



CAREER GROWTH AND EMPLOYEE DEDICATION IN THE BAYELSA STATE CIVIL SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between Career Growth and Employee Dedication of the Bayelsa State Civil Service. The study identified 4,413 civil servants between Grade Level 8 and Grade Level 14. A sample of 367 representatives was drawn using Yamene's (1967) formula. Data retrieved from 281 valid copies of the questionnaire were analyzed to generate descriptive outputs, with the aid of the International Business Machine Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 28.0.1. Three hypotheses were tested using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. All dimensions of Career Growth (career goal progress, professional ability development and organisational rewards) were found to have positive and significant relationship with dedication. The study concluded that higher levels of career goal progress, professional ability development and organisational rewards are associated with higher levels of dedication. The study recommends that government should: (i) enable workers attend more developmental programs, and carry out developmental assignments; coached workers on how to set and attain career goals for specific positions, (ii) create more opportunities for workers to develop new professional skills, knowledge and competencies, and (iii) review reward system to re-introduce incentive schemes such as transportation allowance, meal subsidy, utility allowance, and non-financial incentives such as compliments, public recognition, and awards.

KEYWORDS: Career Growth, career goal progress, professional ability development, and organisational rewards growth, dedication

1.0: INTRODUCTION

Researchers in the fields of organisational behaviour and human resource management are now very eager to find out more about the positive psychological workplace factors that make workers thrive in their jobs (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Chan et al., 2015, 2017; Musenze et al., 2021). One of such factors that persist in literature is work dedication. Employees who are dedicated have a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and tend to take up challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Dedication is touted to amplify higher levels of creativity (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), a higher return on investment (Allen, & Rogelberg, 2013) profitability, productivity (Harter et al., 2003), and employee performance (Tensay & Singh, 2020; Obuobisa-Darko, 2020).

Given the importance of employee dedication, a key concern for organisations is how to promote the dedication of employees through some mechanisms. One of such organisational mechanisms or resource that is can foster employee dedication is career growth (Bai & Liu, 2018). Recent years have seen an increase in scholarly interest in career growth studies (Modem et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Moreover, because civil servant salaries are generally lower than those of their counterparts in the private sector, upward mobility and advancement become particularly crucial for public employees (Xie & Yang, 2021). Career growth is seen by scholars as a resource that encourages individuals to be genuinely driven in performing tasks, resulting in lower levels of burnout. (Van De Voorde & Beijer, 2015) and greater levels of dedication (Albrecht, 2012; Ugwu & Okojie, 2016; Bai & Liu, 2018).



Although there have been many studies on career growth and other variables in many various industries (e.g. Weng et al., 2010; Weng & McElory, 2012; Biswakarma, 2016; Son & Kim, 2019; Knezović & Greda, 2021; Jia-jun & Hua-ming, 2022), the public service sector has received very little attention (Napitupulu et al., 2017), especially in developing country context. Moreover, there is paucity of empirical investigation concerning the employee dedication construct in the literature on civil service (Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2013). This is very surprising given that the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm emphasizes traits like initiative, service orientation, and performance improvement, which are also fundamental to employee dedication (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

Literature suggests that the perceived value of the public sector has been going down, and this has led to a human resource crisis in the public sector (Costantini et al., 2017). This crisis is caused by employees who are unmotivated, lazy, inefficient, and undedicated (e.g., Berman et al., 2019; Jacobson, 2011; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Specifically, a low level of work engagement has been observed in the Bayelsa State Civil service, which manifests in workers' deteriorating productivity as well as lateness to work, absenteeism, and general lack of commitment and diligence towards tasks. Moreover, it appears that many workers are not dedicated to their jobs as files upon files are left untreated for weeks, while some are often given query letters for negligence of duty. Furthermore, the pride, enthusiasm and inspiration workers have for joining the civil service is not as it used to be in the days of yore.

