

Innovations

Structural Career Plateauing and Employees Performance in Deposit Money Banks in South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study examined the effect of Structural Career Plateauing on Employees Performance in Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Southeast, Nigeria. The specific objectives were, to: assess the effect of lack of transparency in succession planning on the productivity levels of employees; evaluate the extent to which lack of periodic promotion affect employee growth; assess the effect of lack of career advancement opportunities on employee retention rates; ascertain the influence of perceived career stagnation on employee psychological commitment; and evaluate the extent to which lack of internal mobility policies affect employee innovation. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised 1481 staff of banks in South-East, Nigeria, which have international operational licenses from the CBN. The banks include: Access Bank – 201, First Bank – 297, First City Monument Bank – 164, Fidelity Bank – 213, Guaranty Trust Bank – 134, United Bank for Africa – 245, and Zenith Bank – 227. A sample size of 305 respondents was used, which was determined using Freund and William’s statistical formula. The study adopted stratified sampling technique to reach out to different strata using a structured questionnaire. The research instrument was validated using face and content validity. Cronbach’s Alpha Statistic was used to test the reliability of the instrument, which reported reliability coefficient of 80%. Regression analysis was used for data analyses at 5% level of significance. Findings revealed that Structural Career Plateauing had a significant effect on Employees Performance in Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Southeast, Nigeria. The study concluded that Structural Career Plateauing had a significant negative effect on the Employees Performance in Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Southeast, Nigeria. The study recommended, among others, that Deposit Money Banks in South-East Nigeria should establish transparent succession planning processes by clearly outlining career*

paths, communicating these plans to employees, and providing regular updates on potential career advancements within the organization.

Keywords: *Structural Career Plateauing, Employees Performance, Deposit Money Banks, South-East, Nigeria*

1.0 Introduction

Career plateauing, a concept rooted in organizational psychology, refers to a state in which an employee perceives little or no opportunity for career advancement within an organization (Ferenca, Stoner, & Warren, 1977). It was initially defined in terms of vertical movement, focusing on the structural limits that prevent employees from ascending the organizational hierarchy (Allen, 1998). Bardwick (1986) extended this concept by identifying job content plateauing, which occurs when an employee's tasks become repetitive and no longer present new challenges, regardless of promotion potential. This reconceptualization emphasized the psychological and emotional dimensions of plateauing, suggesting that the absence of growth opportunities can lead to decreased job satisfaction and engagement (Milliman, 1992). Over time, scholars began to differentiate between structural plateauing—caused by limited organizational positions or rigid hierarchies—and content plateauing, which results from static job roles and repetitive responsibilities (Chao, 1990; Tremblay & Roger, 2004). Regardless of type, career plateauing is widely recognized as a critical factor in workforce demotivation, especially in knowledge-intensive and fast-paced environments (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006).

Structural career plateauing has been closely linked to a decline in employee performance across several sectors (Feldman & Weitz, 1988). Employees who perceive a ceiling to their advancement may become disengaged, emotionally detached, or less committed to organizational goals (Allen, 2000). This disconnection often leads to reduced creativity, minimal discretionary effort, and in some cases, increased absenteeism or turnover (Bozionelos, 2005). According to Smith (2023), employees trapped in structurally plateaued positions often feel underutilized and begin to exhibit signs of burnout and frustration. Johnson (2023) further asserts that in environments where career progression is slow or nonexistent, employee output declines due to a perceived lack of reward for effort. Likewise, Chen and Lee (2023) found that stagnation resulting from structural plateauing can severely impair morale and reduce the quality of service delivery, especially in customer-facing roles. These effects are particularly troubling in industries where performance indicators such as innovation, responsiveness, and client satisfaction are essential to competitiveness (Ng & Feldman, 2014).

In the banking sector, particularly within Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Southeast Nigeria, the effects of structural plateauing are becoming increasingly evident

(Okafor & Onuoha, 2022). These institutions often operate within rigid bureaucratic systems that limit upward mobility, despite the evolving nature of banking roles and client expectations (Eze & Okoye, 2021). Many employees remain in the same roles for extended periods, with promotion opportunities occurring infrequently due to structural bottlenecks or centralised decision-making (Obi & Edeh, 2023). Consequently, the lack of role diversification, training, and career advancement prospects results in low morale and diminished productivity among staff (Ibrahim & Nwachukwu, 2020). Furthermore, employees who feel stuck are less likely to pursue personal development or take initiative, which adversely affects overall service delivery and innovation (Onwuka & Nnabuife, 2023). As Uche and Ezeani (2022) emphasize, such organizational stagnation not only harms the employee but also undermines institutional performance by increasing turnover and reducing institutional memory.

