

# Exploring the Mediating Role of Work Engagement, Career Management and Career Satisfaction among Small and Medium Enterprises in Ghana

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## Abstract

Employers always seek to engage employees who are fit for the work, able to adapt to the changing trends in the business environment and contribute much to the organizations to the best of their abilities. It is however not automatic for an organization to achieve such objective. They must constitute programs and measures that would help them realize this goal and take employees to the level that would enable them to give their best to the organization. Using an online survey, a questionnaire was sent randomly to 460 employees within SMEs in Accra Metropolis out of which 400 responded to the questionnaire sent to them. The researcher explored the mediating role of Work Engagement on the relationship between Organizational Career Management and Career Satisfaction. OCM was categorized into three indicators, which are Career Planning, Career Development and Career Opportunity for the purposes of this study. The study revealed that Organizational Career Management (Career Planning, Career Development, and Career Opportunity) have an impact on employees Career Satisfaction and Work Engagement. It further showed that Work Engagement mediates the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable among employees in SMEs in Accra Metropolis. In view of this, the study recommends that, in order to promote career satisfaction and sustain work engagement among employees, SMEs should promote and incorporate Career Planning, Career Development, and Career Opportunity into their mainstream activities.

**Keywords:** Career Development, Career Opportunity, Career Planning, Career Satisfaction, Organizational Career Management, Work Engagement.

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## Introduction

The basic aim of almost all organization is to deliver their services efficiently and satisfy its customers at a profit while satisfying the demands of its workforce. However, the goal may not be realized if the careers of employees who are supposed to champion the achievement of such goal are neglected while the organization pursues success. Career management of employees are expected to be incorporated in the organizational plans as it sorts to expand, grow at profit, and develop in technology. One should note that, the business world currently is going through series of dramatic and inevitable changes, which has resulted in business decisions such as mergers, acquisitions, downsizing and restructuring. Changes in technology are also in the ascendency, which affects operations of business and employees globally. Such factors have increasingly thrown light on how to strategically manage the human resources at the disposal of organizations especially the need to carefully plan and manage the careers of its employees (Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2009). Employees on the other hand increasingly are looking for innovative means to enhance their skills and abilities in order to remain fit for the job market. Unfortunately, there seem to be a disconnection between what employees expect from their organizations in relation to the management of their career, career opportunities at hand and what the organization is willing to give. This occurrence was as a result of various researches and theories positioning the need for career management on the shoulder of the employee and downplayed the role of the organization in contributing to the career satisfaction of employees. In light of this, it is believed there is little or no contribution by business to the enhancement of the careers of their employees in order to promote career satisfaction (de Oliveira, Cavazotte, & Alan Dunzer, 2017).

In spite of the above, assertions which seek to create the impression about how individuals are to take care of how to manage their careers; it is interesting to note that businesses still put in enough efforts to enhance the careers of their employees because career management is best managed at the workplace. Hence the need for organizational career management among organizations which sort to engage employees and promote career satisfaction (Guan, Zhou, Ye, Jiang, & Zhou, 2015). Human resource managers in various organizations have constitute programs and measures that promotes career planning, career advancement or development and career opportunities for all. In agreement to this reason, (Moses, 1995) asserted that due to the rapid changes happening at work places, employees would need skills, abilities and competencies that can help them to be employable in the unforeseen future, adapt to new jobs and manage the realities life comes with. Organizations on the other hand would need employees who are flexible and can adapt to changes in organizational direction and focus. A driver to achieving this is to promote organizational career management, which will best serve the interest of the employees and the organization coherently.

An important focus of OCM is to take employees to the level where they would decide whether they are content or satisfied with their career and absorbed by the work they do. The point where workers are convinced that they have the support of their organization in progressing towards the achievement of their career goals defines career satisfaction. Career satisfaction is said to be a subjective measure that accounts for employees' perceptions of their satisfaction with their overall career goals, goals for income, goals

for advancement and goals for the development of new skills (Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2009b). It was proven that employees irrespective of the sector they belong obtain career satisfaction as a result of the career management efforts of their organizations and have the feeling that the programs instituted for them would give birth to both short-term and long-term returns to them. More specifically, programs related to self-development, information about job openings, opportunities to learn new skills and retirement preparation programs have contributed to career satisfaction (Kumudha & Abraham, 2014). Osibanjo, Oyewunmi, & Ojo, (2014) also supported the fact that organizations should create a good working atmosphere which seeks to promote, motivate, reward, recognize and enhance career growth among employees which translates into retaining the valuable human capital. Career advancement opportunities for employees should be put in place by organizations through OCM to help them make plans for themselves and the organization in order to reduce turnover, promote work engagement and enhance career satisfaction. It is said that when people's desire to champion the course of their career is not given a nod, they consider looking for a better option.