Following the extant literature (e.g. Weng & McElory, 2012; Weng & Xi, 2013), this study theorizes that career growth, herein dimensionalized as career goal progress, professional ability development, and organisational rewards growth (Weng & Hu, 2009; Weng et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2014) is capable of fostering desirable outcomes (Kim et al., 2015; Bagdadli & Gianecchini, 2019; Jia-jun & Hua-ming, 2022) such as employee dedication. In other words, this study postulates that employees will reciprocate with a high level of dedication when the civil service provides them with opportunities to grow in career paths, while improving their professional abilities and adequately rewarding them. This study hypothesizes that:

- H0₁:** There is no significant relationship between career goal progress and dedication.
H0₂: There is no significant relationship between professional ability development and dedication.
H0₃: There is no significant relationship between organisational rewards growth and dedication.

2.1: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Social Exchange Theory (SET)

According to the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), organisations and their employees engage in a two-way exchange of resources according to established policies, regulations, and norms. When employees gain benefits from their employers, they feel obligated to give back to the organisation in kind. Exchanges of positive resources may be monetary (in the form of compensation, bonuses, and incentives) or material (in the form of the provision of tools and the ambiance of the workplace) or social resources (e.g. social support, training and development, recognition or praise). Furthermore, Bakker and Demerouti (2008) argue that job resources, such as opportunities for growth facilitate motivational psychological states, particularly that of dedication, as they help to fulfil both extrinsic (e.g. goal accomplishment) and intrinsic (e.g. competency) motivational needs.

2.2: Career Growth

Career is "a sequence of positions occupied by a person during the course of a life-time" (Super & Hall, 1978, p. 334). A person's career grows as they move from one job to another, gaining experience and earning more money as they go (Amah & Oyetuunde, 2020). Career growth may also be described as the efforts of both the employee and the employer to help the employee achieve their career goals and develop their desired competences while working for the employer (Weng et al., 2010; Knezovi, & Greda, 2020). Career growth opportunities have been cited by academics as a powerful motivator that can positively amplify employee behaviour (e.g., Bristol & Tisdell, 2010; Wiley, 1997). Staff workers who are offered options for growth inside the organisation have a greater sense of trust in management and are thus less likely to experience burnout, thereby fostering engagement (Chuang & Liao, 2010; Albrecht, 2012; Alias et al., 2014; Van De Voorde & Beijer, 2015).



2.2.1: Dimensions of Career Growth

Career growth was dimensionalized into career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed and remuneration growth (Weng & Hu, 2009). It was later reduced to a three-factor model comprising (1) career goal progress, (2) professional ability development and (3) organisation rewards (promotion speed plus remuneration growth) - (Weng & McElroy, 2012). Recently, Ni et al. (2022) dimensionalized career growth into: career promotion, career goal progress, professional ability and quality improvement, professional identity development and increase in personal prestige. However, most studies have adopted Weng et al.'s (2010) facets of career growth (Bai & Liu, 2018).

