

# The Effect of Training and Development and Networking on Career Success Managerial Staff in Large Manufacturing Firms in Kenya

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## Abstract

The main aim of this study was to examine the effect of networking in the relationship between training and development and career success of the managerial staff in large scale manufacturing firms in Kenya. The study was based on two theories: social capital theory and human capital theory. The study was guided by positivist research paradigm and descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted; primary data was collected from managerial staff from large scale manufacturing firms in Kenya. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Hypothesis was tested using linear regression model. The findings indicated that training and development has a statistically significant influence on career success. Secondly, networking partially mediates the relationship between training and development and career success. The study recommends that large scale manufacturing firms should enhance their employees' career success by providing them with training and development opportunities. Employees on the other hand should engage in networking to enhance their chances of career success.

**Keywords:** Training and Development, Networking, Career Success

**JEL:** M3

## 1. Introduction

The question of Career success is a major concern among researchers, human resource experts and persons involved in professional work (Heslin, 2005). Scholars dealing with career research have endeavored to examine and analyse the antecedents of career success, organizations interested in developing a committed work force are concerned with how they can help their staff realize their career objectives while the staff on the other hand are in a dire need of experiencing success in their careers. Traditionally, most organizations felt obligated to provide clear career paths and development for their staff, the scenario was a common occurrence in the 20th century (Cascio, 2007). On the contrary, careers in the 21st century is measured by continuous learning and identity changes rather than by chronological age and life changes (Bernardin, 2008). Organizations have since experienced major structural changes that has seen downsizings, delayerings, rightsizings, restructurings and layoffs. Many organizations have been rendered flat and the psychological contract existing between the employer and employee has been breached. This has posed a greater challenge than before in

meeting the needs of individual employees and organizations in designing career systems (Cappellen & Janssens, 2010).

In order to keep pace with today's turbulent times, it is very important for both companies and staff to join hands in coming up with proper ways of addressing career needs. For those organizations that have managed to create for themselves a pool of talents and remained competitive, career management for their staff's success has been an issue of concern (Barnett & Bradley, 2007). Nevertheless, for most companies, career management is still seen as optional, it is not regarded as an essential part of organizational resourcing. On the part of the organization training and development is a key aspect in which organizations can proactively manage their staff's careers. It is generally aimed at facilitating the potential of the staff. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) points out that training involves the use of formal processes to impart knowledge and help people acquire the skills necessary for them to perform their jobs satisfactorily while development is directed at future needs and is concerned with growth rather than immediate performance. While better performance in the job is a precursor to promotion and salary increment which marks the achievement of objective career success, employees also need to perform better on the job to realize satisfaction in their careers (Lewis & Arnold, 2012).

A midst these changes, individuals on their part have to realize that they are the drivers of their careers and hence must play an active role towards the realization of their career prospects (Weng & McElroy, 2010). Particularly, in situations where organizations have abandoned their supportive roles, they are solely responsible for their career success. Employees apart from obtaining necessary knowledge and skill through training, need to build both internal and external contacts to facilitate their career success. Establishing internal and external contacts results into a wider social capital base within the organization and enhances more information sharing and wide experience in handling tasks (Counsell & Popova, 2000). This is particularly necessary in handling the various challenges that arise in the work environment especially for the management positions that require more of decision making. Lau and Pang (2000) posit that establishment of internal contacts facilitates the development of good quality relationship with the employers, a part from this, these employees have access to the necessary resources and valuable information that are useful in career development, similarly, they are readily considered for organizational sponsorship opportunities. At the same time, external networks expose one to information on job opportunities that exist outside the organization (Seibert, Kraimer & Liden, 2001). This is important especially when the current organization does not offer chances for career progression. It is proposed that the amount and level of training obtained by individual influences his or her networking behaviour that in turn enhances the achievement of career success. Manufacturing sector in Kenya has received limited attention with respect to this subject matter. Therefore, the study sought to examine the effect of training and development and networking on career success of managers of large manufacturing firms in Kenya.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Training**

Training is the process of improving the capacity of the workforce by allowing them to advance their level of education, through attending seminars and workshop and through engaging in the job itself (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Training imparts knowledge, skills and competences in the employees thus improving their efficiencies and effectiveness in job performance. It is regarded as an investment in human capital regardless of whether the investment is as a result of the effort by the individual or by the organization. Organizations in offering training to their employees not only enhance the staff's performance on the job but also fulfill their obligation as part of the psychological contract with their employees (Lewis & Arnold, 2012). Individuals who are offered training gain feelings of appreciation from their organization and endeavor to devote their time and effort to work towards the fulfilment of the goals and objectives of their companies. Individuals on their own can also develop their own

training and development goals in a bid to improve on their skills and prepare themselves for better career Opportunities and career progression. Training and development are a major step as far as employees' career success is concerned. Apart from this, the skills acquired through training prepare the staff for future job openings and higher positions (Seibert, Kraimer & Heslin, 2016).

