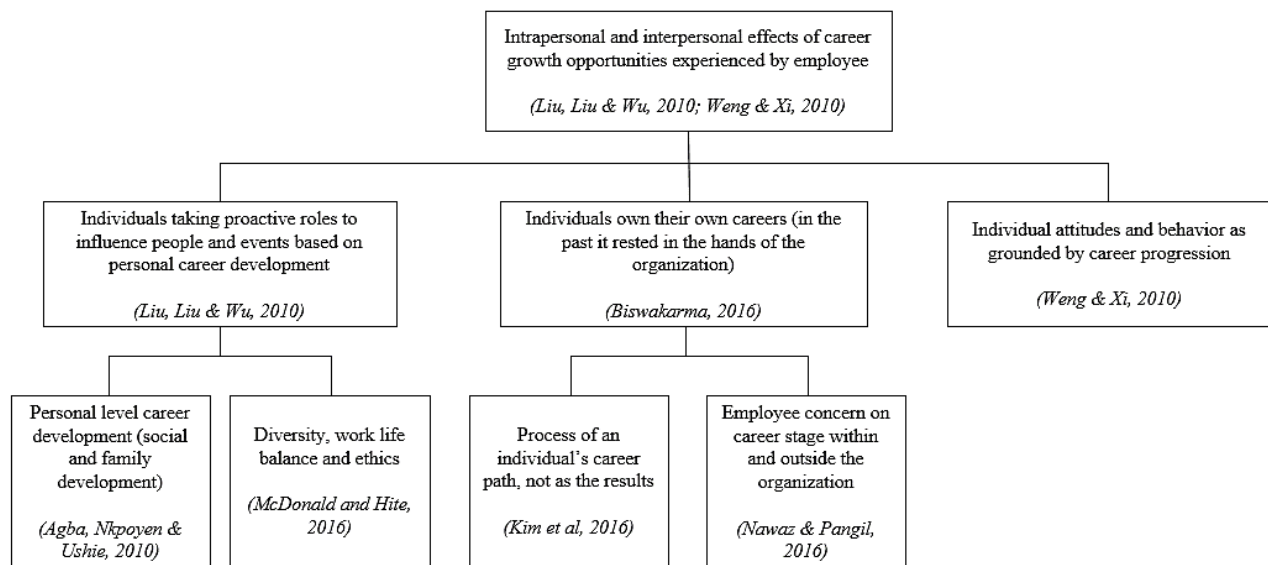


Figure 6 Concept Map of OCG as Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Effects of Career Growth Opportunities Experienced by Employees

Attributes of OCG

The pattern on the different measures of OCG varies as presented in Figure 7. This section provides the attributes of OCG based on related studies over the last ten years.

The dimension indicated four variables namely career goal progress, professional ability, promotion speed, and remuneration growth (C. Chen, 2016; Ho et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2016; M. S. Nawaz & Pangil, 2016; Nouri & Parker, 2013; Wang et al., 2014). However, further studies collapse the use of the four variable into three as promotion speed

and remuneration growth are highly interrelated (Biswakarma, 2016; Li et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2014; Q. Weng & McElroy, 2012; Yang et al., 2015). In the latest years, most diverse authors employ either the four or the three factor models. Though, a study confirmed that the three factor model should be used if the respondents have managerial position, while the four factor model should be utilized to evaluate wide variability of positions (Kim et al., 2016). A study proposes that other than the four methods mentioned by (Daud, 2014; Q. Weng et al., 2010) added job rotation and promotion equity to measure OCG. Other authors suggest that OCG can be measured through career advancement, career counseling and career opportunities (Agba et al., 2010); job- and company-provided development opportunities (Jawahar, 2012); and individual career planning and career management (Pujiwati, 2016).