The extent to which employees think they have had sufficient career opportunities and have not experienced halted careers is known as perceived career goal progress (Lin et al., 2018). Career goal progress is a higher order need satisfaction (Weng et al., 2010) which generates vital, productive work energy that can support more work tasks (Conner, 2014). When workers see daily progress toward their objectives, they are more motivated, more appreciative and become more engaged at work (Amabile & Kramer, 2011; Yang et al., 2018). Professional ability in the workplace might be viewed as the capacity to manage one's own job and learning prospects in order to achieve certain career ambitions (Kuijpers et al., 2006). Professional abilities include goal setting and career planning, self-knowledge, job-related performance, career-related skills, familiarity with (office) politics, career guidance and networking, and feedback-seeking and self-presentation that foster career-related benefits (Francis Smythe et al., 2013). Employees who believe their current position offers limited opportunity for professional development are more likely to demonstrate low commitment to their current position and will like to quit (Weng, 2010). Organisational rewards growth includes the following: (i) likelihood and frequency of promotion; (ii); likelihood of being rewarded; speed and frequency of reward; adequacy of reward; and likely of reward increase. Rewards include any type of monetary compensation, physical perks, and services that workers receive in exchange for the job they accomplish for the company, with a focus on the employment relationship (Malhotra et al., 2007). Rewards can be generally divided into three categories: extrinsic, intrinsic and social rewards (Malhotra et al., 2007; Thomas et al., 2017; Kokubun, 2019). Extrinsic rewards are the more material benefits that the employer provides to employees during their employment, such as bonuses, staff suggestion programs, pay increases, and fringe benefits (Malhotra et al., 2007). Intrinsic rewards are the unquantifiable benefits resulting from the fulfillment of the work itself. When an individual receives intrinsic rewards such as praise from supervisors and coworkers, receives recognition in the public, and has control over their job (e.g. allocation of discretionary funds or application of budgets), they are likely to experience psychological growth. Other forms of intrinsic reward are removal of constraints, role clarity, skill variety, feedback, interesting/challenging assignments or projects, training, delegation of authority and responsibility, and participation in decision making (Malhotra et al., 2007). Social rewards pertain to the availability of favorable interpersonal interactions at work such as pleasant or supportive relationships with supervisors and coworkers (Malhotra et al., 2007; Kokubun, 2019). Effective reward strategies are used by organizations to raise work dedication customer satisfaction, employee performance, and job satisfaction (Robinson et al., 2004; Breevaart et al., 2014). Employee engagement is greatly impacted by incentives and recognition, according to a recent study by (Rose) Liu et al. (2022). Employees may feel tricked if there is a negative discrepancy between how well their rewards are growing and what they should be, which might be detrimental to their level of job engagement (Creed et al., 2015).

2.3: Dedication

Dedication is the state of an employee "characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge" (Schaufeli et al, 2002, p. 74). Eldor et al. (2020) assert that being emotionally invested in one's job and feeling a sense of inspiration, pride, and zeal is what it means to be dedicated. Dedicated employees think positively about the importance of finishing their work tasks (May et al., 2004), thereby giving the job enough attention and deliberate sacrifice. Lack of employee dedication negatively affects the organisation as it "leads to high employee turnover, which in turn, causes high labour costs" (Gill & Mathur, 2007, p. 328).

2.4: Empirical Studies

Jia-jun and Hua-ming (2022) examined the impact of career growth on engagement of knowledge-based workers of companies in China. The survey instrument was administered to 467 workers, and 353 valid surveys were retrieved. Using standardized path coefficients, results from the structural model indicated that career goal progress has a positive and significant relationship with organisational engagement ($\beta = 0.101$, $t = 2.560$, $p < 0.00$) and work engagement ($\beta = 0.283$, $t = 7.524$, $p < 0.00$); professional ability development has a positive and significant relationship with organisational engagement ($\beta = 0.257$, $t = 6.350$, $p < 0.00$) and work engagement (β

= 0.141, $t = 3.557$, $p < 0.00$); while organisational rewards development has a positive and significant relationship with organisational engagement ($\beta = 0.159$, $t = 4.437$, $p < 0.00$), but a positive and non-significant relationship with work engagement ($\beta = 0.058$, $t = 1.649$, $p > 0.05$). The study concluded that the knowledge workers must have perceived the growth gained from the promotion tests delivered by the organisation as trust in them and are therefore more inclined to demonstrate higher levels of engagement.

The link between professional growth and company commitment was the subject of a cross-sectional study by Fletcher (2019) in the United Kingdom. Three thousand people in some UK organisations were requested to take part. Descriptive methods and hierarchical multiple regressions were used to examine the data from 152 responses. A favourable correlation between perceived chances for advancement and work engagement ($\beta = .25$, $p < .01$). the study concluded that providing workers with training and education to further their careers is one of the most effective ways to boost engagement and morale on the job.

Huka and Leah (2019) examined at how the career growth opportunities (personal growth, professional growth, financial growth, growth, increased responsibilities, and autonomy) impacted employee engagement of 26 NGOs in Kenya. A total of 172 people were participated in the study using a survey-based methodology and a purposive sample technique. Regression analysis, the Chi-square test, and the analysis of variance (ANNOVA) were used to evaluate the data. Career growth opportunities were shown to account for 54% of the variation in work engagement ($r^2 = 0.540$, $p = 0.00$). According to the research, offering employees room to advance in their careers is one of the most effective ways for organizations to maintain employee engagement at work.