SME's in Ghana are organizations that are deemed to have employed a greater percentage of the populace irrespective of the challenges such as funding, difficulty accessing loans and conducting market researches to support their operations in order to boost the confidence of investors. They are also challenged as to how to retain their staff as labour turnover is on the rise due to their inability to support the career goals of their employees (Tweneboah, 2014). SME's are mostly challenged as to how to recruit and retain an employee. SME's in Ghana is defined mostly based on the number of employees engaged by the enterprise. Osei, Baah-Nuakoh, & Tutu, (1993) established that cut-off points for employment and levels of employment of an organization could be used to define SME's. It stated that 30 workers which serves as an employment cut-off point could be used to categorize SME's. It concluded that an enterprise which has less than 6, 6-9 and 10-29 workers as micro, very small and small respectively. Using employment levels as means of categorizing SME's in Ghana, the study further revealed that an organization with less than 5, 5-29, 30-99 and 100 or more employees is regarded as micro, small, medium, and large enterprises respectively. The definition of SME's above shows its contribution to providing employment to the citizenry. However, a research done by (Blessing, 2019) indicates that the inadequate opportunities for career advancement is a major contributing factor for an employee to move from one job to another. Employees expect to experience some level of development or progression in their career once they are employed. The research further stated that, chances of advancing your career with SME's are very slim as compared to Multinational Companies who offer better remuneration packages and room for career development. Considering the above, SME's tend to lose a lot of their intellectual capital and best candidates to MNC's who are more established to ensure career planning, career development and career opportunities for their workers in order to promote retention, career satisfaction and engagement.

Employee's expectations regarding their career developments increases when there is a favorable environment for them to thrive. Employee's career satisfaction was found to be influenced by workplace training. OCM practices such training and development opportunities, career sponsorship, and supervisor support were also found to be strongly

related to employees' career satisfaction and engagement (Afonso, Ramos, Saraiva, Moreira, & Figueira, 2014). Based on the above viewpoints, this research contributes to existing knowledge by exploring the impact of OCM on career satisfaction among SME's in Accra Metropolis, Ghana and ascertain the mediating role of work engagement on the relationship between OCM and career satisfaction.

## **Literature Review**

### *Organizational Career Management*

The series and sequence of management methods implemented by organizations that aims at improving employees' potential, promote retention and help them achieve self-actualization is known as Organizational Career Management (OCM). It is a function of human resource which seeks to help employees assess their own career strength and weaknesses, set priorities and specific goals, provide information on various career paths and alternatives within and lastly offer employees yearly reviews of their progress towards these goals by managers who are responsible in conducting such assessment (Long, 2002). According to H, Cheung, & H., (2011), Organizational career management is also made up of three essential activities which includes career appraisal, career development and career training. Feedback regarding their work, consultation about career, negotiations about career, schemes for the justification of career and the performance appraisal of 360 degrees which also means multi-faceted appraisal constitute the career appraisal. The opportunities organizations lay out for their workforce to improve their career constitute career development and if these schemes meet the needs and goals of an individual create a sense of satisfaction within them. Therefore, organizations offer career training where their employees are educated about their career in order to help them define the objectives of their own career. This is done through workshops and intra-organizational education approaches according to (Bambacas, 2010). Sometimes, OCM could also be said to be the process of taking risk by management. In order to ensure employee career satisfaction, organizations must determine whether the investment in supporting employee career development is worth it and would obtain adequate benefits which will help them iron out better career development strategies to achieved expected results (Lent & Brown, 2006b).

### *Career Satisfaction*

According to Seibert & Kraimer, (2001) career satisfaction refers to a person's positive emotional state that comes as a result of a personal evaluation of one's career or career-related experiences. Career satisfaction is normally used as a subjective indicator of career success because it reflects an individual's attitude towards his or her career based on a personal appraisal. To be satisfied with your career means your career has been successful. One could therefore say that career success refers to individuals work experience that is obtained as a result of work-related outcomes. Career satisfaction can also be explained as the state where an individual feels he or she is satisfied or dissatisfied in relation to the career being pursued. It was also argued that, the state of accomplishment regarding one's career, a feeling based on individuals' own assessment about his career gives an indication as to whether he or she is satisfied or not. It is also believed that career

satisfaction is where employees believe progressing in their career is in line with their goals, values and preferences (Barnett & Bradley, 2007).