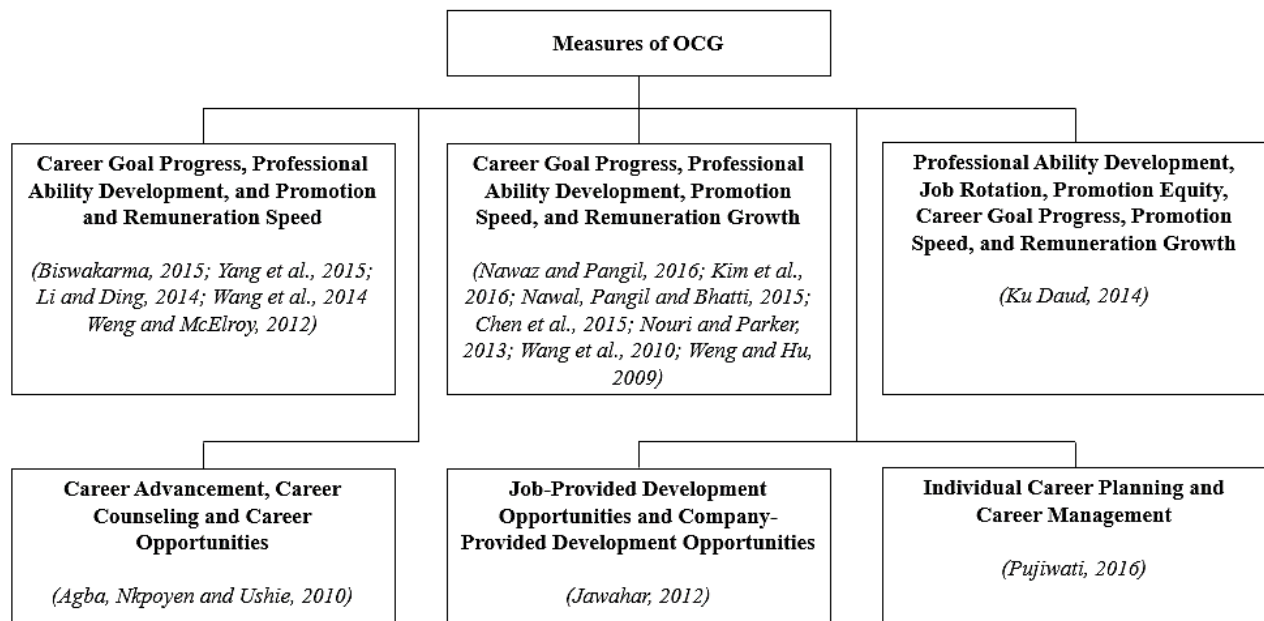


Figure 7 Literature Map of OCG Attributes

Literature Mapping on Studies Linked to OCG

A number of studies have been interrelated to OCG in the last ten years. Since the term OCG was introduced in the early 2000s, several studies have been conducted on the relationship between OCG and employee commitment. A research indicates that OCG has significant relationship with EC (Agba et al., 2010). When the employer provide the personnel with OCG opportunities, a commitment attitude can be developed. To elaborate this result, OCG is tested in its multidimensional scale namely career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, and remuneration growth to further assess its relationship with employee commitment. The results show that all the OCG attributes except promotion speed reciprocated high commitment to organization (Juhdi et al., 2013); however, another study proposes that only professional ability development and promotion speed are related with employee commitment (Daud, 2014). Q. Weng et al. (2010) studied the relationship between OCG attributes and employee commitment attributes (namely affective, normative and continuance commitment). The result presents that all four dimensions of OCG is associated with affective commitment. Conversely among the four attributes of OCG, only professional ability development is not associated with normative and continuance commitment. With the exclusion of professional ability development, the utilization of career growth factors as an HR practice has inferences for the remaining two forms of commitment. This proposes that these three attributes are effective means of building up side bets and norms of reciprocity which makes employees perceive that leaving the organization is both more costly and morally problematic. The fact that professional ability development is linked to affective commitment but not to continuance or normative commitment recommends that the development of workers' professional abilities may help them ascertain with the organizational goals and values; thus, building affective commitment. Contrariwise, the employees may see these abilities as transferrable and a normal business activity of the organization, which explains the lack of correlation between professional ability development and continuance and normative commitment, respectively.

On the other hand, some research have been studied to test the effect of OCG on employee commitment. OCG has positive influence on employee commitment (Pujiwati, 2016). This reflects that when management promote career opportunities programs, they will greatly increase the commitment level of the workforce. Though, more comprehensive studies are done in which OCG attributes are enumerated to assess their effects on employee commitment. Results are varied in which employee commitment is influenced by professional ability development and rewards system (Gul, 2015); career goal progress and professional ability development (Nouri & Parker, 2013); professional ability development and remuneration growth (Lamba & Choudhary, 2013); and professional ability development, promotion speed, and remuneration growth (Tremblay, Cloutier, Simard, Chênevert, & Vandenberghe, 2010). Likewise, a particular study designed by (Lamba & Choudhary, 2013) to test the hypothesis in different sectors. They find out that OC is influenced by remuneration growth and professional ability development in the banking industry; career goal progress in academic sector; remuneration growth in hospitality industry; professional ability development in the IT industry; and lastly, remuneration growth in manufacturing sector.

Lastly, employee commitment is used as a mediating variable in different studies. M. S. Nawaz and Pangil (2016) prove that employee commitment has mediating effect on the causality of the relationship between OCG attributes and turnover intention. But, a much later study conducted by M. S. Nawaz and Pangil (2016) sees that only the relationship between the two OCG attributes namely promotion speed and remuneration growth, and turnover intention are mediated by employee commitment. This implicates that providing promotion and remuneration mobility programs are sought to build committed personnel; therefore, decreasing turnover intent of employees. Though, the result is in contrast with the study of (Wang et al., 2014) wherein the relationship of all OCG attributes and subsequent voice behavior is mediated by affective commitment. Relationship between OCG attributes and turnover intention is also mediated by affective commitment as to (Q. Weng & McElroy, 2012). The findings suggest that OCG is a viable subset of practices that should be measured by management seeking to increase employees' willingness to provide suggestions or comments on improving organizational competitiveness. Also, it is contrary to the research of (Karavardar, 2014) and turnover intention, only affective and normative commitment have significant mediating effect.