Mohapatra and Sharma (2010) looked at the leading indicators of employee engagement in a PSU in India. The research relies on primary data from 84 managerial employees, or 37% of the 229 officers in the corporate offices, on several factors related to employee engagement and its potential predictors, such as benefits, pay and career growth opportunity, recognition, and training and development. Results from correlation analysis indicated that benefits ($\beta = 0.466$, $p < .001$), pay ($\beta = 0.579$, $p < .001$) and career growth opportunity ($\beta = 0.619$, $p < .001$), recognition ($\beta = 0.558$, $p < .001$), and training and development ($\beta = 0.443$, $p < .001$) were positively and significantly associated to work engagement. The results of the study showed that an organisation's ability to take care of its employees in terms of compensation, career advancement prospects, public acknowledgement of their efforts, and opportunities for professional and personal growth all had significant impacts on employee engagement.

Research Model



Figure 1: Career Growth: Career Goal Progress, Professional Ability Development, and Organisational Rewards Growth (Weng & Hu, 2009; Weng & McElory, 2012; Wang et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2015). Dedication (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Bai & Liu, 2018).

3: METHODOLOGY

3.1: *Research Design, Population and Sample*

Data were collected from respondents in a single moment in time using a cross-sectional survey, a type of quasi-experimental study design. Additionally, the positivist philosophical paradigm was employed (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). All of the mainstream public employees working in the 84 Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of the Bayelsa State Civil Service, from Grade Level 8 to Grade Level 14, make up the population for this study. There are 4,413 civil officials in the state who are between Grade Levels 8 and 14. Determination of the sample size was performed using the formula proposed by Yamene (1967). Yamene's formula is given by:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = the sample size; N = the population size; e = the acceptable sampling error at 95% confidence level. This gave rise to 367 as sample size.

3.2: *Questionnaire Design and Measurement*

Sections A, B, and C make up the questionnaire. Section A includes items on the respondents' demographics. Section B, offers fifteen (15) items pertaining to career growth, all of which were obtained from established scales (Weng & Hu, 2009; Weng & McElory, 2012; Wang et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2015). Career goal progress was observed with four (4) indicators, e.g. "My present job sets the foundation for the realization of my career goals". Professional Ability Development is measured by four (4) observables, e.g. "My present job encourages me to continuously gain new and job-related skills and abilities". Organisational Rewards Growth is operationalized by seven (7) indicators. A sample statement item is "In this civil service, the possibility of my current salary being increased is very large". Section C pertains to Dedication constructed with five (5) indicators adapted from Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), and Bai and Liu (2018). A sample item reads "Our firm has experienced higher growth in market share relative to competitors". All of the indicators for the study's constructs were based on a Likert scale with five possible values, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (see appendix 1).

3.3: *Validity of the Instrument*

This study utilizes the three types of validity often used to evaluate instruments: face validity, content validity, and construct validity. For this study, eight government personnel from states other than Bayelsa State (Delta State) were randomly selected to review the questionnaire for face validity. They all thought the questions and layout of the instrument were fair, clear, easy to understand, and useful. For content validity, we ensured that the items sufficiently reflect and cover the range of meanings of the variables (Bollen, 1989), through a deep search on the literature. AVEs of 0.5 or above indicated adequate communality or convergent validity in this study (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2022). Discriminant validity is established when the square root of an individual construct's AVE is larger than its correlation with all other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Both convergent and discriminant validity tests are shown to have passed in this research.

3.4: *Reliability of the Research Instrument*

This study utilized the following reliability indices: (i) composite reliability - Jöreskog's rho_A or DillonGoldstein's ρ_c - which has a cut-off value of 0.7 (Jöreskog, 1970; Wertz, Linn & Jöreskog, 1974; Werts et al., 1978; Dillon & Goldstein, 1984); (ii) reliability coefficient - Dijkstra-Henseler's ρ_A (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015a, 2015b) - which has a cut-off value of 0.7; and (iii) the coefficient alpha - Cronbach's alpha (α) - with cut-off value of 0.7, and not exceeding 0.95 (Cronbach, 1951; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Test for reliability is presented in the results section of this study.

