



## Career Environment Dynamics and Employee Career Development in Star-Rated Hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. An Empirical Evidence.

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### **Abstract**

The progression of an individual's career is determined by the professional roles and activities they pursue throughout time, as well as the corresponding attitudes, skills, and knowledge which usually change with time. Career development encompasses an individual's personal and professional life as well as the relationships that exist between them. The process of developing one's career is influenced by the person, the organization, the management, the position among others. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of career environmental dynamics on employee career development in star rated hotels in Nairobi City County. The objectives were; to establish the influence of career orientation environment, teamwork and goodwill for careers on employee career development. Explanatory and descriptive research designs were used. The target population was 3114 hotel employees out of which 341 formed the sample. Purposive, stratified and systematic random sampling techniques were used to select the research participants. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data was analyzed via structural equation modeling using SPSS in conjunction with AMOS v24 to test the hypothesis. The fit indices for the structural model fell within the acceptable range (CMIN=326.711, DF=134.000, CMIN/DF=2.438, CFI=0.934, TLI= 0.916, SRMR=0.071, RMSEA=0.072) R<sup>2</sup>=0.21, and was used to test the hypothesis. career orientation environment on employee career development was negative and significant ( $\beta=-0.482$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) Ho1 was not supported. teamwork on employee career development was negative but not significant ( $\beta=-0.215$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) Ho2 was supported. goodwill for career on employee career development was positive but significant ( $\beta=-0.542$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) Ho3 was not supported. the researcher concluded that career orientation environment and goodwill for career are instrumental in helping the employees in developing their careers in the hotels. It was recommended that managers need to create conducive work environment to support employees to develop their careers.

**Keywords:** Career; Career Dynamics; Career Environment; Career Development

## **Introduction**

Noe *et al* (2021) claim that a management style that prioritizes employee development and empowerment is necessary to fully capitalize on employees' knowledge. Giving staff members the freedom and ability to decide on any aspect of customer service or product development is known as "empowerment." Workers are then held responsible for the goods and services they provide, and they split the profits and losses that arise from this. In order for empowerment to be effective, managers need to be trained in connecting staff members to both internal and external resources (people, websites, etc.), facilitating communication between staff members and managers across the organization, and making sure that staff members are informed about critical issues and work together.

Savickas, (2013) says that people are more focused on how to design a professional path that would lead to a satisfying existence in the 21st century because they understand the importance of a career. In fact, people build their own subjective careers that provide them purpose and direction throughout their lives. What's even more amazing is how closely linked the evolving nature of the workforce is to the evolving traits of the generations. There has been constant advancement in technology, globalization and information overload, which in for some employees lead to uncertainty and to others, flexibility in the way they view careers. Some careers that result from rigid organizational structures offer rigid career paths resulting to job insecurity. The younger workforce wants to be recognized in the community, have fun, and work toward higher positions in order to get paid well. These factors have an impact on how they build their careers. About seven months later, they take on a greater variety of jobs in their profession and leave their first employment. As a result, hospitality companies are formed that lack clear career boundaries and that prioritize temporary work over permanent positions (Savickas, Nota & Rossier, 2009; Košťálová *et al*, 2017). Therefore, there is a need to investigate the influence of career dynamics that inform how employees make career development decisions.

In addition, Armstrong & Taylor (2023) posit that career development further involves the process of making sure that the gifted employees acquire the knowledge and expertise needed to live up to their potential, progress in their careers, and meet the organization's demand for hiring top personnel for senior and critical positions within the organization. It allows potential employees to join a talent pool, and yet, the qualified talent pool participants will still gain from ongoing developmental activities because there is always opportunity for improvement.

## **The Organization and Career**

According to Columbus (2011), thousands of candidates are interviewed for various jobs with the help of department managers to fill those job vacancies. The candidates are afforded an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. Many applicants for jobs include either too little or too much information in their resumes; this might create the impression that the prospective employee spent a lot of time preparing the resume instead of including the information that the hiring manager or potential employer needs to know. The majority of applicants might appear unconfident or lack confidence since they believe they are at the mercy of the interview panel (Košťálová *et al*, 2017).

Structures help organizations manage worker activities and turn outside resources into finished goods (Coleman, 1990; Mintzberg, 1983). A team structure promotes a more decentralized mechanism with the decision power distributed among a group of individuals, whereas a hierarchy structure stresses a command-and-control mechanism with the decision power concentrated at the top of the company. Employers who impose more hierarchical limitations anticipate that employee differences will generally have less of an effect on the company. According to Phelan and Lin (2001), promotion schemes will therefore have less of an effect on organizational performance in a hierarchical structure than in a team one.

## The Career Environment

Akbar, (2017), opines that the entirety of the physical, social, and cultural phenomena that have an impact on a person is referred to as the environment within the context of a hospitality organization, while work is an intrinsic human activity that serves a purpose—satisfaction—and is based on both physical and mental faculties. When people can perform their jobs in a healthy, safe, comfortable, and optimal manner, their working environment is considered acceptable or appropriate. The two types of work environments are as follows: (a) The physical work environment, which is the physical surroundings of the workplace that may have an impact on employees directly or indirectly; and (b) The non-physical work environment, which is the totality of events related to the working relationships, including those with peers and superiors. All parties involved—workers, leaders, or the workplace—will benefit from a positive work environment or enjoyable experience.

Bhoite S. (2015) observes that without an awareness of the demand, the cost factor, and the career environmental aspect, no business function is able to start. First, a thorough plan is created, which includes determining the kind of skills and staffing levels needed for the hospitality organization. This evaluation is based on business plans that include things like market competitiveness, turnover, expansions and closures, while calculating the potential financial impact, hiring costs, etc. Finding possible employees for a hospitality organization entail hiring and assigning the most qualified individuals to open positions inside the company. The employment expectations are communicated, induction, placement, and other subfunctions.