Despite the evident relationship between structural plateauing and performance decline, there is a notable research gap on this phenomenon within the context of DMBs in Southeast Nigeria (Anyanwu & Udu, 2023). While international studies have extensively documented the psychological and behavioural outcomes of career stagnation, localized empirical insights remain limited (Ike & Madu, 2022). Understanding how structural limitations—such as time in current roles, lack of internal mobility, and slow promotion cycles—impact key performance indicators like customer service quality, task completion rates, and innovation is critical (Okeke & Agu, 2023). Addressing this research gap will help uncover the extent to which plateaued careers influence employee behaviours and organizational outcomes in the Nigerian banking system (Nwachukwu & Nwankwo, 2021). Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effect of structural career plateauing on employee performance in Deposit Money Banks in Southeast Nigeria. To achieve this aim, the study asked the following research questions:

- i. What is the effect of lack of transparency in succession planning on employee productivity level?
- ii. To what extent does lack of periodic promotion affect employee growth?
- iii. What is the effect of lack of career advancement opportunities on employee retention rates?
- iv. How does perceived career stagnation affect employee psychological commitment?
- v. To what extent does lack of internal mobility policies affect employee innovation?

Therefore, by addressing these questions, this study seeks to examine the effect of structural career plateauing on employee performance in Deposit Money Banks in Southeast Nigeria by focusing on five critical dimensions of the phenomenon. Specifically, the study aims to determine the effect of lack of transparency in succession planning on employee productivity levels, recognizing that opaque leadership pipelines may demotivate staff and hinder performance. It also intends to assess the extent to which lack of periodic promotion affects employee growth, as stagnation in hierarchical advancement may erode motivation for skill development and long-term career investment. Furthermore, the study examines the effect of lack of career advancement opportunities on employee retention rates, given that limited prospects for upward mobility often contribute to high turnover and loss of institutional knowledge. In addition, the study evaluates how perceived career stagnation influences employee psychological commitment, understanding that emotional detachment and reduced organizational loyalty are common outcomes when employees feel stuck in their roles. And lastly, the study investigates the extent to which lack of internal mobility policies affects employee innovation, since rigid structures and inadequate lateral movement frameworks can suppress creativity, limit idea exchange, and reduce adaptive responses to dynamic market demands. To achieve this objective, the study formulated five hypotheses which include:

- H₁: Lack of transparency in succession planning significantly affect employee productivity level.
- H₂: Lack of periodic promotion significantly effect employee growth.
- H₃: Lack of career advancement opportunities have a significant effect on employee retention rates.
- H₄: Perceived career stagnation significantly affects employee psychological commitment.
- H₅: Lack of internal mobility policies significantly affect employee innovation

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Lack of Transparency in Succession Planning and Employee Productivity Level

Research evidence suggests that lack of transparency in succession planning adversely affects employee productivity in Deposit Money Banks, as transparency in managerial practices significantly shapes employee commitment and performance. Shanthakumary and Kandiah (2021) found a strong positive correlation between employees' perception of transparency—defined by openness, accountability, integrity, and participation—and their affective commitment, highlighting that transparency mechanisms directly influence employee dedication. Similarly,

Osborne and Hammoud (2017) emphasized that employee engagement, a key driver of productivity, is fostered through transparent leadership and strong interpersonal relationships between leaders and subordinates, with disengagement posing serious threats to performance and profitability. Waleed (2023) supported this view through a systematic review showing that Performance Management Systems (PMS), when designed and implemented transparently with clear communication and employee motivation, significantly improve performance outcomes. Further aligning with this, Stofberg, Mabasco, and Bussin (2022) observed that while employees perceive pay transparency differently, they still critically engage with the concept, suggesting that increased transparency—even if limited—affects their expectations and behavior. Abdelwahed and Doghan (2023) also reported that work engagement, influenced by organizational transparency and internal practices, is crucial for enhancing both productivity and performance, particularly in education-related institutions. Moreover, Jo-Yun Li et al. (2021) found that transparent internal communication helps employees manage organizational change by reducing uncertainty, encouraging proactive coping strategies, and reinforcing organizational commitment.