Galanou (2009) argues that training and development process is one of the most important aspects for improving employees' productivity and aligning individual goals to corporate goals. Further, clear training and development policies have led to the success of many organizations because employees gain more competencies leading to improved productivity (Hamid, 2011). For this to happen, training and development programs should be designed to meet individual employee needs (Steven, 2009). A study by Hutchings et al., (2009) revealed that training and development practices increase an employee's technical and interpersonal abilities while enhancing their job satisfaction. In this era of dynamic business environment, organizations have realized the need to develop employees who can not only adapt to changes but also act as change managers (Hwang & Rauen, 2015). The study asserted that organizations need to instil the drive in employees by providing a challenging work environment in order to develop a leadership mindset. This can be done by providing early exposure to future roles (Fernandez-Araoz, 2014). Based on the study, early exposure to future roles enables employees to develop self-efficacy prior to the actual assumption of duty. This will enable them to make tough decisions in an uncertain business environment and easily adapt to changes in their careers. Nevertheless, organizations should identify and select employees who are highly disciplined and results oriented to work well in their future roles.

Undoubtedly, modern organizations require manpower that is able to perform today's jobs and are receptive to ever changing needs (Salas, 2012). The argument posed by the researcher is that what an organization needs is to be fully aware of how to utilize training in order to develop a competent workforce. In addition, understanding the trainee's expectations is very vital in making training and development a success. Nevertheless, training and development process requires pulled efforts of both individuals and the organization. The individual has his/her own career goals which require him/her to polish his/her competencies. The organization on the other hand has to provide T&D programs to individuals which will ensure matching of the personal career goals to the corporate career goals. Henceforth, manufacturing firms should ensure the creation of learning organization as well as provide seminars and workshops to managerial staff. This will lead to gaining of competencies which will lead to improvement of their work performance as well as prepare them for future career, role changes and achievement of subjective career success (Cranshaw, 2006).

## **2.2. Networking**

This is defined as behaviors that are aimed at building, maintaining, and using informal relationships that possess the potential of facilitating work-related activities of individuals by voluntarily granting access to resources and maximizing common advantages (Wolff & Moser, 2006). The concept is defined on a behavioral level as a set of interrelated behaviors consistently shown by individuals (Witt, 2004). Accordingly, networking measures typically assess how often individuals show networking behaviors such as discussing business matters outside of working hours or using contacts to get confidential advice. Michael and Yukl (1993) posit that these behaviors lead to informal, voluntary, and reciprocal relationships that in turn facilitate access to resources such as task related support, strategic information, or career success. Networking is distinct from the concept of social capital, which refers to a different level of analysis. Networking is an individual level construct and focuses on individual behavior. The concept of social capital refers to a structural level of analysis and focuses on the quality and extent of existing relationship constellations (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001).

Nie, Lian & Huang (2012) argue that apart from building internal contacts, employees can establish external contacts outside the organization. Lau and Pang (2000) observe that strengthening external contacts involves being part of trade associations or social organizations and liaising with job

searchers and professional bodies. The tactic is important to people who are frequently searching for better career opportunities. Eddleston, Baldrige, and Veiga (2004) argue that people who develop external contacts are better placed in terms of achievement of their career prospects. Being part of social groups enable employees to widen their network and establish important associations with influential people such as; the CEO, managing directors and other employees working in other firms (Cappellen & Janssens, 2010). The outcomes of these relationships predict the probability of obtaining career opportunities and useful information that is likely to lead to faster realization of career success.

### **2.3. Career Success**

Career success is defined as positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements one has accumulated as a result of one's work experiences (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999; Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman, 2005; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). A part from sharing a similar definition of career success, these authors are in agreement about the two forms of career success. The first one; career success can be described as observable career accomplishments which are measured by income, promotion, job status and work-related recognition (Ng et al., 2005). Therefore, researchers call this form of career success objective career success (Judge & Kameyer-Mueller, 2007; Ng et al., 2005). The other form explains career success as a process in which the extent of career success depends on how a person perceives or judges it (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). It is overall reactions of individuals towards their careers. This is what is called subjective or intrinsic career success (Judge & Kameyer-Mueller, 2007; Ng et al., 2005). The commonly used measures of subjective career success are career satisfaction and job satisfaction (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001).