3.5: *Data Analysis Techniques*

The International Business Machine Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM@SPSS) version 29.0, we analysed the collected data to provide descriptive statistics on the respondents' demographics. Means and standard deviations of the constructs were evaluated (univariate analysis). The data were imported into Smart PLS 3.3.7 (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015) to check the indicator- and internal consistency reliability as well as to analyse the loadings of the various observables. Finally, the correlation between career growth and dedication was analysed using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient test.

4.0 Results

4.1 Fieldwork, Data Cleaning and Demographic Report

Three hundred and sixty-seven respondents were given the survey by hand. Six weeks later (August 2, 2022 to September 13, 2022), a total of 281 correctly filled out copies of the questionnaire were collected, giving a response rate of 76.57%. We attribute the high response rate to the several tactics we used, including: sending many emails and making phone calls; presenting presents to some of the respondents; and establishing an atmosphere of conviviality (Singer et al., 1999; Singer & Ye, 2012; Yu et al., 2017). Due to the high level of literacy among government employees, we experienced no instances of missing data. There were 281 total cases, all of which were entered correctly into IBM@SPSS version 29.0 for further analysis. Respondents' cumulative demographic information is displayed in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	117	41.6	41.6	41.6
	Female	164	58.4	58.4	100.0
	Total	281	100.0	100.0	
Age	20-35	72	25.6	25.6	25.6
	36-50	190	67.6	67.6	93.2
	51-above	19	6.8	6.8	100.0
	Total	281	100.0	100.0	
Marital Status	Single	94	33.5	33.5	33.5
	Married	173	61.6	61.6	95.1
	Separated	6	2.1	2.1	97.2
	Divorced	8	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	281	100.0	100.0	
Educational Attainment	HND/Bachelor	13	4.6	4.6	4.6
	PGD/Master	259	92.2	92.2	96.8
	DBA/Ph.D	9	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	281	100.0	100.0	
Position in the Organisation	GL 8 - GL10	154	54.8	54.8	54.8
	GL 12 - GL14	127	45.2	45.2	100
	Total	281	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data (IBM @SPSS version 29.0 Output) 2023

According to Table 4.1, out of the total 281 respondents, 117 (or 41.6% of the total) were male and 164 (or 58.4% of the total) were female. Of the 281 respondents, 72 (25.6%) are between the ages of 20 and 35, 190 (67.6%) are between the ages of 36 and 50, and 19 (6.8%) are 51 or older. Out of 281 respondents, 94 (33.5%) are single, 173 (61.6%) are married, 6 (2.1%) are separated, and 8 (2.8%) are divorced. Only 13 respondents (4.6% of total) hold a Higher National Diploma and bachelor's degree, whereas 259 respondents (92.2%) hold a Post Graduate Diploma and master's degree. There are 9 people who have earned a PhD or DBA (3.2% of all responses). For position in the service, position, 54.8% of responses are in the 8-10 grade levels, with 127 in the 12-14 levels making up 45.2% of the total.

4.2: Univariate Analysis

Data concerning the four latent variables were analysed in terms of their means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis. The levels of manifestation of the variables in the civil service were observed based on the thresholds of low, medium and high levels. These categories were derived from the following equation: interval length = (highest weight minus lowest weight)/ (three levels) = (5-1)/3 = 1.33, as shown in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Scale on Relative Importance of the Mean

Level of Effect	Mean
Low	2.33 and <
Medium	2.34 to 3.67
High	3.68 to 5.00

In the case of normality assumptions, if skewness and kurtosis values of each variable are divided by the corresponding Standard Errors (S.E), and the outputs fall within -2 and +2, it means there is no serious violation of normality (George & Mallery, 2019; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2017). Table 4.3 shows that output for univariate analysis and test for normality.