It is however worth to note that career development was severely affected due to the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic that was first reported in the year 2019 in Wuhan, China. The International Labor Organization (ILO) found that employers are facing significant challenges, including small business owners struggling to keep up with overhead costs. Unemployment rates had drastically increased since the start of the pandemic, indicating that roughly 7% of working hours disappeared in the second half of 2020, leaving up to 200 million people unemployed, particularly individuals and small business owners working in services, tourism, travel, and retail. There might also have been significant increases in underemployment and reduced wages, resulting in an increase of 8.8 million in the number of ‘working poor’. These figures clearly indicate that Covid-19 had a profound impact on people's careers and, as a consequence, was a major career shock for many people. (Akkermans J, & Richardson J; 2020)

The world faced a pandemic as the respiratory virus Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) affected its populations. Different countries of the world had to close their borders and organizations within them and to issue directions and orders to ensure the spread of the pandemic was contained. This had far reaching implication on hospitality careers as reported by respected international organizations in both the short and the long term (WHO, 2020; Remuzzi & Remuzzi, 2020; ILO, 2020). Countries also went into lockdown to varying degrees, which means that people had to live in social isolation from each other (Giupponi & Landais, 2020; Remuzzi & Remuzzi, 2020; WHO, 2020). Based on systems of ‘temporary unemployment’, employment contracts had been suspended in companies that were unable to comply with social distancing directives, or which had experienced an immediate fall in demand for their products and services (Giupponi & Landais, 2020; ILO, 2020). In the longer term, there was fear that what began as a health crisis will develop into a deep economic crisis, with a decline in growth in the long term and increasing unemployment (Atkeson, 2020; Giupponi & Landais, 2020; ILO, 2020; McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), leisure and hospitality industry lost 4.8 million jobs. Average hourly earnings for all leisure and hospitality workers fell by 40 cents in June 2020 due to the pandemic.

Across the Eastern African region, the impacts of COVID-19 were being felt in different ways and the measures taken by the respective governments had also differed on the areas of focus and comprehensiveness. Although the infections of the disease were reported at different time lines for each

East Africa nation, tourism and hospitality organizations were been adversely affected by border closures and lock downs to combat the spread of the disease which further grounded the development of careers of employees in the sector of the economy (Deloitte, 2020).

Deloitte (2020), further opined that the leisure and conference tourism, both external and domestic in Kenya, faced possible collapse owing to travel restrictions which had completely stopped international tourist arrivals, while social distancing measures affected domestic tourism and conferencing due to COVID-19 pandemic. Given the tourism sector's strong linkages with the wider economy, reduced tourist arrivals impeded consumption of various goods and services and the incomes of workers in related sectors. This further affected many careers in the tourism and hospitality industries due to closures of facilities. Owing to these findings, career development for employees in the hospitality industry had adversely been affected.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Due to the dynamism of unexpected circumstances, the aspirations of employees may be thwarted. Career development is affected by other factors that range from individual interests and aspirations, the level of growth in the career, the level of education attained by the employee, age among others. The organization where a person works also shapes the way they develop in the career and the extent of their development in the career. For instance, issues related to the state of technology in the organization, the level of skill and knowledge required by the organization from their employees, the lifecycle stage of growth of the organization, and the policies of the hospitality organization will serve as a force that shapes the development of the careers of the employees. As the hotel grows in terms of its infrastructure, and in conformity with the prevailing legal regulatory frameworks, different job roles and tasks may evolve that further will contribute to the career development for the employees.

Further, the environment where an employee works may also have an influence on their career development. Each employee's background involves some nature of origin on the grounds of physical location, family of orientation, and education where the employee learns skills and acquires knowledge specific to the hospitality discipline. These may nevertheless be compounded with the climatic conditions of the location, and pandemics that may affect the health of an individual leading to choices of the employee on the extent of development in their career. The socio-economic aspects of the employee's background may also affect the route they may choose to develop the career in the hotel industry.

The problem of limited career development opportunities in hospitality firms stems from an imbalance between the number of employees and available roles. Because there are relatively few top-level responsibilities in relation to the total number of regular employees, it is difficult for lower-level employees to grow in their careers. Employees who do not have access to opportunities for career progression therefore remain in their existing roles until they acquire the required certifications and are able to seek career growth. Employees who fail to address issues that have been brought up regarding themselves, the organization, the work environment, and their own conscientiousness may face severe consequences such as losing their job, experiencing poor health, and experiencing financial difficulties both for themselves and the organization. Employees may be deemed redundant in severe circumstances, which could result in job loss, a decline in career options, depression, or even death. Due to these ramifications, this study looked into how career environmental dynamics affect the professional advancement of employees in the hospitality industry.

## **Specific objective of the study**

- i. To establish the influence of career orientation environment on employee career development in star rated hotels in Nairobi City County.

- ii. To establish the influence of teamwork on employee career development in star rated hotels in Nairobi City County.
- iii. To establish the influence of goodwill for careers on employee career development in star rated hotels in Nairobi City County.