### *Work Engagement*

Work engagement is said to be a way through which organizations use to measure an investment in the human resources at its disposal. It is said that, work engagement is a motivational and positive element which is work related and it is defined by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Where vigor is explained as the high levels of energy and mental resilience demonstrated while working; dedication refers to the enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, significance and challenging work an employee exhibits while working; finally, absorption means a fulfilling, positive and work-related state of mind (i.e., a situation whereby an employee has full concentration, happily attached to his work and with the passage of time one has the difficulty in detaching oneself from the work) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Employees who are engaged have strong feelings toward their organization and their work and contribute in every way to make it a success. It has also been ascertained that employees who are highly engaged are assets to the organization and help to promote retention of talented workforce whereas employees who are disengaged are regarded as a liability to the organization which results in absenteeism, training cost and lower productivity (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

### *Organizational Career Management, Career Satisfaction and Work Engagement*

Guan et al., (2015) said the implementation of OCM activities or practices throws more light on the subjective perception employees have about the support the organization is providing for the career advancement. The extent to which employees would get access to career development opportunities are through these practices and activities laid down by the organization. Thus, the support practices laid down by the organization give birth to subjective perception of career success which invariably translates into career satisfaction. The role of OCM is to provide assistance, material and social support to promote realization of personal goals which is recognized as an identified predictor of career satisfaction (Lent & Brown, 2006). Developmental exercises, proactive recognition of opportunities, career planning and future support offered by the organization are the fruits of OCM. The depth at which organizations show care and support the well-being of its employees increases the perception about OCM which invariably favors the organization at large. Employees' expectations regarding their career developments increase when there is a favorable environment for them to thrive (Guan, Zhou, Ye, Jiang, & Zhou, 2015). Employee's career satisfaction was found to be influenced by workplace training. OCM practices such as career planning, career development, career opportunities, career sponsorship, and supervisor support were also found to be strongly related to employees' career satisfaction (Afonso et al., 2014).

When employees perceive that there is the presence of support from the organization towards the development of their careers, they attempt to reciprocate through positive behaviors such as work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). In the report of (Leadership, 2010) on talent and career management, it was seen that organizations who contribute to career development and provide career opportunities are six times more

likely to engage their employees as compared to those who do not. It was indicated in same report that among employees in USA, Canada, and Denmark, 63% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they have the highest level of engagement among organizations that are capable in contributing to their careers and providing opportunities. The study also underlines that OCM might be a way through employees could be empowered and provide career development opportunities for them. These measures help employees in acquisition of new knowledge and skills that promotes high level of engagement among workers. It was also stated in the report that though it was difficult engaging all employees, the organization can put measures in place to encourage active participation of employees to their work by means of OCM practices such as proper guidance which runs into activities such as career planning, career development and opportunities, performance appraisal, motivation and competency (Leadership, 2010). Based on the above literatures, the study believes organizational career management is a kind of organizational factors which could be categorized into career planning, career development and career opportunities which have impact on employees' career satisfaction and work engagement. The following hypothesis is put forward:

H1a: career planning has a positive effect on the career satisfaction.

H1b: career development has a positive effect on the career satisfaction.

H1c: career opportunity has a positive effect on the career satisfaction.

H2a: Career planning has a positive effect on the work engagement.

H2b: career development has a positive effect on work engagement

H2c: career opportunity has a positive effect on work engagement.

### *Work Engagement and Career Satisfaction*

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) is employed to give meaning to how work engagement which is borne out of OCM practices and programs put in place by the organization leading to career satisfaction of employees. SET is founded on the principle that people assess the perceived cost and benefits of a given situation before making a social decision. It is indicated that the level of engagement is a means through which employees pay their organization which involves the emotional and psychological relationship between them which invariably translates into an outcome which could be either negative or positive (Andrew & Sofian, 2012). Employees who are engaged contributes more to their work roles and this help them obtain more knowledge and skills which is related to their work, perform creditably well, and achieve occupational success. In the light of that, they may reach a level where there is an indication of sense of achievement and then evaluate how far they have come in pursuit of their careers in a positive way. Past studies also show that work engagement has a positive relation to the feeling of being successful regarding one's career which is sometimes known as satisfaction (Stumpf, Tymon, & van Dam, 2013). In this study, it is deemed that the decision an employee arrives at is perceived as being satisfied with his or her career. Therefore, the study forms the following hypotheses:

H3: work engagement has a positive effect on the engagement.

Organizational career management has positive effect on work engagement, and work engagement has positive effect on the career satisfaction. The study believes:

H3a: work engagement mediates the relationship between career planning and career satisfaction;

H3b: work engagement mediates the relationship between career development and career satisfaction;

H3c: work engagement mediates the relationship between career opportunity and career satisfaction.

Based on the above analysis and assumptions, the research builds up a conceptual framework which is indicated in figure 1.