Table 4.3 Descriptive statistics on the Latent Variables

Latent Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness (S _k)		Kurtosis (Ku)	
	Stat.	Stat.	Stat.	Stat.	Std. Error	Stat.	Std. Error
CGP	281	2.96	.606	2.314	1.980	.290	.190
PAD	281	3.15	.731	-1.444	.723	2.068	1.101
ORG	281	3.32	.409	2.290	1.190	1.221	.886
DCT	281	2.31	.415	-1.988	1.230	2.109	1.062

Note: CGP = Career Goal Progress; PAD = Professional Ability Development; ORG = Organisational Rewards Growth; DCT= Dedication.

Source: IBM@SPSS version 29.0 Computation from Data, 2023

According to Table 4.3, the greatest skewness and kurtosis values are 2.314 and 2.109, respectively, indicating that the variables are roughly normally distributed. Also, respondents rated their progress towards career goals as medium ($M = 2.96, SD = 0.606$), their development of professional abilities as medium ($M = 3.15, SD = 0.713$), their receipt of increasing organisational rewards as medium ($M = 3.32, SD = 0.409$), and their level of dedication as low ($M = 2.31, SD = 0.415$).

4.3. Assessment of Reliability and Validity

Reliability and convergent validity (AVE) of the constructs are displayed in Table 4.4 along with factor loadings, and indicators' reliabilities.

Table 4.4: Evaluation of Measurement Models Using PLS-SEM

Latent Variable	Indicators	Convergent validity			Internal consistency reliability		
		Loadings	Indicator reliability	AVE	Composite reliability ρ_c	Reliability Coefficient ρ_A	Cronbach's alpha (CA)
		>0.70	>0.50	>0.50	>0.70	>0.70	0.70 - 0.95
CGP	CGP ₁	0.801	0.642	0.591	0.832	0.776	0.719
	CGP ₂	0.720	0.518				
	CGP ₃	0.708	0.501				
	CGP ₄	0.838	0.702				
PAD	PAD ₁	0.706	0.498	0.658	0.755	0.732	0.709
	PAD ₂	0.855	0.731				
	PAD ₃	0.792	0.627				
	PAD ₄	0.880	0.774				
ORG	ORG ₁	0.709	0.503	0.589	0.860	0.829	0.798
	ORG ₂	0.777	0.604				
	ORG ₃	0.817	0.668				
	ORG ₄	0.755	0.570				
	ORG ₅	0.717	0.514				
	ORG ₆	0.834	0.696				
	ORG ₇	0.752	0.566				
DCT	DCT ₁	0.822	0.676	0.652	0.811	0.773	0.735
	DCT ₂	0.744	0.554				
	DCT ₃	0.785	0.616				
	DCT ₄	0.872	0.760				
	DCT ₅	0.808	0.653				

Note: CGP = Career Goal Progress; PAD = Professional Ability Development; ORG = Organisational Rewards Growth; DCT= Dedication

Source: SmartPLS 3.2.6 output on research data, 2023

Table 4.4 shows that the loadings (l_k) on the dimensions of career growth, from PAD₁ ($l_k = 0.708$) to PAD₄ ($l_k = 0.880$), were over 0.70. Also, from DCT₂ ($l_k = 0.744$) to DCT₄ ($l_k = 0.878$), all of the observable indicators of dedication had scores over 0.70. Composite reliability, reliability coefficient, and Cronbach's alpha for the constructs all above the minimal acceptable value of 0.7, indicating good reliability. As well, AVEs have values greater than 50%. This means there is no issue with the model's convergent validity. Tabulated results from the discriminant validity test follow in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Test of Discriminant Validity - Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion

Latent Variable	AVE	CGP	PAD	ORG	DCT
CGP	0.591	0.769			
PAD	0.658	0.303	0.811		
ORG	0.589	0.289	0.222	0.768	
DCT	0.652	0.151	0.190	0.175	0.808

Note: CGP = Career Goal Progress; PAD = Professional Ability Development; ORG = Organisational Rewards Growth; DCT= Dedication. The off-diagonal values are the correlations between latent variables, while the diagonal values (in bold) denote the square roots of AVEs.