One of the most common studies on OCG is its relationship with turnover intention. Coherently, provision of OCG is necessary to increase the intention of the employees to stay in the organization (Biswakarma, 2016; J.-Q. Chen et al., 2016; Jawahar, 2012; Kanwal & Tariq, 2016; Karavardar, 2014; M. S. Nawaz & Pangil, 2016; M. Nawaz & Pangil, 2016; M. S. Nawaz, Pangil, & Bhatti, 2015; Nouri & Parker, 2013; Umar et al., 2016; van Osch & Schaveling, 2020; Vande Griek et al., 2020). Although, no matter what OCG programs the organization offers, not all have intention to stay (Yang et al., 2015).

Another construct linked to OCG is job satisfaction. Results indicated that OCG is an effective manner to promote job satisfaction among employees. The occurrence of job satisfaction among others is compelled by factors of OCG which is developing well. As stated, OCG influence to behaviors and attitudes of the employees as well as their emotional condition (Dick, 2011; Kanwal & Tariq, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2018; Spagnoli & Weng, 2019; Q. Weng & McElroy, 2012).

Additionally, some constructs have been concomitant with OCG such as demographic factors (Biswakarma, 2016; Kanwal & Tariq, 2016; D. Okurame, 2012; van Osch & Schaveling, 2020); proactivity (Vande Griek et al., 2020); employee loyalty (Agba et al., 2010; Lee & Lee, 2018); employee performance (Spagnoli & Weng, 2019); motivation (D. Okurame, 2012); organizational environment (Kanwal & Tariq, 2016) self-efficacy beliefs (D. E. Okurame, 2014); and personal growth initiative (D. E. Okurame, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Scholarly works on OCG in the last ten years have shown diverse and imperative concepts on this human resource terminology. Conceptions developed are as follows: employee perception of development and advancement within organization; career success over individuals work-life across organization; provision and agreement on career growth to compromise organizational productivity; management perspective on how the organization benefits from development of employees; and intrapersonal and interpersonal effects of career growth opportunities experienced by employees.

Firstly, most of the recent studies have approached OCG as the perception of employees on the agendas provided by their respective employer in relation to career advancement. However, results of perceptions may be prejudiced as it is influenced by self-assessment and subjective in nature. Therefore, it will not truly reflect ones growth within the organization unless measured objectively. Secondly, whilst some studies claimed that OCG is individuals career growth

in totality. It is not just about one's career growth in the organization he is associated with, but rather his overall career success which is measured by the level of career goals he has achieved thus far. Despite the fact that OCG, as described by the first two concepts, is in the view of the individual, the third and fourth concepts describe otherwise. Thirdly, OCG is defined as career opportunities provided by the organization wherein the employees are also considered in the formation of the OCG programs. This implies that the OCG agendas will develop the employees as well as give value to the company in the long-run. In rather contrast to the third concept, the fourth OCG is defined as career opportunities provided by the organization based on what they think will result to organizational efficiency. Hence, organization has to reflect first on which of these agendas or programs will be beneficial to the company before they start implementing them. Lastly, OCG is associated to developing intrapersonal and interpersonal effects of the employees. It reflects on their behavior and how they relay this growth to others.

This study aims to widely convene all the scholarly works on the concept of OCG which has not been done considering the newness of this human resource variable.

Future Research Agenda

Research gaps were identified and comprehensively conferred after careful scrutiny of all recent scholarly literatures related to OCG. Future research agenda are as follows:

1. Majority of the studies in the last ten years on OCG are assessed subjectively based on employees own assumptions and judgment towards career growth programs provided within and across organizations. Only the study of [Inkson and King \(2011\)](#) evaluated OCG objectively actual or performance measure of the respondents. Furthermore, no study has been conducted based on a qualitative research design. Hence, there is a clear dearth on evaluating OCG objectively.

2. As recommended by [\(Q. Weng & McElroy, 2012\)](#), there is still a need for improvement on the best way to measure and conceptualize career growth. This study will introduce attributes to measure OCG objectively since objective information is provable and factual. Objective research instrument is not coloured by prejudices and perceptions. Therefore, this paper will focus on the actual experiences of the respondents, not their perception.

3. It is essential to examine the causal relationships among OCG and other variables to elaborate the concept of OCG further since studies on this human resource construct are still limited ([Kim et al., 2016](#)). [Q. Weng and Zhu \(2020\)](#) proposes which managerial practices could be used to advance employees OCG; and what positive organizational attitudes and behaviors is OCG is related to.

4. Most of the studies are cross sectional. A cross sectional study in social science research is a type of observable research that explores data from a population or a representative subset, at a specific point in time ([Cherry, 2019](#)). As suggested by [\(Daud, 2014\)](#), future study on OCG could involve longitudinal research to elevate effectiveness of career growth before and after individual experiences. Additionally, assessing an employee, given that he has limited experience or inadequate time period, is not a true effective measure whether their organization is progressing them toward their career goals through the OCG programs provided ([Q. Weng & McElroy, 2012](#)).

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