2.2 Lack of Periodic Promotion and Employee Growth

Empirical evidence indicates that lack of periodic promotion negatively impacts employee growth across various organizational settings, including Deposit Money Banks. Thomas, Mensah, and Nsowah (2024) found a statistically significant positive relationship between job promotion and employee commitment among library staff in Ghana, emphasizing that regular promotion fosters affective commitment and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, Nyaga and Omuya (2024) reported that promotion practices significantly influence employee performance in the National Bank of Kenya, recommending that clearly defined promotion paths enhance motivation and engagement. Chukwu (2019) observed that timely, transparent, and satisfactory promotion significantly reduces employee turnover intention in Nigeria's food and beverage industry, reinforcing the need for regular and fair promotion systems. Supporting this, Razak, Sarpan, and Ramlan (2018) found that promotion, aligned with job satisfaction, improves employee performance in the Makassar Government Region, advocating that merit-based promotion enhances organizational functionality. Setyawati, Woelandari, and Rianto (2022) also established that career development, motivation, and promotion jointly exert significant influence on performance, encouraging consistent evaluation and improvement of these elements. In Borno State, Abdulmumini (2021) revealed that offering paper promotions without financial incentives weakens academic staff development, stressing the importance of corresponding monetary benefits. Williams and Matoka (2023) confirmed that objective and timely promotions

positively influence job satisfaction among police officers in Tanzania through enhanced commitment and workplace relationships. Anugrah and Putri (2020) reinforced this view by highlighting that fair promotion practices based on performance rather than seniority boost employee morale and productivity in the garment sector. Furthermore, Ligare, Wanyama, and Aliatra (2020) demonstrated that job promotion accounted for 71.3% of the variation in employee performance among Kenya's administration police, concluding that performance would significantly improve if promotions were fair and merit-based.

2.3 Lack of Career Advancement Opportunities and Employee Retention Rates

Extant literature reveals a strong association between career advancement opportunities and employee retention across various sectors and regions, including educational institutions, civil service, and military contexts. Mwititi, Moguche and Rintari (2021) found that career advancement significantly influenced job satisfaction among teachers in Kenya, with a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.8902$), implying that growth opportunities are a key determinant of satisfaction and, by extension, retention. Similarly, Thwin, Janarthanan and Bhaumik (2023), through a systematic literature review, observed that both organizational and individual career planning influence employee satisfaction, which in turn boosts retention, especially when aligned with long-term goals and structured career ladders. While Idajor (2023) reported that career training improved productivity, the study surprisingly found that career advancement insignificantly decreased productivity among university staff, suggesting the need for context-specific policy interventions. Els and Meyer (2023) highlighted structural and leadership inefficiencies—such as unqualified leaders and lack of mentoring—as hindrances to career development and training quality in the South African Army, recommending alignment between staffing practices and career development goals. In the Qatari educational context, Abu-Tineh et al. (2023) identified that flat career structures limit advancement, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced retention, thereby advocating for restructured career advancement systems that align with modern workforce expectations. Supporting this, Asamaowei, Amah and Sylva (2023) emphasized the importance of policy makers in Nigeria's civil service enabling career growth to enhance performance, recommending structured developmental programs and coaching to help workers define and achieve career goals

2.4 Perceived Career Stagnation and Employee Psychological Commitment

Perceived career stagnation has been consistently linked to diminished psychological commitment among employees, particularly when opportunities for growth and recognition are absent. Hossain (2018) found that career plateauing, influenced by factors such as hierarchical structures, organizational culture, and psychological perceptions, results in low job satisfaction, poor organizational commitment, increased stress, and higher turnover intentions in Bangladeshi private organizations. Similarly, Chang, Geng, and Cai (2024) demonstrated that career plateaus undermine job performance by eroding perceptions of organizational justice; however, the presence of positive psychological capital can moderate these negative effects and improve performance outcomes. Pagayanan (2021), through a phenomenological study, revealed that career stagnation among public school teachers in Tacloban City arises from both individual factors (e.g., low qualifications, work pressure) and organizational shortcomings (e.g., limited support and communication), reinforcing the importance of proactive career development interventions. In a broader organizational context, Gladka, Fedorova, and Dohadailo (2022) argued that managing the employee life cycle in a client-oriented manner can enhance engagement and retention, suggesting that neglecting career progression risks disengagement. Ahmadi, Jansen, and Eggers (2022) highlighted that while stretch goals can stimulate engagement and idea generation among capable employees, they may also overwhelm less experienced staff, further exacerbating feelings of stagnation if not strategically implemented. Additionally, Coimbra and Proenca (2022) emphasized the role of managerial coaching in enhancing performance and commitment, particularly under demanding organizational environments, by promoting customer and results orientation among employees. Fasasi (2020) reinforced the detrimental effect of stagnation and lack of reward systems, finding that the absence of merit-based promotions and equitable compensation demotivated staff in the Bank of Palestine, ultimately impacting sales and productivity.