## ***Literature Review***

### **The Concept of Career Development**

According to Noe & Raymond (2017), in recent times, the idea of a career has evolved. A career, according to the conventional perspective, is a series of jobs held within a profession or company. For instance, working as an adjunct professor at a university could be the first step in an academic career. The next step involves being appointed as an assistant professor, associate professor, and eventually full professor to academic positions. An engineer may begin their career as a staff engineer and advance to vice president of engineering, senior engineer, and advisory engineer as their experience grows. In these cases, the career path is like a flight of steps leading from the bottom to the top of a profession or organization. In the hospitality context, the entry level may be an intern in a certain department of the hotel, and in time, the employee may rise in ranks along the organizational structure to the organization to the level of being the general manager of the hotel.

According to Armstrong (2003), career development is a tool utilized by many businesses to find ways to help their staff members improve or advance in their roles. Furthermore, workers who receive complete assistance in advancing their careers are devoted to their employers and will perform better in their current roles to meet and support the aims and objectives of the company. Career growth is therefore crucial for people, organizations, and society at large. By helping individuals grow in their jobs, the workplace inspires and motivates its employees. Career development is an individual process in strengthening their abilities in obtaining the chosen career. With the use of scientific methodologies, the program can be meticulously planned and organized to support the company's operations both today and in the future. If handled well, a strong career development program can have a significant impact on the business. Both the corporation and the employees themselves are investing in this career development. The organization can expand the number of employees with ability and enhance employee ability using a career development program.

Ans De Vos, Jos Akkermans, and Beatrice Van der Heijden (2024) are of the view that in order for employees to improve person-career fit and maximize career results, career crafting is understood to be proactive behavior in action. This means that people actively design their careers over time by considering, reflecting on, and making decisions based on their motivations and career goals. These decisions can affect an individual's performance and work engagement in the short term, as well as their subjective and objective career success in the long run. Because contextual pressures and individual requirements are dynamic, they can impact person-career fit at any given time, according to this approach on career construction. The key difference between career crafting and similar constructs like professional competences and adaptability (more on these in the next section) is that the former refers to actual proactive conduct, while the latter two are about personal resources and competencies.

According to Savickas and Porfeli (2012), career adaptability is made up of four distinct self-regulation techniques, also known as psychosocial resources, that can be useful in a variety of job transition situations. First and foremost, career concerns are about planning for the future and looking ahead. Second, career control is the process of taking charge of one's career by applying perseverance, self-control, and discipline. Third, information-seeking behaviors that let a person consider many possible identities are referred to as professional curiosity. Ultimately, having the self-assurance to pursue endeavors that aid in achieving professional objectives and conquering challenges is a key component of



career confidence. These four job adaptability resources are tightly related, while consisting of distinct strategies, and together they form the aggregate construct of career adaptability.

A broad spectrum of processes and actions that are helpful in improving various job-related aspects are included in career development. A person's career growth process runs concurrently with their career life cycle. A person can advance and enhance their career by studying, changing, and relocating from one environment to another. A variety of factors influence the processes involved in career advancement, including the workplace culture inside the organization and employees' job satisfaction levels. Various procedures or areas fall under the category of career development, including career management, skills, mentality, and career planning. It is a means of improving the abilities and information that a person needs to have. The person has to work on honing the abilities needed for the specific task or jobs. The term "development" accurately captures the alterations and expansions in the composition and capabilities (Brown, 2002).

Accordingly, Patton & McMahon (2001) observed that in career development, both content and process learning are essential components of career development education. The world of work (paid and unpaid) and its changing nature, the knowledge and skills people need for work and the expectations of employers, awareness and understanding of career options and pathways available, knowledge about primary education, training, and employment-related information sources and services, knowledge and understanding of decision-making processes that can be applied when making career choices, changing opportunities in the labor market, awareness and understanding of one's own qualities, such as interests, abilities, values, and motivations, and how these change over time, are some of the specific areas of career development for employees in the hospitality industry.

In addition, Patton & McMahon (2001) noted that it has long been understood that career development is a continuous process. It is widely acknowledged that because of the constant changes in the workplace, people will change careers multiple times in their lifetime. They will therefore require continuous career counseling. Organizations offer the perfect environment in which to hold professional programs. People are being encouraged to manage their own careers, tenure is becoming less assured, and workers are being hired on a temporary basis more and more. Organizations that offer career programs as a part of their ongoing professional development programs are showing that they are aware of the ways in which the workplace has changed.

Jia-jun, & Hua-ming, (2022), further suggests that employee career development is a reflection of the mentality that the company values, which is the fulfillment of personal development requirements and the recognition of one's own worth. Employees who have experienced professional growth will, via the principle of reciprocity, make an affective commitment to the hospitality organization. They will also return to the organization with a commitment of loyalty, remaining within the organization and adhering to its norms, which will result in more positive attitudes and feelings toward their careers (Weng, *et al*, 2010). Through organizational commitment, the achievement of employees' career development goals within hospitality organization and the growth of career-related knowledge and skills, for instance, will positively affect employee engagement with the establishment.

Career development is the process of enhancing one's employability in order to land the job one desires. According to Adnyani and Dewi (2019), in order for workers to be content in their positions and increase productivity, they need to have a respectable amount of work experience. The expectation is that every employee will produce the best results for the company, hence it is necessary to provide them with opportunities to grow in their careers. organizations can use career development as a strategy to retain and grow employee productivity as well as to get workers ready for their future careers (Jumawan & Mora, 2018). Career development is a work-related activity that assists people in making plans for their future careers inside the organization, allowing both the organization and the individuals in question to grow to their full potential.

While commenting on career development of employees, Nasution (2018), postulates that when it comes to job knowledge, an employee who accepts an offer for the first time will differ from another who has worked in a hospitality organization for a long period. Employees with extensive work experience usually possess deep and insightful knowledge. As time goes on, so does their perception of their careers. An employee's job is seen as more than just a means of generating income; it also serves as a means of satisfying other needs, such as recognition from peers, competitiveness with superiors and better positions, and so on.