In discussing career success, the perspective of upward mobility by Turner (1960) provides a basis for both objective and subjective career success. On the basis of this perspective individuals that move up in the organizational or societal hierarchy, are generally regarded as having achieved career success or experiencing career success thereof (Ng et al., 2005). According to this perspective, employees can move upwards in the organization according to two different systems of upward mobility: contest mobility and sponsored mobility (Fuller & Marler, 2009; Ng et al., 2005; Turner, 1960). The contest-mobility perspective states that an individual will move upwards in the organization by adding value to the organization with his or her own abilities and contributions (Ng et al., 2005; Turner, 1960). According to this upward mobility system, every individual can compete to move upwards in the organization (Ng et al., 2005). Having political knowledge and skills, following training, and having a network are examples of contest-mobility upward movements (Fuller & Marler, 2009). In contradiction to the contest-mobility perspective, not every individual is able to compete to move upwards within the sponsored-mobility perspective (Ng et al., 2005). This perspective suggests that only those who are chosen by elites can move upwards in the organization. Elites such as managers, pay more attention to these chosen ones and help them to gain advantage in comparison to other competing individuals (Ng et al., 2005).

### **2.4. Training and Development, Networking and Career Success**

Training has evolved substantially in recent years with evidence indicating more organizational and individual investment in training and development (Bernardin, 2008). Given the intense pressure to compete, improve quality and customer service, and lower costs, leading companies have come to view training as a key to organizational survival and success. As the workforce matures, retaining employees with critical skills, creating career paths to keep senior employees break out of career plateau and retraining senior employees whose skills have become outdated, are posing special challenges to managers and business operators (Zeffane and Mayo, 1994). Jamrog, (2002) asserts that employees want good training opportunities in order to keep themselves up-to-date and survive in the labor market if needed. A usual logic applied in the discussion of development is that increasing employee's attractiveness on the market through training is that they will leave when the opportunity presents

itself. However, Jamrog argues that employees are more willing to stay within firms that provide training and that turnover commences when those opportunities cease to exist. As organizations evolve in response to the impact of organizational changes, developments in cultural and environmental areas, and improvements to and introduction of new technologies and procedures, continuous training and development of employees become important. Training and development of employees, as a component of organizational career management programmes, can contribute to ensuring organizational changes and improvements occur as planned by assuring that such changes are supported by qualified, motivated and committed staff resources as employees gain their career success (Baruch, & Peiperl, 2000). Despite this acknowledgement, there is little empirical data on the extent to which Kenyan manufacturing companies engage in training and development of their employees.

Over the years training and development has been perceived as a means of building one's human capital through enhancing acquisition and improvement in skills and competences in addition to ensuring that one is well equipped to occupy higher positions within and outside the organization (Power, 2010). In the recent past training and development was one of the fundamental means of facilitating individual achievement of career success. However, with rapid changes in the work context people may not rely only on the knowledge and skills obtained, there is a dire need to build internal and external contacts in order to facilitate one's achievement of career success (Nie, Lian & Huang, 2012). The influence of training and development on career success has been explained through human capital theory that assumes that individuals are motivated to increase their human capital by obtaining relevant qualifications and experience, because this will most likely increase their future earnings (Becker, 1993). On the other hand, social capital theory has been widely used to explain the role of effective networking in determining career success (Law, Wong, Huang, & Li, 2008). According to Coleman (2010) social capital is any aspect of social structure that creates value and facilitates the actions of individuals within that social structure. Social capital is the result of the changes in human relations in a way that leads to favourable outcomes.