2.5 Lack of Internal Mobility Policies and Employee Innovation

The lack of internal mobility policies within organizations has been found to significantly impact employee innovation and engagement across various sectors. Balamurugan and Akila (2024) argue that internal mobility serves as a catalyst for higher employee engagement, job satisfaction, and professional development, with clear career paths, skill utilization, and supportive leadership being essential for its success. This is further supported by Baslandze (2022), who examines the role of employee mobility and entrepreneurship in fostering innovation and growth, suggesting that employee mobility, especially in environments free of non-compete

laws, can drive technological leadership and industry advancement. Similarly, Wendel (2020) highlights the challenges and preferences employees have regarding mobility within the high-tech industry, noting that dissatisfaction with pay and limited training opportunities often increase turnover and mobility intentions, thereby reducing organizational knowledge capital. Ferreira (2022) emphasizes the influence of internal mobility on employee empowerment and customer satisfaction, although the relationship between mobility and customer satisfaction was less significant in the hospitality industry, suggesting that mobility policies need to be further refined for broader organizational impact. Benson and Rissing (2021) further reinforce the value of internal mobility for the retention of high performers, particularly in sales, where internal advancement increases retention rates compared to external hires. Wismar (2023) also explores how gender stereotypes influence internal mobility in low-skilled, male-dominated occupations, revealing that gender biases in internal mobility can discourage female workers from advancing, perpetuating a cycle of inequality and limiting innovation potential.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised 1481 staff of banks in South-East, Nigeria, which have international operational licenses from the CBN and are located in capital cities of the states in South-East. The banks include: Access Bank – 201, First Bank – 297, First City Monument Bank – 164, Fidelity Bank – 213, Guaranty Trust Bank – 134, United Bank for Africa – 245, and Zenith Bank – 227. A sample size of 305 respondents was used, which was determined using Freund and William's statistical formula. The sample size distribution includes: Access Bank – 41, First Bank – 61, First City Monument Bank – 34, Fidelity Bank – 34, Guaranty Trust Bank – 28, United Bank for Africa – 50, and Zenith Bank – 47. The study adopted stratified sampling technique to reach out to different strata using a structured questionnaire. The research instrument was validated using face and content validity. Cronbach's Alpha Statistic was used to test the reliability of the instrument, which reported reliability coefficient of 80%. Descriptive statistics was used for data analyses while the inferential statistics applied regression analysis to test the hypotheses at 5% level of significance.

4.1 Results and Implication

- i. Lack of transparency in succession planning had a significant negative effect on employee productivity level ($\beta = -0.758$); ($p < 0.05$). This implied that non-transparency in succession planning undermines employee productivity, suggesting that clearer succession plans are essential for maintaining high performance levels.

- ii. Lack of periodic promotion had a significant negative effect on employee growth ($\beta = -0.788$); ($p < 0.05$). This implied that lack of periodic promotion hindered employee's professional growth and development, indicating that timely staff promotions are crucial for employee morale.
- iii. Lack of career advancement opportunities had a significant negative effect on employee retention rates ($\beta = -0.758$); ($p < 0.05$). This implied that lack of career advancement opportunities leads to higher employee turnover, emphasizing the need for clear career progression paths to retain talent.
- iv. Perceived career stagnation had a significant negative effect on employee psychological commitment ($\beta = -0.751$); ($p < 0.05$). This implied that perceived career stagnation hampers sales target achievement, highlighting the importance of addressing employee growth concerns to boost sales performance.
- v. Lack of Internal mobility policies had a significant negative effect on employee innovation ($\beta = -0.772$); ($p < 0.05$). This implied that lack of internal mobility policies stifles employee innovation, suggesting that promoting internal career moves can enhance creativity and innovation within the organization.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