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Bloomer & Hodkinson (2000) further observes that personal guidance coaching helps individuals make better career decisions on a personal basis. In a sense, the person faces its own limitations, stays true to its goals and ideals, overcomes obstacles, gains confidence, and makes the best choice. The term "career development" encompasses both an individual's stage of life and work in all of its manifestations, facets, and results. The progress of a profession is influenced by the relationships between the different dimensions, scopes, and repercussions, including gender, need, ethics, health, age, demographics, and environmental factors. The process of professional development, which entails integrating oneself into the environment, connected elements, and informed methods, is the foundation for discovering one's self-identity, values, and ethics. It is the process of adapting and applying life concepts to one's job. It is an ongoing process that involves the decisions an individual makes based on their ideals and the concessions they make when interacting with subordinates or superiors. Through career development, it lays the foundation for surviving and thriving in this environment.

In the opinions of Noe & Raymond (2017), the difficulty facing managers today is how to transform their hospitality organizations into high-performing work environments with the ideal mix of personnel, organizational design, and technology to fully utilize assets and possibilities in attaining their companies' objectives. Each of these components needs to work well with the others to form a cohesive whole in order for the system to produce high-performance results. Many hotels use the most recent processes available, such as just-in-time inventory control, flexible production technology, and total quality management (which restocks parts and supplies automatically as needed). Of course, these processes require supervision from qualified individuals; they cannot be used in an autonomous manner. After identifying the types of individuals best suited for their requirements, organizations must seek out, develop, and inspire these unique individuals. Empirical studies indicate that the implementation of integrated high-performance work practices by firms typically results in improved productivity and sustained financial performance.

According to research on career development, this new career era is the context in which people are working in today's organizations, where workers must strike a balance between their need for professional growth and their attitudes toward their current employers (Weng & McElroy, 2012). Companies that support employee career development benefit from a more devoted workforce and, consequently, lower turnover in a setting where people are likely to switch jobs or companies in order to achieve the psychological career success they desire (Weng & McElroy, 2012; Weng et al., 2010).

Baird, Coffey & Shields (2020) while commenting on career planning, find that it is possible to hire staff at the most advantageous time, at the most affordable price, and in accordance with the needs of

the organization going forward. It is possible to efficiently prevent labor shortages or idle labor, and surplus labor can be put to use in the creation of new goods or markets. The improvement of these characteristics can be achieved by recognizing and addressing the problems brought about by an aging workforce as well as talent or skill shortages. Career planning can raise employee morale and ensure that future skill requirements are met by promptly educating and developing individuals. It is possible to foresee and handle likely redundancy with minimal impact on workers, workflows, and organizational goals.

Employers operating in a global environment are finding that one of the most important challenges is designing work to fit the needs of both the organization and the employee. Employers now expect more flexibility in the workplace, including multitasking, multiskilling, and increased productivity from their workforce, while employees demand more interesting work with more opportunities for skill enhancement and promotion due to rising educational standards and an emphasis on the social and technological aspects of the workplace (Baird, Coffey & Shields (2020)). In order to make sure that their employees are working as effectively and productively as possible, companies are under pressure from both regional and global economic crises to assess the roles of their employees. Employers must make sure that every employee is trained, supervised for performance, and fully used due to tight operational resources.

Numerous people have characterized the present labor market as challenging, turbulent, and uncertain. The status of the economy, technological developments, a more diverse workforce, governmental laws, and societal influences are just a few of the interconnected concerns that have affected this changed environment. As previously said, a weak economy and massive worldwide debt near the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century resulted in unemployment as businesses undertook significant downsizings in an effort to recover financial equilibrium (McDonald & Hite, 2023). Thus, employee career development in the hotels is vital for the employees to overcome the challenges within their operational and organizational environments.

In the opinion of Jia-jun and Hua-ming (2022), career growth highlights the advancements employees have made in their careers up to a given point. This includes not only the enterprise's current internal growth but also the career advancements of individuals during the process of interorganizational mobility, particularly the rate at which individuals within the enterprise are growing. Employee engagement encompasses not only the behaviors that an employee demonstrates within the organization that are advantageous to the firm, but also the attitude that the individual has toward the enterprise and their understanding of the significance of their existence within the enterprise. In part, this indicates that career advancement has a big influence on workers' work attitudes since knowledge workers place a high value on having access to strong resources and development possibilities within the company. When companies provide their staff members chances to further their careers—such as by raising pay or giving them promotions—people will respond with a high degree of engagement.

DeCenzo, David A, Robbins, Stephen, (2010) consent with the view that the main goal of individual career development, also known as career planning, is to help people determine their main objectives and the best ways to reach them. It should be noted that the latter situation is wholly focused on the individual and takes into account both their lives inside and outside of the business. Therefore, individual career development deals with each person's unique work career and other lifestyle difficulties, whereas organizational career development focuses on individuals meeting the needs of the organization. For example, an exceptional worker who receives support in better understanding needs and goals through interest inventories, life-planning analysis, and counseling may even choose to leave the company if it turns out that goals for their career can be best met outside of the employing company. Career approaches that are organizational and individual-focused are valuable.



In conclusion, staff members constantly strive to pursue a lifetime learning process that involves managing work, holidays, and employment transitions in a variety of hospitality organizations. This is done with the goal of moving toward individualized determination and evolving preferred futures in both the dynamic hospitality companies and the job markets. This occurs in the hospitality firms where the employees currently work and perceive themselves working in the future.