Borrowing support from social capital theory, Blickle, Witzki, and Schneider (2009) conducted a survey on alumni of German business schools and found that self-initiated mentoring and networking ability positively influences employees' career success. Similarly, the authors in their three-year predictive field study found that networking proved to be a strong determinant of objective career success. Seibert, Kraimer, and Liden (2001) tested social capital-based model of career success in a sample of 448 employees from diverse organizations. They confirmed that network structure had a positive relationship with social resources, which in turn positively affected career success through access to resources, access to information and career sponsorship, and it is likely that such desirable outcomes will positively influence individuals' overall perception about their careers. Whereas the above studies delved on the relationship between networking and career success, this study finds it necessary to use networking as a mediator in the relationship between training and development and career success. This proposition is made on the basis of the fact that the dynamic business environment has transformed the traditional organizations reducing them to flat structures that has made it difficult for people to realize career success despite the training and development they have gained. Furthermore, the new developments in the career field that has seen new terms such as boundaryless career and protean career coming into play basically denote that there is more to be done to enhance achievement of career success. This has meant that people have to build internal and external contacts in addition to undergoing training and development to improve on their chances of achieving their career success. On the basis of the above argument the hypothesis formulated for this study was.

**H<sub>1</sub>: The relationship between training and development and career success is mediated by networking.**

### **3. Research Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design is concerned with the process of gathering data so as to verify the hypothesized relationship and to generate solutions to research

questions with respect to the present status of the phenomena under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). 255 managerial staff from large manufacturing firms in Kenya was used for the purpose of this survey. Roscoe (1975) sample size determination procedure for unknown population was used in establishing the correct sample for this study since it was not possible to establish the exact number of managers in these firms. On the basis of this procedure, a sample larger than 30 and less than 500 is appropriate. The study relied on primary data that was collected using a semi structured questionnaire. The resultant data was then analyzed using regression analysis.

#### 4. Data Analysis and Results

The analysis done involved a four-step process of path analysis proposed by Baron and Kenny’s (1986) mediation model. In step one, career success was regressed on training and development in order to establish whether training and development was a significant predictor of career success (CS). Results in Table 1 reveal that 19.9% of variance in CS was explained by training and development ( $R^2=0.203$ , adjusted  $R^2=0.199$ ). However, the remaining 80.1 % that was not explained suggested the existence of other factors related to career success not included in the study. The overall model was statistically significant, implying model fit ( $F=51.316$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient indicates a moderately strong relationship between training and development and career success ( $R=0.451$ ). The beta coefficient indicates that the influence of organizational sponsorship on career success is statistically significant ( $\beta=0.361$ ,  $t=7.164$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) thus confirming step one in testing for mediation.

**Table 1:** Effects of Training and Development on Career Success

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.451 <sup>a</sup>	.203	.199	.61516	.203	51.316	1	201	.000	1.500

A. Predictors: (Constant), Training development  
 B. Dependent Variable: Career success

Anova						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.419	1	19.419	51.316	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	76.062	201	.378		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95.481</b>	<b>202</b>			

A. Dependent Variable: Career success  
 B. Predictors: (Constant), Training and development

Coefficient								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.704	.186		9.164	.000		
	Training development	.361	.050	.451	7.164	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent variable: career success

#### Step 2: Effect of Training and Development on Networking

The second step involved regressing networking on career success. The results in Table 2 show that training and development explains 26.8% of variation in networking ( $R^2=0.271$ , adjusted  $R^2=0.268$ ). The model being significant as indicated by the F ratio justified the use of regression analysis ( $F=74.798$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient indicated a moderately strong relationship between

training and development and career success ( $R=0.521$ ). The beta coefficient was statistically significant ( $\beta=0.562$ ,  $t=8.649$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). It implied that a unit change in training and development was associated with 0.562 change in career success. These results indicate further that those who undergo training and development are able to improve on their networking ability. The second step in testing for mediation was confirmed.

**Table 2:** Effect of Training and Development on Networking

Model Summary										
M	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.521 <sup>a</sup>	.271	.268	.79291	.271	74.79	1	201	.000	1.484

A. Predictors: (Constant), Training and development  
B. Dependent Variable: Networking

Anova						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.025	1	47.025	74.798	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	126.369	201	.629		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>173.394</b>	<b>202</b>			

A. Dependent variable: networking  
B. Predictors: (constant), training development

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.371	.240		5.719	.000		
	Training & development	.562	.065	.521	8.649	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Networking

### Step 3: Effect of Networking on Career Success

The third step assessed the link between networking and CS. The results in Table 3 indicate that 26.0% of variance in CS was explained by networking ( $R^2=0.263$ , adjusted  $R^2=0.260$ ). The F ratio was statistically significant implying a model fit ( $F=71.818$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The beta coefficient was statistically significant ( $\beta=0.381$ ,  $t=8.475$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), suggesting that a unit change in networking is associated with 0.381 change in career success. The third step in testing for mediation was confirmed.