4.2.1 Lack of Transparency in Succession Planning and Employee Productivity Level

The study found that lack of transparency in succession planning had a significant negative effect on the productivity levels of employees ($\beta = -0.758$); ($p < 0.05$). This finding aligns with Shanthakumary & Kandiah (2021), who identified a strong correlation between management transparency and employees' affective commitment, highlighting the importance of openness, accountability, integrity, and participation in managerial practices to enhance commitment. Similarly, Osborne & Hammoud (2017) underscored the critical role of direct relationships between leaders and employees in fostering engagement, which in turn boosts organizational profitability. This suggests that transparent succession planning could strengthen employee engagement and productivity. Waleed (2023) emphasized the positive impact of Performance Management Systems (PMS) on employee performance, advocating for comprehensive design, implementation, and motivation strategies. Transparent succession planning could be integrated into such systems to further enhance performance. Stofberg, Mabasco & Bussin (2022) found that employees' perceptions of pay transparency involve complex considerations of risks and

benefits, indicating that transparent policies in areas such as succession planning could mitigate potential misunderstandings and build trust. Abdelwahed & Doghan (2023) demonstrated that employee productivity positively affects performance, suggesting that enhancing transparency in succession planning could be a strategic organizational factor to boost overall productivity. Finally, Jo-Yun Li et al. (2021) highlighted that transparent internal communication aids employees in coping with organizational change, reducing uncertainty, and fostering better employee-organization relationships. This supports the notion that clear and transparent succession plans could similarly help employees manage career expectations and maintain high productivity levels amidst organizational changes.

4.2.2 Lack of Periodic Promotion and Employee Growth

The study revealed that lack of periodic promotion had a significant negative effect on employee growth ($\beta = -0.788$; $p < 0.05$). This finding highlights the crucial role of regular promotion opportunities in fostering employee growth and development. The result aligns with some of the existing literature, highlighting the effect of promotions on job satisfaction, employee motivation, and overall organizational performance.

For instance, these findings are consistent with those of Razak, Sarpan, and Ramlan (2018), who reported that appropriate and timely promotions in the Makassar Government Region positively influenced employee satisfaction and performance. Their research emphasized the necessity of creative and fair promotion policies to enhance efficiency within organizations. Similarly, Setyawati, Woelandari, and Rianto (2022) established that career development, motivation, and promotions significantly affect employee performance, thereby reinforcing the importance of structured career advancement programs. This suggests that organizations must integrate fair and transparent promotion systems to sustain high levels of performance and commitment among employees.

Moreover, the study aligns with the findings of Abdulmumini (2021), who examined promotions in academic institutions and noted that promotions without corresponding financial benefits failed to enhance morale or job performance. This highlights the importance of linking promotions with tangible rewards to ensure effectiveness. In a related study, Williams and Matoka (2023) found that job promotions significantly enhanced satisfaction among police officers in Tanzania, further indicating that objective and timely promotions strengthen job commitment and workplace relationships.

Additionally, studies by Anugrah and Putri (2020) and Ligare, Wanyama, and Aliatra (2020) reinforce the argument that fair and merit-based promotions lead to improved employee performance. Their research suggests that organizations should adopt transparent promotion policies to ensure fair reward systems, ultimately

boosting job satisfaction and productivity. This supports the notion that organizations that prioritise transparency in promotion policies are more likely to experience enhanced employee engagement and performance.

Findings from Thomas, Mensah, and Nsowah (2024) further support the importance of job promotion, particularly in the university sector. Their study on employee commitment in a Ghanaian University Library established a statistically significant positive relationship between job promotion and employee commitment. The study concluded that prioritizing job promotion fosters employees' affective commitment, leading to greater organizational effectiveness and satisfaction. These findings provide strong empirical backing for the argument that structured and consistent promotions are essential for sustaining employee commitment and enhancing institutional efficiency.

Furthermore, the study by Nyaga and Omuya (2024) on promotion practices in the National Bank of Kenya found that structured promotion policies had a statistically significant positive influence on employee performance. The study concluded that when employees perceive clear career advancement opportunities, they exhibit higher motivation and engagement levels. This underscores the importance of well-defined career pathways and promotion criteria in enhancing organizational productivity and employee loyalty.