Source: SmartPLS 3.2.6 output on research data, 2023

Table 4.5 shows that each construct sufficiently discriminates itself from any other construct in the model, since all diagonal numbers (square roots of the AVEs) surpass 0.7 and are much bigger than the off-diagonal figures (correlations between the constructs). As a result, there is no problem with discriminant validity in the model.

4.4: Test of Hypotheses

Table 4.6 shows the outcome of the tests of hypotheses.

Table 4.6: Correlation between Career Growth and Dedication

			Career Goal Progress	Professional Ability Development	Organisational Rewards Growth	Dedication
Spearman's rho	Career Goal Progress	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.240*	.427*	.543**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.011	.012	.000
		N	281	281	281	281
	Professional Ability Development	Correlation Coefficient	.240*	1.000	.264*	.461*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.	.013	.018
		N	281	281	281	281
	Organisational Rewards Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.427*	.264*	1.000	.603**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.013	.	.000
		N	281	281	281	281
	Dedication	Correlation Coefficient	.543**	.461*	.603**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.018	.000	.
		N	281	281	281	281

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: IBM@SPSS version 29 Computation from Data, 2023

Table 4.6 illustrates the association between the dimensions of career growth (Career Goal Progress, Professional Ability Development, Organisational Rewards Growth), and Dedication.

The results reveal that Career Goal Progress has moderate, positive and significant relationship ($rho = .543, n = 281, p < 0.01$) with Dedication. Similarly, Organisational Rewards Growth has moderate, positive and significant relationship ($rho = .603, n = 281, p < 0.01$) with Dedication, while Professional Ability



Development has low, positive and significant relationship ($\rho = .461, n = 281, p < 0.05$) with Dedication. Based on the results, hypothesis one (H_{01}), hypotheses two (H_{02}) and three (H_{03}) are rejected.

Based on the aforementioned, the findings of this study are:

- i. Career goal progress fosters dedication. This implies that civil servants will be more excited about their work and follow the civil service laws, regulations, and procedures if they believe that their current positions offer opportunity to accomplish or reach their career goals and ambitions.
- ii. Higher levels of professional ability development provoke higher levels of dedication. Therefore, the more chances the Civil Service provides for employees to gain new professional skills, knowledge, and experience, the more likely it is that those employees will turn up for work, follow the regulations, and make sure that duties are completed properly and efficiently.
- iii. Organisational rewards growth amplifies dedication. This indicates that government employees will be more dedicated in terms of liking their work and feeling devoted to what they do if they see fair, regular, and quick promotion opportunities and salary increases throughout their career.

DISCUSSION

Results on test of hypothesis one showed a strong and beneficial association between dedication and career goal progress. This finding demonstrates that workers will obey civil service norms, standards, and procedures with greater fervor the more they feel their current jobs will help them reach their career goals. This finding is in harmony with Huka and Leah's (2019) study. Furthermore, this finding is in line with the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) based on the notion that workers and the organisations that employ their mutually exchange resources within a policy framework, rules and norms, such that when workers receive resources from the organisations they will feel obliged to reciprocate in kind (e.g. getting more dedicated to the job). The study found that higher levels of professional ability development provoke higher levels of dedication. This is not a surprise as professional development, through training and development for skills improvement, could be seen as advantageous resources that will augment effective work behaviours and positive employee attitudes like dedication to job. Jia-jun and Hua-ming (2022) also had a similar finding. Findings also suggest that greater levels of organisational rewards growth amplifies dedication. This finding is in agreement with the work Mohapatra and Sharma (2010) who found that employee dedication is most certainly influenced by how the management of an organisation manages its human resources in terms of benefits and pay.

5.0: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on extant studies (Albrecht, 2012; Ugwu & Okojie, 2016; Huang et al., 2017; Bai & Liu, 2018) and the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), this study identified career growth as both a job resource (Naruse et al., 2015) and personal resource (Ouweneel et al, 2013) that could serve as a mechanism in mitigating the challenge of low dedication to work. Thus, the present study empirically examined the nexus between career growth and dedication in the Bayelsa State Civil Service. The study concludes that the three strands of career growth (career goal progress, professional ability development and organisational rewards growth) spur dedication. This study validates Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) by demonstrating that when the civil service provides resources for the workers to meet their personal career-related objectives, develop the workers' professional skills and competences, and enact competitive reward system as the workers grow along their career paths, the employees will feel obligated to recompense with a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by dedication.