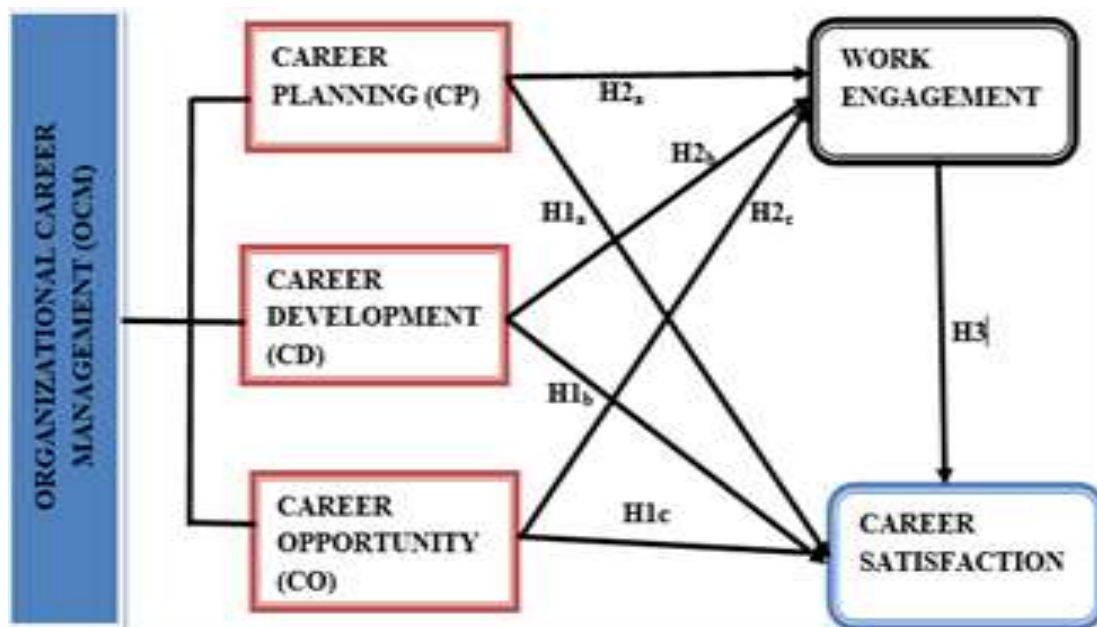


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## Methodology

### *Research Design*

Research design refers to the ways and methods through which research data can be acquired. It indicates the sources and the kind of information gathered and the means of doing so. This study adopted a cross-sectional survey of doing research which is mostly used in the education and social sciences. A research which uses cross-sectional seeks to gather and analyze data from different groups of people whose interest differs but may have certain features such educational background and socio-economic status in common (Kothari, 2004). A cross-sectional survey was conducted to collect data from the field from respondents who are employees of Small and Medium Enterprises in Accra

Metropolis in Ghana which seeks to shed more light on the impact of organizational career management on employee's career satisfaction and also find out if employee work engagement could also result in employee career satisfaction. The advantage or merit of the survey method constitutes its applicability to real life contemporary human situations. The researcher would use the survey method because its results relate directly to the common reader's everyday experience. Data from respondents will be organized, analyzed, and compared for similarities, differences and trends discussed considering available literature and researcher opinions.

### *Population and Sample Size*

Hassan, (2015) asserts that the population of a research refers to a group of people or subjects who are said to have certain characteristics in common. In this case, it is assumed that all these people and subjects possesses traits which are related and binding. The study is conducted with regards to this population. The study focuses on employees within the various Small and Medium Enterprises in Ghana specifically in the Accra Metropolis which is the capital of the nation. The study used online survey where questionnaire was sent randomly to 460 employees within the various SME's operating in Accra and out of which 400 completely filled and submitted indicating a response rate of 87%. This was valid and was used for the study. The nature of this study is quantitative and it is worth mentioning that respondents are familiar with issues regarding career management. The research seeks to explore the relationship between the independent variable OCM (which has been further categorized under career planning, career development and career opportunities) and the dependent variable Career satisfaction; the mediating role of work engagement.

### *Measuring of variables*

In order to operationalize the variables presented in the conceptual model of the study, OCM was measured using 8-item scale elements adopted from Lee and Brown (2003) and Chen; Cheng and Yeh (2004). This was then categorized them into three indicators which are Career Planning which has 3 items, Career Development which has 3 items and Career Opportunity with 2 items; Career satisfaction was also be measured by five items adopted from Greenhaus el al. (1990) and work engagement was measured by five items adopted from Schaufeli el al. (2006).

### *Data Analysis*

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics on degree of Career Planning, Career Development and Career Opportunities on Career Satisfaction among employees in SME's in Accra Metropolis, Ghana.