Similarly, Chukwu (2019) examined the impact of staff promotion on employee turnover intention in Nigeria's food and beverage industry. The study found that regular, timely, and transparent promotions significantly influenced employees' decisions to remain with their organizations. These findings suggest that delayed or unfair promotion practices can lead to increased turnover intentions, thereby affecting workforce stability and overall organizational performance.

These findings align with existing literature, confirming that periodic, transparent, and merit-based promotions are critical for employee growth, motivation, commitment, and overall performance. Organizations that establish clear and fair promotion policies are likely to experience lower turnover rates and higher employee satisfaction. Therefore, management should prioritize timely and structured promotion practices to enhance workforce stability and organizational efficiency.

4.2.3 Lack of Career Advancement Opportunities and Employee Retention Rates

The study found that the lack of career advancement opportunities had a significant negative effect on employee retention rates ($\beta = -0.758$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that employees are more likely to leave an organization when they do not see clear paths for progression. This finding aligns with Mwititi, Moguche, and Rintari (2021), who established a positive correlation between career advancement and job satisfaction

among secondary school teachers in Kenya, recommending ongoing professional development to enhance skills and satisfaction. Similarly, Thwin, Janarthanan, and Bhaumik (2023) found that organizations focusing on career development significantly boost employee satisfaction and retention by aligning career paths with organizational goals and individual aspirations. Idajor (2023) noted that while career training positively influences employee productivity, career advancement did not significantly impact productivity at Cross River University, suggesting that merely advancing positions without corresponding skill development may not enhance performance. Els and Meyer (2023) highlighted the importance of competent leadership and continuous career development in the South African Army, recommending that career paths be clearly defined and linked to relevant training experiences to prevent dissatisfaction. Additionally, Abu-Tineh et al. (2023) found that Qatari public-school teachers desired more career development opportunities, as traditional linear career paths did not meet modern expectations, leading to dissatisfaction and higher turnover. Lastly, Asamaowei, Amah, and Sylva (2023) emphasized the need for civil service organizations in Nigeria to facilitate career growth through developmental programs and skill acquisition, which would enhance employee performance and retention. These studies collectively underscore the necessity of structured career advancement opportunities to maintain employee satisfaction and reduce turnover rates.

4.2.4 Perceived Career Stagnation and Employee Psychological Commitment

The findings of this study revealed that perceived career stagnation has a significant negative effect on employee psychological commitment ($\beta = -0.751$; $p < 0.05$). This suggests that employees who perceive their careers as stagnant experience diminished professional growth, which adversely affects their overall engagement and commitment to their organisations. These findings align with the work of Wawira, Matthews, Machogu, and Wanjala (2015), who identified career stagnation as a critical factor negatively impacting job performance in the public sector of Murang'a County Government. They attributed this to a lack of skills, work-related stress, and an absence of career orientation, recommending the implementation of training and an innovative work climate to mitigate these effects.

Similarly, the study findings resonate with those of Pagayanan (2021), who examined career stagnation among public school teachers in Tacloban City. The study found that barriers such as financial constraints, low educational qualifications, and insufficient organisational support hinder career progression, leading to both professional and organisational challenges. Moreover, both positive and negative coping mechanisms were identified, highlighting the need for well-structured intervention programs to enhance career development, job satisfaction, and performance.

Further reinforcing these insights, Gladka, Fedorova, and Dohadailo (2022) stressed the importance of treating employees as clients throughout their career life cycle. Their study suggested that organisations should prioritise employee engagement at all career stages to enhance retention and performance. This client-oriented approach is particularly relevant in sales-oriented environments, where addressing perceived career stagnation can contribute to sustaining high performance. Coimbra and Proenca (2022) further underscored the significance of managerial coaching as a strategic intervention to enhance employee engagement. Their research established that managerial coaching, when combined with a focus on customer and results orientation, can counteract the adverse effects of career stagnation by fostering a culture of continuous learning and development. This is similarly in line with the findings of Hossain (2018)

The findings also corroborate the study by Chang, Geng, and Cai (2024), which explored the relationship between career plateaus and job performance through the lens of organisational justice and positive psychological capital. Their research established that employees experiencing career stagnation perceive lower levels of organisational justice, which, in turn, diminishes their job performance. However, positive psychological capital was found to moderate these negative effects, reducing the impact of career stagnation on perceived organisational justice and overall job performance. Consequently, organisations must foster a culture that strengthens employees' positive psychological capital to mitigate the detrimental effects of career stagnation.