It is imperative for directors, permanent secretaries and policy makers in government to understand how they can stimulate job dedication through career growth practices. Directors, permanent secretaries and policy makers in government should realize that civil servants will be more enthusiastic and proud about their work and follow civil service norms, rules, regulations with a sense of purpose, when the following conditions prevail: (i) more opportunities are provided for the civil servants to meet or reach their career goals and objectives, (ii) more opportunities are provided for the civil servants to learn new career skills, knowledge, and gain more experience, and (iii) emphasis is placed on fair, frequent and speedy promotion opportunities and pay raises for the workers.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. Opportunities should be provided for the workers to meet or reach their career goals and objectives through developmental programs and coaching Employees who achieve their career goals should be celebrated (e.g. dinner, vacation, or even an announcement).



- ii. The government should create more opportunities for workers to develop new skills and knowledge to improve their competencies on the job, and to effectively solve problems, think strategically, engage citizens, crowdsource ideas and co-create better services. More funds should be allocated in the budget for professional development of civil servants through refresher courses, orientation programmes, workshops, seminars and conferences from time to time.
- iii. Government should review and improve on its reward mechanism to ensure that civil servants are recognised and rewarded adequately, and in a timely manner. Salaries should be paid regularly. Incentive schemes, transportation allowance, meal subsidy, utility allowance, leave grant, entertainment allowance, recognition schemes, awards, discretionary funds and conducive work environment. Civil servants should be promoted as and when due, and salary increment associated with promotion should be implemented promptly.
- iv.

5.1: Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Studies.

Despite the noteworthy findings of this study, it has some limitations as follows:

- i. The study is a cross-sectional study which limits the data collection process to a single snapshot. Longitudinal survey should be utilized for future studies as it will allow researchers to track the impact of career growth on employees' dedication over time.
- ii. The research was limited to the civil service in Bayelsa State. Expanding the model to include additional sectors like higher education, the diplomatic corps of federal civil service, the Armed Forces, and the Police will be beneficial
- iii. The self-reported data from a single source may result in issues with common method variance or self-selection bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff et al., 2012; Baumgartner & Weijters, 2021). Further studies should include some measures, such as test of Common Method Variance, to ascertain the integrity of responses.
- iv. This study was limited to the use of a structured questionnaire to generate quantitative data. Future studies should evaluate the relationship between the variables by combining qualitative data (e.g. in-depth interview) to improve richness and depth.
- v. Moreover, the absence of moderating or mediating variable in the model is worrisome. Future studies may include contextual variables such as ICT adoption, employee personality and worker's age.

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SECTION A

Personal Data:

- 1. Name of MDA.....
2. Gender: Male [] Female []
3. Age: 20-35 [] 36-50 [] 51 Above []
4. Marital status: Single [] Married [] Separated [] Divorced []
5. Educational Qualification: HND/Bachelor [] PGD/Master [] DBA/Ph.D []
6. Position in the organisation (GL).....

SECTION B

The statements below describe the Career Growth construct. Please tick one choice for each of the following statement that is applicable to your organisation. (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3 = undecided, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree)

Table with 5 columns (1-5) and 15 rows. Rows are grouped into three sections: Career Goal Progress, Professional Ability Development, and Organisational Rewards Growth. Each row contains a statement and five empty boxes for rating.



4	Compared with my colleagues, I am being promoted faster.					
5	My salary is growing quickly in my present place of work					
6	In this civil service, the possibility of my current salary being increased is very large.					
7	Compared with my colleagues, my salary has grown more quickly.					

SECTION C

The statements below describe the dedication construct. Please tick one choice for each of the following statements as applicable to your organisation.

(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree)

DEDICATION		1	2	3	4	5
1	I am proud of the civil service work that I do.					
2	I find the civil service work that I do full of meaning and purpose.					
3	My civil service job inspires me					
4	I am enthusiastic about my job					
5	To me, my job is challenging					