**Table 3:** Effect of Networking on Career Success

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.513 <sup>a</sup>	.263	.260	.59159	.263	71.818	1	201	.000	1.745

A. Predictors: (Constant), Networking  
B. Dependent Variable: Career success

Anova						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.135	1	25.135	71.818	.000 <sup>p</sup>
	Residual	70.346	201	.350		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95.481</b>	<b>202</b>			

A. Dependent Variable: Career success  
B. Predictors: (Constant), Networking

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.710	.158		10.842	.000		
	Networking	.381	.045	.513	8.475	.000	1.000	1.000

A. Dependent Variable: Career success

**Step 4: Effect of Training and Development and Networking on Career Success**

In the fourth step, career success was regressed against training and development and networking first by introducing organizational sponsorship in the model followed by career management behaviour. These results are presented in Table 4. The introduction of networking in training and development and career success model increased the variance explained by 30.3%, ( $R^2=0.310$ , adjusted  $R^2=0.303$ ), the model being significant implied a model fit ( $F=44.842$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient indicated a slightly strong relationship between the two variables (training and development and networking) and career success ( $R=0.556$ ). The results in steps one to three were significant and therefore mediation could not be ruled out completely, in this fourth step, the beta coefficient for training and development remained significant ( $\beta=0.202$ ,  $t=3.664$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The beta coefficient suggested that a unit change in training and development is associated with 0.202 change in CS. It was therefore concluded that networking partially mediates the link between training and development and CS hence supporting the hypothesis.

**Table 4:** Effect of Training and Development and Networking on Career Success

Model Summary										
M	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.556 <sup>a</sup>	.310	.303	.57411	.310	44.842	2	200	.000	1.665

A. Predictors: (Constant), Networking, Training and development  
 B. Dependent Variable: Career success

Anova						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.560	2	14.780	44.842	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	65.921	200	.330		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95.481</b>	<b>202</b>			

A. Dependent Variable: Career success  
 B. Predictors: (Constant), Networking, Training and development

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.316	.187		7.031	.000		
	Training & development	.202	.055	.252	3.664	.000	.729	1.372
	Networking	.283	.051	.382	5.547	.000	.729	1.372

A. Dependent Variable: Career success

## 5. Discussion of Findings

The results of this study provide a partial support for the hypothesis. Even though training and development had a significant influence in career success, it was observed from the analysis that networking plays an important role in enhancing this relationship. Based on the analysis, when training and development and career success were used together in the model there was an improvement in the predictive power of the model from 19.9% to 30.3%. In addition, the result further indicated that networking partially mediated the relationship between training and development and career success. The results provide an empirical support for theoretical propositions that in the modern work environment, achievement of career success does not rely only on the level of training and development that one undergoes only but there is additional need for people to establish internal and external contact in order to facilitate information sharing on job openings, learning from experiences of others and building on proper relationship with influential people in and outside the organization.

The findings further support the work of Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004) who in introducing the construct of employability posited that networking was an important dimension of this construct besides training and development. They further explained that networking plays an important role in identification and realization of employment opportunities at every level of one's career. Furthermore, these results also support the two theories that the study anchors on; social capital theory that emphasizes on the need for people to engage in beneficial social and professional networks that can facilitate their career achievements and human capital theory which emphasizes on the importance of building ones' skills abilities and competences as a means of gaining the necessary knowledge that can enhance their upward career mobility and salary increment. The study helps advance the literature as far as mediating hypothesis is concerned in the study of career success.

## 6. Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions Further Studies

This study has established that training and development have a significant impact on managers career success and that this relationship is partially mediated by networking. On the basis of the findings, the study recommends that manufacturing firms should assist employees in achieving their career goals through developing appropriate training and development programs. They should also provide the staff with necessary support that they require in their individual training plans that will make them achieve their career success. On other hand, the staff needs to engage in networking to help them gain access to necessary information on employment opportunities that can help them establish good relationship with influential people who can play a role in fostering their career success.

Although the study used cross-sectional research, it is suggested that future study should use longitudinal design that offers ample time for the researcher to asses the relationship among the variable; training and development, networking and career success. It can be observed that development is a process that takes place overtime and establishment of networks and achievement of career success also require more time. Secondly, this study relied on primary data only, future studies may consider using both primary and secondary data for the purpose of accuracy. Finally, it would also be appropriate if prospective researchers are able to delve more on the possible moderators in this relationship.

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