The findings of these studies highlight the critical need for organisations to implement targeted career development programs, managerial coaching, fair promotion practices, and a supportive organisational climate. Addressing career stagnation through these strategies can enhance employee commitment, job satisfaction, and overall performance, ultimately leading to better organisational outcomes.

4.2.5 Lack of Internal Mobility Policies and Employee Innovation

The study underscores the detrimental impact of a lack of internal mobility policies on employee innovation, emphasizing that such policies stifle creativity within organizations. This finding resonates with Balamurugan & Akila (2024), who highlighted internal mobility as a catalyst for higher employee engagement and job satisfaction. They emphasized the importance of offering career growth opportunities and skill development to enhance engagement levels, aligning with the need to foster innovation. Similarly, Baslandze (2022) explored the role of employee mobility in entrepreneurship, innovation, and growth, advocating for the abolition of non-compete restrictions to maximize industry dynamics and aggregate growth. Wendel (2020) delved into the factors influencing employee mobility within

regional industries, revealing that high-tech personnel perceive opportunities for employment within the same industry more favorably. This aligns with the notion that internal mobility policies can facilitate innovation by providing avenues for employees to explore new roles and challenges within their industry. Ferreira (2022) investigated the implications of internal mobility, empowerment, and leadership on customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry. While their study found a less significant direct relationship between internal mobility and customer satisfaction, it underscores the importance of nurturing a deeply engaged workforce through effective leadership and internal mobility initiatives. Benson & Rissing (2021) examined the retention of high performers through internal mobility, highlighting its importance in closing the internal-external hire performance gap. Their findings suggest that positive retention plays a vital role in maximizing employee potential, reinforcing the value of internal advancement. Lastly, Wismar (2023) explored workers' acceptance of unequal internal mobility opportunities, particularly in low-skilled male-dominated occupations. Their study revealed gender disparities in internal mobility acceptance, underscoring the need to address biases and stereotypes to promote diversity and equal opportunities within organizations.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The study examined the effect of Structural Career Plateau on the performance of employees in Deposit Money Banks in South-East, Nigeria. The findings revealed that non-transparency in succession planning significantly undermines employee productivity, suggesting the need for clearer succession plans. Additionally, the lack of periodic promotions significantly hinders employee growth and development, indicating the importance of regular promotion opportunities for maintaining employee morale. The research also showed that insufficient career advancement opportunities lead to higher employee turnover, emphasizing the necessity of clear career progression paths to retain talent. Perceived career stagnation was found to negatively affect employee psychological commitment, highlighting the need to address employee growth concerns to enhance sales performance. Furthermore, the lack of internal mobility policies significantly stifles employee innovation, suggesting that promoting internal career moves can foster creativity and innovation within the organization. These findings collectively underscore the critical role of transparent and supportive career development practices in enhancing various aspects of employee performance. Addressing these issues can lead to improved productivity, job satisfaction, retention rates, sales performance, and innovation. The study therefore concluded that Structural Career Plateau has a negative effect on the Performance of Employees of Deposit Money Banks in South-East, Nigeria.

5.2 Recommendations

- i. To improve productivity, Deposit Money Banks in South-East Nigeria should establish transparent succession planning processes by clearly outlining career paths, communicating these plans to employees, and providing regular updates on potential career advancements within the organization.
- ii. To enhance employee growth, banks should implement regular promotion opportunities by setting up a structured promotion schedule, ensuring fair and merit-based evaluations, and offering professional development programs that prepare employees for higher roles.
- iii. To reduce employee turnover, banks need to provide clear career advancement opportunities by mapping out career progression paths, offering mentorship programs, and creating an environment that supports continuous learning and skill development.
- iv. To boost employee's psychological commitment towards the organisation, addressing perceived career stagnation through employee growth initiatives is essential. This can be achieved by regularly assessing employee career satisfaction, providing targeted training programs to enhance skills, and setting clear, attainable goals for career progression.
- v. To foster innovation, banks should promote internal mobility policies by encouraging employees to apply for different roles within the organization, providing cross-training opportunities, and establishing a culture that values and rewards creative problem-solving and innovative thinking.

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