Below indicates the descriptive statistics of the data with table1 showing the descriptive features of the data set and showing the demographic characteristics of respondents. The number of observations for this study is 400 with all variables indicating a strong mean with Career Development showing the largest mean (4.3333) of the study. This shows that Career Development is one of the major elements showing a strong



positive relationship with Career Satisfaction among employees in the various Small and Medium Enterprises in Accra Metropolis, Ghana.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation
CP	400	4.2767	.55608
CD	400	4.3333	.48538
CO	400	4.3050	.52575
CS	400	4.2745	.51206
WE	400	4.2965	.51619
Valid N (Listwise)	400		

### *Descriptive Statistics*

The outcome of the study showed that out of the 400 respondents, 282 (70.55%) and 118 (29.5%) of the sample were males and females respectively. With respect to the age bracket, 134 of the respondents representing 33.5% were within the range of 18-25 years, 203 respondents representing 50.8% were within the range of 26-35 years, 33 respondents representing 8.3% were within the age bracket of 36-45 and finally 30 of the respondents, which makes up 7.5% were within the range of 46-60. In the aspect of educational background, the study revealed that out of the 400 respondents, 11(2.8%), 96(24%), 263(65.5%), 15(3.8%) and 15(3.8%) had primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and informal qualifications respectively. Regarding the number of years spent at the organization, the study showed that 62(15.5%), 102(25.5%), 17(4.3%), 176(44.0%), 23(5.8%), and 20(5%) of the 400 respondents had spent less than year, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20 and 20 and above respectively. 282, which represents 70.5% of the respondents, said they have heard of OCM practices whereas 118 representing 29.5% of the respondents had no idea. 244(61%) of the respondents believe OCM practices suits employees and 156(39%) of the respondents believes OCM practices in their business entities does not suit the employees. 260(65%) of the respondents believes the OCM practices in their organizations are effective while 140(35%) asserts that the OCM practices are not effective.

Table 2. the SME sector respondents belong

Construction	62
Business services	102
Food/catering	17
Banking/Insurance	176
Information Technology	23
Others	20

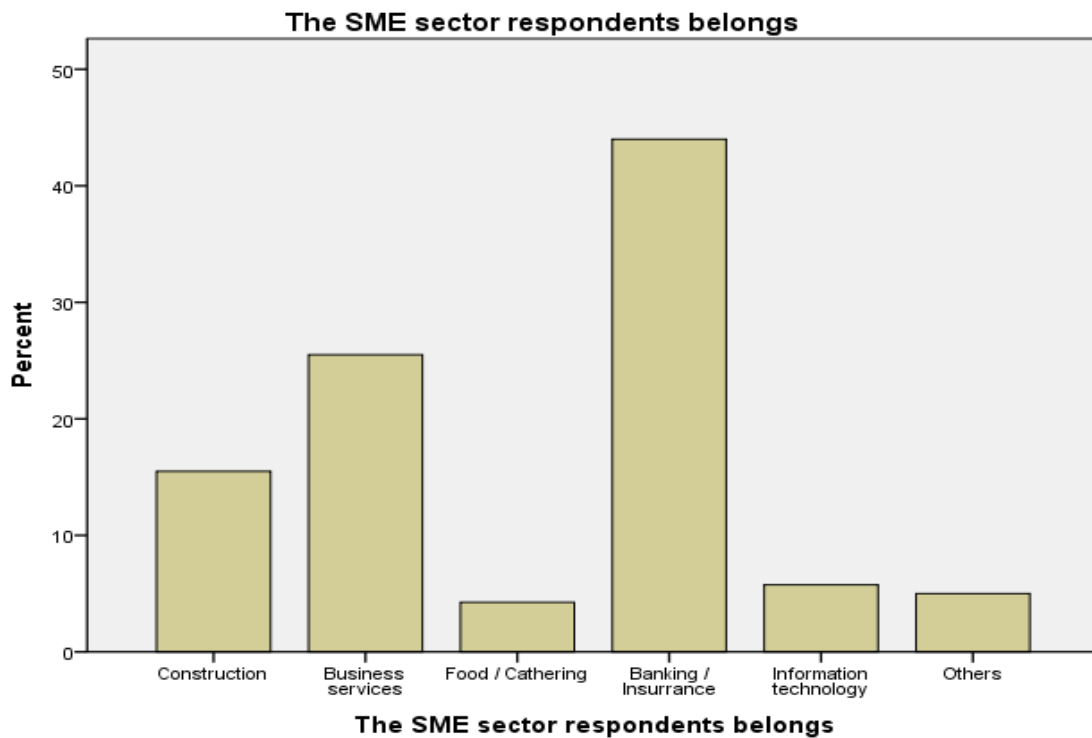


Figure 2. The SME Sector Respondents Belongs

Out of the 400 respondents, 62 of them said they work in construction firms, 102 of them belonged to business services, 17 belonged to food & catering, 176 of them belonged to banking & insurance, 23 of them belonged to information technology entities and 20 of the respondents belonged to other Small and Medium Enterprises (SME'S).