### **Career Environmental Dynamics**

According to Hirschi & Dauwalder, (2015) three basic methods that people might interact with their surroundings through various proactive professional behaviors can be recognized as behaviors with the following goals: choosing surroundings, adapting to present environments, and actively modifying one's current environment. This idea holds that personal environment fit is a temporal state that comes about as a result of matching individual wants and needs to the needs and resources of the environment. In hospitality organizations, everything surrounding employees that may have an impact on their performance at work, such as lighting configurations, noise levels, workplace security configurations, and hygiene settings, is referred to as the career environment.

Following a study that was carried out by Hermawan, Sijabat & Darmaputra (2024), the ability of workers in a given industry to perform at their best level in order to achieve production outcomes that match the original plan is known as employee career productivity. The treatment of employees by the hospitality industry, which is impacted by their integrity and work conduct in the industry, has a significant impact on good working conditions. Employee satisfaction with the industry's compensation will increase if it can keep up with employee expectations. This will also create a calmer workplace, which will boost productivity. Several elements, including as pay, workload, work ethics, discipline, motivation, job aptitude, and work environment, can also have an impact on human resource productivity.

Moreover, Hermawan, Sijabat & Darmaputra (2024), suggested that when operational duties can be completed in a way that is most effective, safe, healthy, and comfortable, the career environment is conducive. Each and every aspect of social and cultural phenomena, including the workplace in its entirety, will surround and impact individuals. To establish a reasonable career environment, a number of considerations must be made, including a comfortable workspace, safe working conditions, a constant room temperature, enough lighting, and productive working relationships with colleagues. Should a business succeed in doing this, it will motivate staff members to boost output. People can develop strong professional relationships with one another in the workplace. Hence, it is imperative to make efforts to ensure that the career environment is pleasant and conducive, as this will help employees feel at ease and motivated to perform their duties. Ultimately, this will lead to a rise in job satisfaction, which in turn will boost employee performance leading to their growth and development in their occupations.

Additionally, Bahren &Poma (2024) posits that the productivity of employees is highly influenced by a positive work environment. An enthusiastic workplace will ultimately boost employee productivity (performance), efficiency, motivation, and achievement. A high-quality work environment will fuel this excitement. The physical and non-physical environments are all included in the company's environment. The physical conditions around the workplace that have the potential to directly or indirectly effect employees are referred to as the physical work environment. All circumstances pertaining to professional relationships—with supervisors as well as with coworkers or subordinates—are considered to be a part of the non-physical work environment.

Numerous businesses of all sizes have undergone restructuring as a result of increased global competitiveness and shifting economic conditions (Simamora, 1997), which has an effect on alterations in both internal and external environmental factors. Career dynamics are influenced by the surroundings as well. Employees at an organization must adapt their career management to the changing needs of the business. In this case, the employer must also provide opportunities for career progression to its

employees. According to Marlon et al. in Widawati (2001), career development generally strives to increase performance and satisfaction. Because of these changes, businesses need to know how to empower all employees, regardless of their position within the company. To fill new, larger, and more sophisticated occupations requiring new technologies, qualified people must be accessible.

The way hospitality workers approach their employment is influenced by a variety of environmental and personal factors in addition to personal ones. Some of these are family history, work experience opportunities, and socioeconomic status. According to an empirical study on graduate instructors considering a profession in teaching, family background is a significant factor in employees' career decision making (Maura, Ellsworth, & Hawley, 2008). According to the results, 16% of mothers and 7% of fathers who were instructors had taught at some point in their lives, and many graduate students in teaching courses who expressed great pleasure with teaching as a vocation (Dirksen P, 2016).

The decision of an individual to continue or discontinue organizational training may also be influenced by culture. Culture is not just our behavior; it's also our thoughts, according to Macionis (1999). Values are imparted to people via culture, claims Macionis. Social controls incentivize people to follow social norms, according to Macionis. Consider the numerous, stringent rules that some hospitality organizations have. If the industry's regulations align with an employee's cultural beliefs, they may elect to give up or pursue alternative professional goals. Ethnicity is one cultural component that may have an impact on employment decision and perseverance. The degree to which minority personnel succeed in technical jobs within their firms can also be significantly influenced by cultural factors such as parental influence.

According to research by Devi (2012), training and development is a fundamental practice in high-performance work environments that unlocks potential for future growth and development and helps employees gain a competitive edge. Training and development help close the knowledge and skill gap between personnel and what they should know and be able to perform. This is due to the fact that knowledge, abilities, and attitudes occasionally deteriorate, rendering them obsolete. Therefore, firms need to polish the competencies of their employees if they want to stand out in this contemporary era's dynamic commercial environment.

According to Sugiarti (2022), a comfortable and sufficient work environment is crucial for boosting employee morale, with the workplace being an integral element of the organization. This is in addition to providing training. The workplace must be sufficiently furnished by the company with respect to both the physical and non-physical aspects of work life, including the work environment, happiness of the employees, relationships between employees and managers, and places of worship, as well as a comfortable layout, fresh air, good lighting, color, and melodic music.

Sugiarti (2022) goes on to say that a productive workplace can encourage people to take on new tasks with enthusiasm and increase productivity. Employee performance is positively impacted by the working environment, which is something that needs to be considered. The individuals who work there will benefit from the workplace. Improved performance from fewer sick days, higher productivity and quality from more dedicated employees, lower health and insurance costs, workers' compensation and direct payments from fewer claims filed, greater flexibility and adaptability from increased ownership and participation, and better labor choice due to enhanced company reputation are all advantages of a safe and healthy work environment.