*Regression Analysis*

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square
1	.92	.858	.856
a. Predictors: (Constant), WE, CO, CP, CD			
b. Dependent Variable: CS			

To ascertain the impact of the independent variables (OCM, which has been categorized into career planning, career development and career opportunities by the study) and the mediating variable (work engagement) on the dependent variable (career satisfaction), the study developed a research model which is indicated below. Table 3 and table 4 indicates the outcome of the regression analysis and the reliability statistics. The test for reliability is most used to find out the reliability of the measurement model which is in respect to the independent variables used which are Career Planning, Career Development, and Career Opportunities with Work Engagement. Career Satisfaction is used as the dependent variable in this research.

The table 4 below indicates that all the independent variables have very strong reliability because their corresponding Cronbach Alpha exceeds 0.90. Work Engagement produces the highest reliability with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.937. We therefore conclude that all the variables fall good in the reliability scores. The thumb rule states that Cronbach Alpha coefficient represents as:  $0.7 < 0.8$  is good and  $0.8 < 0.9$  is very good.

Table 4 Reliability Statistics Summary

S. N	Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items	Number of Respondents
1	CP	0.913	8	400
2	CD	0.920	8	400
3	CO	0.908	7	400
4	WE	0.937	10	400

Table 5. Summary of the correlation between career planning, career development and career opportunities on career satisfaction among employees in the various SME's in Accra Metropolis, Ghana

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardize Coefficient	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.130	.092		1.416	.158
	CP	.093	.030	.101	3.061	.002
	CD	.278	.036	.264	7.678	.000
	CO	.266	.031	.273	8.622	.000
	WE	.386	.037	.389	10.30	.000

Using a confidence interval level of 95%, the regression model showed an R-squared (R<sup>2</sup>) of 0.93 with very good Cronbach alpha for all variables showing how reliable the model is as it explains about 93% of the variations between the variables which means the model gives detailed meaning to the relationships between variables. Based on same confidence interval of 95%, the model shows that all the variables are significant statistically to the study with  $p < 0.05$ , and  $t > 2.0$ .

The table 5 indicates the coefficient values of all predictors which with Work Engagement showing the highest correlation coefficient of 0.386 with the dependent variable career satisfaction. Which means additional unit of work engagement would lead to a positive impact of about 0.386 increase on the influence of career satisfaction among employees of SME's in Accra Metropolis. This result is highly significant with a P-value of .000.

Career planning, Career Development and Career Opportunity have highly significant P-values and correlation coefficient value which are .002, .000 and .000 and 0.093, 0.278 and 0.266 respectively indicating a positive relationship with the dependent variable. This means the independent variables highly promotes career satisfaction among employees in SME's in Accra Metropolis, Ghana when increased by 0.093, 0.278 and 0.266 of additional units of Career Planning, Career Development and Career Opportunity.

These outcomes show that the hypothesis, H1a, H1b, H1c and H3 can be accepted as it shows a positive relationship between them and the dependent variable.

Table 6. Summary of the correlation between career planning, career development and career opportunities on work engagement among employees in the various SME's in Accra Metropolis, Ghana

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T Value	Sig.
1 Constant	.267	.123		2.169	.031
CP	.474	.033	.511	14.258	.000
CD	.352	.046	.331	7.710	.000
CO	.270	.031	.278	8.791	.000
Dependent Variable WE					

Table 6 also shows that Career planning, Career Development and Career Opportunity have highly significant P-values and correlation coefficient values which are .000, .000 and .000 and 0.474, 0.352 and 0.270 respectively indicating a positive relationship with the dependent variable. This means the independent variables highly promotes Work Engagement among employees in SME's in Accra Metropolis, Ghana when increased by 0.474, 0.352 and 0.270 of additional units of Career Planning, Career Development and Career Opportunity.

These outcomes show that the hypothesis, H2a, H2b and H2c can be accepted as it shows a positive relationship between them and the dependent variable which is Work Engagement. This implies that when SME's in Accra Metropolis consciously promote OCM activities such as Career planning, Career Development and Career Opportunities, employees of these sectors are likely to be engaged.

Figure 3 & Table 7 indicating the mediating role of work engagement on the relationship between career planning, career development, career opportunities and career satisfaction among employees in the various SME's in Accra Metropolis, Ghana.

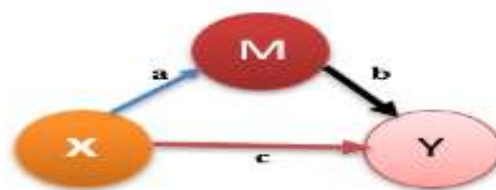


Figure 3. Mediation model and pathways

Figure 3 depicting the mediation model and pathways with x being the independent variables, M the mediator and Y the independent variable. Path c depicts the relationship between the predictors and the outcome. Path a, depicts the relationship between the predictors and the mediator and path b indicates the relationship between the mediator and the outcome.