## ***Research Methodology***

This research study was carried out in Nairobi City County, in selected four-star and five-star hotels. A quantitative research approach was used and explanatory study design assisted the researcher in investigating the causal links between variables. The target population of the employees in the selected

hotels were 3,114 employees out of which a sample of 341 respondents was obtained. Purposive, census, stratified, systematic and simple random sampling procedures were used in the study. structured questionnaire was used in collection of data for the study.

## Results

### Demographic Information of the Respondents

Demographic information included hospitality employee's age, gender, education level, marital status, number of dependants, years worked in the organization, number of seniors an employee reports to, star rating of the hotel, department and position held by the respondents. Results in table below shows that from a total of 280 sampled employees 154 (55%) were male while 126 (45%) were female. Further the hotels employee had an average age of 29 years with a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 60 years. On education levels, 94 (33.57%) respondents had attained diploma education level, 79 (28.21%) respondents had attained bachelor's degree education level, 59 (21.07%) respondents had attained certificate level of education, 27 (9.64%) respondents had attained high school level of education, 16 (5.72%) respondents had attained master's degree level of education, 4 (1.43%) respondents had attained primary level of education while only 1 (0.36%) respondent had attained PhD degree level of education. Results further indicated that 132 (47.14%) respondents were married, 125 (44.64 %) respondents were single, 13 (4.64%) respondents were separated, and 7 (2.50%) of the respondents were divorced while only 3 (1.07%) of the respondent was a widow. On average the hospitality employees had 4 dependants with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 20 family dependants. Further, the study found out that on average the hospitality employee had worked in their company for 3.5 years with a minimum of one year and a maximum of 24 years. Results in table 4.2 further depicts that on average the sampled hospitality employees reported to 3 seniors with a minimum of 1 to and a maximum of 10 seniors within the hierarchy of their organizational structure. Results on star rating hotels indicated that 159 (56.79%) of the respondents worked in 4 star rated hotels while 121 (43.21%) of the respondents worked in 5 star rated hotels. Further, the results of this study showed that 48 (17.14%) of the respondents worked in food and beverage service section, 38 (13.57%) of the respondents worked in food and beverage production section, 35 (12.5%) of the respondents worked in accountant department, 28 (10%) of the respondents worked in sales and marketing department, 25 (8.93%) of the respondents worked in front office, 22 (7.86%) of the respondents worked in security department, 21 (7.5%) of the respondents worked in purchasing and stores department, 19 (6.79%) of the respondents worked in the maintenance department, 19(6.79%) of the respondents worked in the human resource department, 16 (5.71%) of the respondents worked in housekeeping department while 9 (3.21%) of the respondents worked in other departments. Result in table 4.6 indicated that 173 (61.79%) of the respondent held junior employee position, 66 (23.21%) of the respondents held supervisor position while 41 (14.64%) of the respondents held manager position.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	154	55.00
	Female	126	45.00
Age	M=29.38	Min 18	100
		Max 60	
Education level	Primary.	4	1.43
	High school	27	9.64
	Certificate	59	21.07
	Diploma	94	33.57

	Bachelor's degree	79	28.21
	Master's degree	16	5.71
	PHD degree	1	0.36
Marital status	Single	125	44.64
	Married	132	47.14
	Separated	13	4.64
	Divorced	7	2.50
	Widowed	3	1.07
Number of dependents	M=4	Min 1 Max 20	100
	M=3.5	Min 1 Max 24	100
Number of seniors reporting to	M=3	1	10
Star rating	5-Star	121	43.21
	4-Star	159	56.79
Department	Front Office	25	8.93
	Accounts	35	12.5
	Human Resource	19	6.79
	Security	22	7.86
	Food and Beverage production	38	13.57
	Food and Beverage service	48	17.14
	Purchasing and Stores	21	7.5
	Maintenance	19	6.79
	Sales and Marketing	28	10
	Housekeeping	16	5.71
	Other	9	3.21
Position	Manager	41	14.64
	Supervisor	66	23.57
	Junior employee	173	61.79
Department	Front Office	25	8.93
	Accounts	35	12.5
	Human Resource	19	6.79
	Security	22	7.86
	Food and Beverage production	38	13.57
	Food and Beverage service	48	17.14
	Purchasing and Stores	21	7.5
	Maintenance	19	6.79
	Sales and Marketing	28	10
	Housekeeping	16	5.71
	Other	9	3.21

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

The data collected career environment dynamics was subjected to exploratory factor analysis Using principal component extraction method. Career environment dynamic objective had a total of three components that were extracted. They were named career orientation environment (COE), Team work (TW), and good will for the career (GWC). Cronbach's alpha for the items that measured career environment dynamics was 0.832, suggesting that it provided a reliable measurement of the career environmental variable. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value for career environmental dynamics was 0.810, which confirmed that the items were adequate to predict the

influence of the career environment dynamics on career development of the respondents. The total variance explained for the section was 53.33%.

Five components were extracted from the career development variable. This included Organizational needs (ON), Career prospects (CP), Career goals (CG), Career support (CS), and Career opportunities (CO). The Cronbach's alpha was obtained to be 0.8461. This indicated that it gave a reliable estimate of career development variable. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value for career development was 0.8246, which confirmed that the items were adequate to predict the career development of the respondents. The total variance explained for the section was 57.22%.

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The components that were retained from the exploratory factor analysis were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The two main processes in SEM are fitting the structural model and validating the measurement model. Path analysis with latent variables is used to fit the structural model, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to validate the measurement model. Fit indicators for the measurement models in the confirmatory factor analysis were satisfactory as follows.

Career environment dynamics:  $X^2 = 131.511$ , D.F = 71, P= .000, CMIN/DF 1.852, CFI .933, PCFI .735, RMSEA .050

Employee career development:  $X^2 = 212.009$ , D.F = 133, P= .000, CMIN/DF 1.594, CFI .937, RMSEA .046.

### Proposed Structural Model

Figure 1 below shows the proposed structural model that was used for the testing of the research hypothesis. The fit indices obtained (CMIN=425.364, DF=146.000 CMIN/DF=2.913, CFI=0.905, SRMR=0.080, RMSEA=0.083) showed that further modification was required to test the research hypothesis.

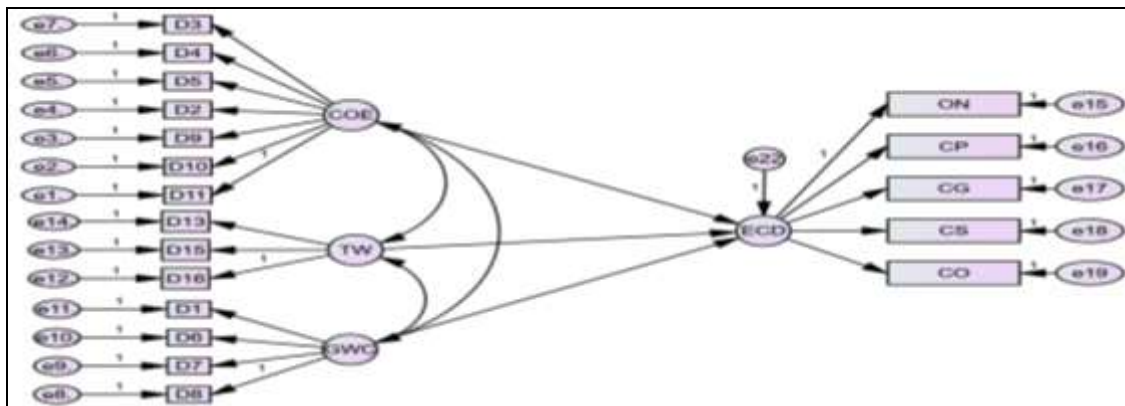


Figure 1: measurement model for the study

**Abbreviations:** COE: Career Orientation Environment TW: Team Work GWC: Good Will for The Career ECD: Employee Career Development ON: Organizational Needs CP: Career Prospects CG: Career Goals CS: Career Support CO: Career Opportunities.



### Structural Model

Upon testing the measurement model, the modification indices indicated that the model can improve by correlating the error terms before testing the research hypothesis. The results for the model were; (CMIN=326.711, DF=134.000, CMIN/DF=2.438, CFI=0.934, SRMR=0.071, RMSEA=0.072). this was a good model fit to test the hypothesis. Figure 2 below shows the structural model that was fit to test the research hypothesis.

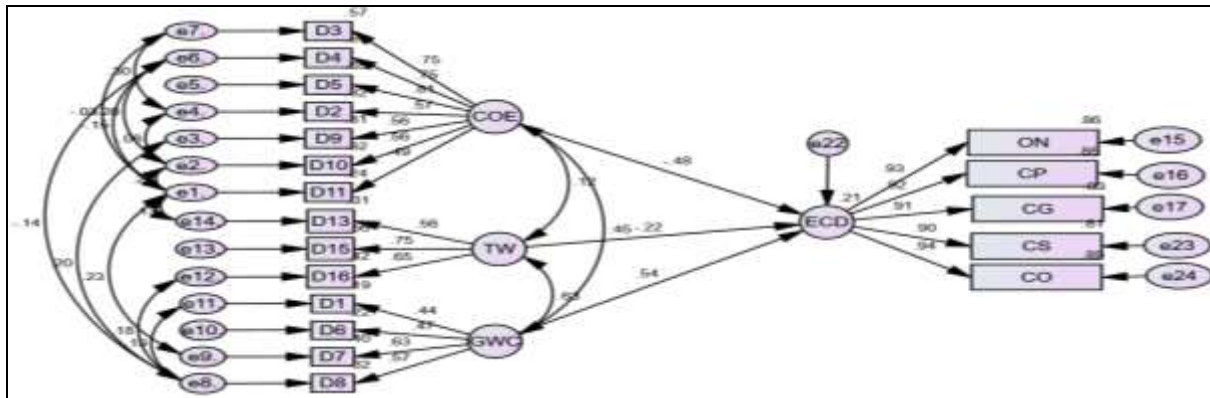


Figure 2. structural model for the study.

**Abbreviations:** COE: Career Orientation Environment TW: Team Work GWC: Good Will for The Career ECD: Employee Career Development ON: Organizational Needs CP: Career Prospects CG: Career Goals CS: Career Support CO: Career Opportunities

### Hypothesis Testing

The following hypotheses were advanced and tested from the data that was analyzed.

- i.H<sub>01</sub> There is no significant influence of career orientation environment on employee career development in star rated hotels in Nairobi City County.
- ii.H<sub>02</sub> There is no significant influence of teamwork on employee career development in star rated hotels in Nairobi City County.
- iii.H<sub>03</sub> There is no significant influence of goodwill for careers on employee career development in star rated hotels in Nairobi City County.