Table 7. mediation analysis & results of hypothesis

Hypothesis and path	Path Co-efficient	T-value	P-value	Hypothesis support
Finding path 'c'				
CP	0.276	9.938	0.000	Support
CD	0.414	10.876	0.000	Support
CO	0.309	8.955	0.000	Support
Dependent Variable CS				
Finding path 'a'				
CP	0.474	14.258	0.000	Support
CD	0.352	7.710	0.000	Support
CO	0.270	8.791	0.000	Support
Dependent Variable WE				
Finding 'b'				
CP	0.093	3.061	0.002	Support
CD	0.278	7.678	0.000	Support
CO	0.266	8.622	0.000	Support
WE	0.386	10.370	0.000	Support
Dependent Variable CS				

Table 8. Sobel Test

Independent Variable	Test Statistics (Z)	Standard Error	P-value
CP	3.030	0.015	0.002
CD	2.703	0.010	0.001
CO	2.560	0.011	0.001

To establish the mediation of work engagement on the relationship between the career planning, career development, career opportunity and career satisfaction, an initial multiple regression analysis was carried out to find out the direct effect of the predictors on the outcome. The results from table 9 reveals additional unit in CP, CD and CD will result in a positive increase of about 0.276, 0.414 and 0.309 of career satisfaction in this case holding all variables constant. A positive coefficients and strong significant figures from table 7 between the independent and dependent variables shows mediation has been established and therefore calls for the need of a mediator. The outcome which is “path c” from figure 4 indicates CP (B-0.276, t-9.938, p<0.05), CD (B-0.414, t-10.876, p<0.05) and CO (B-0.509, t-8.905, p<0.05). Subsequently, the mediator (work engagement) was employed as a standard variable as if it was the outcome and the independent variables (CP, CD&CO) as predictors. A regression was conducted and the results from the table 9 shows there is a positive correlation and high significant figures between the predictors and the mediator which helps to carry out further studies. The results which represent “path a” from figure 4 reveal CP (B-0.474, t-14.258, p<0.05), CD (B-0.352, t-7.710, p<0.05) and CO (B-0.270, t-8.791, p<0.05).

In furtherance to the above, the independent variables and the mediator were employed to as predictors as we seek to establish the path coefficient between the mediator and the

outcome in this case between work engagement and career satisfaction and determine if the mediator has effect on the dependent variable. The independent equation was employed because the mediator alone wasn't sufficient to correlate the dependent variable since both correlated positively and significantly by the independent variables. The outcome from table 9 representing "path b" from figure 4 indicates the following results: CP (B-0.093, t-7.687,  $p < 0.05$ ), CD (B-0.278, t-8.622,  $p < 0.05$ ), CO (B-0.266, t-8.622,  $p < 0.05$ ) and WE (B-0.386, t-10.370,  $p < 0.05$ ). The study shows Work Engagement as a mediator requires extra unit of it to bring about 0.386 increase on career satisfaction and it also shows a strong significant figure.

Notwithstanding what has been stated, it is appropriate to establish the mediator (Work Engagement) mediates the relationship between the independent variables (Career Planning, Career Development and Career Opportunity) and the outcome (Career Satisfaction) as asserted by the hypothesis of the study. To realize this, a Sobel test was conducted and the results as indicated in the table 10 indicates that; The complete pathway from the independent variable (CP) to the mediator (Work Engagement) and to the dependent variable (Career Satisfaction) is significant with (z-3.030,  $p < 0.002$ ). The complete pathway from the independent variable (CD) to the mediator (Work Engagement) and to the dependent variable (Career Satisfaction) is significant with (z-2.703,  $p < 0.001$ ). The complete pathway from the independent variable (CO) to the mediator (Work Engagement) and to the dependent variable (Career Satisfaction) is significant with (z-2.560,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Therefore, the hypothesis H3a, H3b and H3c which states that work engagement mediates the relationship between career planning and career satisfaction, career development and career satisfaction and finally career opportunity and career satisfaction are acceptable since their complete pathways among them is significant.

## Conclusions

The aim of this research is to explore the mediating role of work engagement of employees on the relationship between OCM which is categorized into three indicators which are Career Planning, Career Development, Career Opportunity, and Career Satisfaction of employees among SME's in Accra Metropolis, Ghana. The study also determined if the independent variables in the conceptual model also has an impact Work Engagement. The two assertions are captured in H1a, H1b, H1c, H2a, H2b and H2c. The second aspect of the research is to find out whether Work Engagement has an impact on Career Satisfaction and played a mediating role on the relationship between Career Planning, Career Development, Career Opportunity, and Career Satisfaction as captured in H3, H3a, H3b and H3c.