The structural equation model generated using SPSS AMOS was relied upon in testing the research hypothesis. An adequate fitting model for hypothesis testing is accepted if the computed value of the Normed Chi Square Index/Df<5, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI>0.9), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI>0.9), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA<0.08), Tucker and Lewis Index (TLI>0.9), Normed-Fit Index (NFI>0.9), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI>0.9) (Hair et al., 2010). The fit indices for the structural model in figure 2 fell within the acceptable range: CMIN=326.711, DF=134.000, CMIN/DF=2.438, CFI=0.934, TLI= 0.916, SRMR=0.071, RMSEA=0.072. The squared multiple correlation was for career environment dynamics which shows that 0.21 variance in employee career development is accounted for by career orientation environment, team work and goodwill for careers. The study assessed the influence of career orientation environment on employee career development. The influence of career orientation environment on employee career development was negative and significant ( $\beta=-0.482$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and therefore H<sub>01</sub> was not supported. The influence of teamwork on employee career development was negative but not significant ( $\beta=-0.215$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and therefore H<sub>02</sub> was supported. The

influence of good will for career on employee career development was positive but significant ( $\beta=-0.542$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and therefore  $H_3$  was not supported.

**Table 2: Hypothesis Testing Using the Structural Model**

Hypothesized path	Standardized Estimates	S.E.	C.R.	P	P	Results
ECD <--- COE	-0.482	.356	-4.47	***	<0.05	Not Supported
ECD <--- TW	-0.215	.436	-1.63	.103	>0.05	Supported
ECD <--- GWC	0.542	.604	3.19	.001	<0.05	Not supported
<b>R square</b>						
Employee career development	0.21					
<b>Model fitness</b>						
CMIN=326.711, DF=134.000, CMIN/DF=2.438, CFI=0.934, TLI= 0.916, SRMR=0.071, RMSEA=0.072						

### **Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations**

The hypothesis was aimed at testing the extent to which the career environment of the employees predicts their career development. The findings of the study were in support of the assertion that employee career productivity, as defined by a study conducted by Hermawan, Sijabat, and Darmaputra (2024), is the capacity of workers in a particular industry to operate at their highest level in order to accomplish output outcomes that match the original plan. Good working conditions are significantly impacted by how the hospitality business treats its employees, which is determined by their ethics and behavior within the industry. If the sector can match employee expectations, employee satisfaction with compensation will rise. Also, a calmer workplace will result from this, increasing productivity. Human resource productivity can also be impacted by a number of factors, such as compensation, workload, discipline, work ethics, motivation, job aptitude, and work environment.

As suggested by (Adzandri, Satrio, Agung, Mendrofa & Ferdian, 2023), work compensation is a type of benefit that employees receive from their employer in exchange for their labor. Direct remuneration for employment can take many forms, but it can include any type of financial incentive such as a salary, commissions, bonuses, achievement awards, stock options, and profit-sharing from the hospitality company. Furthermore, there is indirect compensation, which may consist of cash given to staff members by outside parties. As in the case of firms enrolling employees in health and social insurance schemes. The company covers the cost of the employees' insurance, including health, life, and employment insurance, so long as the workers use the advantages of the program. Paying employees in the form of positive qualities that they may appreciate is referred to as non-financial remuneration. benefits including the opportunity to participate in company-sponsored training programs, a solid and supportive work team, competent and kind supervisors, a laid-back work environment, flexible work schedules, more time off, and recognition of staff achievements. One of the key elements in keeping workers happy and motivated, as well as making sure the company has a skilled workforce, is employment pay. This is instrumental in enabling the employee to positively improve the self and also the place of work, which is the career environment that supports their livelihoods, ultimately leading to their development in their careers within hotel organizations.

Furthermore, the findings were in favor of the opinions of Sugiarti (2022) who asserts that improving employee morale requires an adequate and comfortable work environment, with the workplace

being a critical component of the business. Not only that, but we also offer training. In addition to having a comfortable layout, fresh air, good lighting, color, and melodic music, the workplace must be adequately furnished by the company in terms of both the physical and non-physical aspects of work life, such as the work environment, employee happiness, relationships between employees and managers, and places of worship. Thus, the career environment where an employee is usually engaged has an instrumental influence on the level of productivity.

Hospitality organizations need to create working environments that create humble surroundings to support the careers of their employees in order to boost the ability of the employees to be more productive in their careers within the hotels. This will help the employees to focus on their career development better through improved productivity and operational performance from their knowledge and skills that they obtain from the duties and responsibilities within the hospitality organizations. For strategic human resource managers in the hospitality industry to accurately contribute to the business's strategic direction, they must have a thorough understanding of the social, economic, and political settings of organizations. Hospitality managers must also have a thorough understanding of the labor marketplaces where their human resources are found, chosen, and developed. Because the economic environments in which businesses operate are dynamic and interrelated, changes in the local, regional, and worldwide economies will directly affect business operations in terms of workforce size and composition as well as growth and contraction. Hotel managers are constantly concerned with the problem of productivity and how to make it better.

### **Recommendations**

The researcher arrived at the following recommendations;

Hospitality establishment need to adapt to the changing trends of hospitality operations to remain competitive. The hospitality environment is changing due to forces inside and outside the organization. For instance, technology is fast evolving and hotels need to keep up with the emerging trends of the upcoming technologies. This is possible especially from the practice of customization of employee career paths within hospitality establishments. Managers need to know the career aspirations for their workforce and diversify the possible career lines where the employees can liberally pursue.

Career environment is very significant in the career development of the hospitality employees. Managers should ensure that the environment is conducive for the activities that employees undertake in their jobs. This may involve the technological infrastructure, the physical spaces and even the equipment that the employees use to discharge their duties and responsibilities. Optimal satisfaction will be derived from a career if the employees are working in favorable organizational environment

Hospitality organizations should promote work-life balance. This is because most employees may have other responsibilities for instance, family responsibilities. Some responsibilities outside an employee's career may be very demanding in terms of the resources and time that the employee may invest in them, which may drain the employee's capacity and commitment to their career within the hospitality organization.

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