The results from the study shows that these factors such as Career Planning, Career Development and Career Opportunity which was incorporated under Organizational Career Management by the study has a positive and significant impact on career satisfaction and work engagement. Many employees among the various SME's who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they are highly satisfied with their career because their respective SME's plans, develop and create opportunities in relation to their career for them.

Furthermore, the research showed that Work Engagement can also promote career satisfaction among employees and mediates the relationship between Career Planning, Career Development, Career Opportunity, and Career Satisfaction. When Organizational Career Management activities, programs and measures that ensure Career Planning, Career Development and Career Opportunity are put in place to promote employees Work Engagement, it creates room for employees to be highly satisfied with their career. Responses from employees in the various SME's showed that once they are engaged with their work it translates into them being satisfied with their career. Conclusively, Organizational Career Management promotes Career Satisfaction through Work Engagement.

### **Implications**

To balance the benefits obtained by each side of the coin i.e. the organization and employees, OCM practices need to be advanced. It should serve as a means of investment into the career life of an employee which also serve as a means through which certain needs such as career satisfaction and work engagement could be realized. This study is a wake-up call to all organizations especially the SME's under study, employers, and human resource managers as to what they stand to gain when they promote OCM activities among their employees. In reference to existing literatures, OCM practices, measures and activities were deemed to be positively related to career satisfaction and work engagement (Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2014). Kong, Cheung, & Song, (2012) stated that organizations who attached seriousness in developing the careers of their employee ends up promoting career satisfaction, work engagement and other work-related behaviors such as retention. They also indicated that Career Planning, Career Development and Career Opportunity put in place by their SME's has results in getting engaged to their work. Cheung, Kong, & Song, (2014) believes that the workforce of various organizations expresses some level of feeling when they believe with no doubt that management of the organization have made provisions that takes care of their career development or career growth in the immediate and future. The findings of this study also support these assertions that supportive career activities and measures has the tendency to predict career satisfaction and work engagement.

The research also throws weight behind the Social Exchange Theory which drives on the basis of reciprocity which means what employees give out in return for what they receive from the organization. Rhoades & Einsenberger, (2002) believes that once employees come to the realization of measures put in place by their organizations to help them feel at home, feel empowered, to be effective and efficient in performance of their work, they become engaged and are always willing to pay back their organizations. One of such is believe to manifest in their career satisfaction. (Riggle et al., 2009). This study therefore believes that once an employee is engaged through OCM activities, it further leads to the satisfaction of that employee towards his or her career.

This study differs from existing studies on the grounds that, the study tested for the mediation role of work engagement on the relationship between OCM and career satisfaction. This is to draw the attention of the SME's being investigated as to the need to also promote work engagement as they seek to also address other issues such as lack of finance, poor marketing strategies, high interest rate among others. This is because

work engagement could be used as an essential tool to enhance career satisfaction and possibly encourage other work-related behaviors as indicated by their employees through their responses. In the research work of (Thomas, 2007) an assertion was made that employees who are engaged show it through their preparedness and willingness to exert all his or her cognitive, physical and emotional abilities towards their work which is somehow similar to an individual who is satisfied with his or her career. One important aspect of an employee well-being is work engagement because it gives a lot of organizational outcomes and behaviors of which one is career satisfaction. (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2014). The outcome of the study also supports this caveats and stresses on the need to promote work engagement within an organization since it has the tendency of predicting and promoting career satisfaction.

Conclusively, OCM has the tendency to promote work engagement and career satisfaction among employees. Van den Broeck et al., (2008) suggest OCM could be used as a motivational tool to enhance and promote other work-related objectives such as work engagement, career satisfaction, and competition among others. This assertion was also supported by (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). From our study, one could say that OCM is as important as any other organizational focus. Given the demands and changes in the career pattern of employees, the organization cannot remain blind to OCM programs and measures since it accrues a lot of benefits to the organization. OCM helps employees to achieve their career goals and remain relevant to the business fraternity especially in this technological age. Once employees develop this positive feeling towards the organization, they become in love with their work and it subsequently reflect in organizational results. Employee's weaknesses and strength are identified and programs that suit them should be assembled.

### **Limitations and Future Recommendations**

Like any other research, this study also has its limitations. First, the location where the data was gathered was a limitation to the study which further resulted in a small sample size. This is because the research focused on SME's in the capital of the country which is Accra. The research submits that subsequent research could focus on the sixteen regions within Ghana in order to make results more representable. Furthermore, OCM was categorized into only three indicators to operationalize it. Future studies could focus on employing additional items which depicts OCM to investigate.

The study also recommends that SME's in Accra should consistently and consciously put out every measure that would promote and sustain career satisfaction and work engagement among their employees. This would obviously reduce labor turnover and preserve its intellectual capital. They should also endeavor to incorporate the career goals of their employees into their objectives through career planning, create a common platform through which these career goals will be realized i.e. through development and make employees know the existing or future opportunities that are available to them.



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