

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT

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## MANAGING CAREER ASPIRATIONS – A CONCEPTUAL INSIGHT

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### ABSTRACT

*The study finds out that none of us have an infinite number of choices when it comes to career management. But all of us have some choices. We need to figure out areas of our choice and become active in managing them. As the world gets more complex, more and more of a burden will fall on each person to manage his or her own career because employers will have a harder time figuring out what is best for everyone. Thus, the most important bit of advice is not to become a victim.*

### KEYWORD

career aspirations.

### INTRODUCTION

The word career is used in many ways and has several connotations. Sometimes “having a career” is used to apply only to someone who has a profession whose occupational life is well structured and involves steady advancement. In the context of career development, career includes how any individual’s work life develops over time and how it is perceived by that person.

### CONCEPT OF CAREER

The word “Career” as such appears to be old and conventional. But, the meaning of the word “career” has been redefined again and again due to the advent of the Information Technology into our lives. A career is an individual’s journey through learning, work and other aspects of life.

The traditional concept of ‘career’ was progression up an ordered hierarchy within an organisation or profession. The notion was that people ‘chose’ a career, which then unfolded in an orderly way. It was an elitist concept: some had a career; many only had a job; some did not even have that. For some time now, however, this traditional concept has been fragmenting. The pace of change, driven by technology and globalisation, means that organisations are constantly exposed to change. They are therefore less willing to make long-term commitments to individuals; where they do, it is in exchange for flexibility about the roles and tasks the individuals will perform. Increasingly, therefore, security lies not in employment but in employability. Individuals who want to maintain their employability must be willing to regularly learn new skills. **So, careers are now increasingly seen not as being ‘chosen’ but as being constructed, through the series of choices about learning and work that people make throughout their lives.**

**Career aspiration:** A career aspiration is a path that one wants the career to follow. For example, a big career aspiration for a lot of people is to become part of a management team. Being part of a management team is a big step up because it needs investment with more power and greater responsibility. Here are some common career aspirations:

- Enhancing professional skills to advance in an organization.
- Find stable job security.
- Become an expert in a field.
- Gain more autonomy at work.
- Better balance of home and work life.
- Network more on a professional level.
- Become better motivated to complete the job.
- Educate more.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Gaining insight into the career aspirations of IT/ITES employees

### MANAGEMENT OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF EMPLOYEES

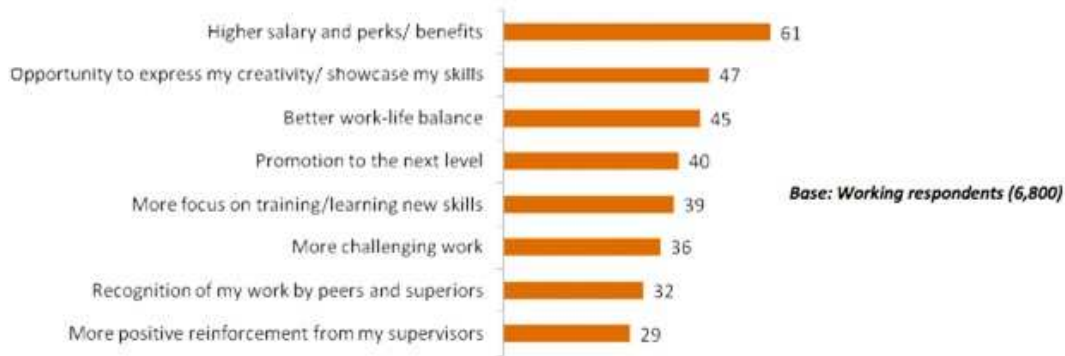
**Dan Schawbel (2013)** has discussed the three career must haves – Passion, Strengths and Market. When it comes to thinking about a satisfying career, these are the critical factors. Having only two won’t cut it. For example: If an employee is passionate about something, he will work hard and turn that skill or knowledge of a subject into one of his strengths. But if an employee does not care about that particular skill, he will have a tough time finding job that will put food on his table. If he is really good at something but he does not really like it, building his career around it will give him ulcers – even if he is making a lot of money. Of course, finding a career that satisfies all three conditions isn’t easy.

The idea of aspiration management draws from Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. It depicts self-actualization as the utmost need individuals aspire to realize in their life. Self-actualization just means being the best you can be at what you do. In fact, 61% of respondents in the January 2015 Bayt.com *Skills and Hiring Trends* poll say that their company suffers from lack of skills. Managing employee aspirations meritoriously can be a crucial driver of growth for both employees and the company.

Knowing employees’ aspirations is the first step towards effective aspiration management. These aspirations may be associated to where they are headed in their professional life, such as aspiring a promotion or a salary increase, or personal goals, such as how they plan to maintain their work-life balance. Once they know what they want to achieve in life, you can help them convert these aspirations into more specific, measurable and time-bound goals. Data from the Bayt.com *Career Aspirations* survey (2015) shows that while 68% of professionals say they have set professional goals for themselves, 22% have not set any goals. The latter are the ones who will need your help in defining short- and long- term goals.

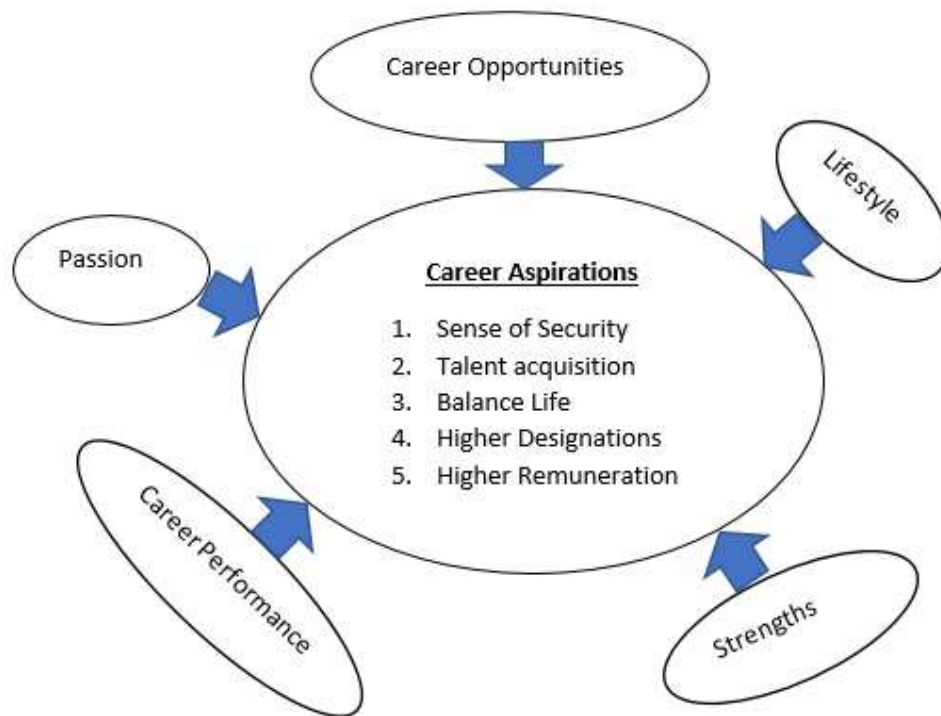
Once the aspirations have been described and quantified, all that is left is finding ways to achieve them. For aspiration management to be effective, employees’ goals need to be aligned with organizational goals. Providing the necessary training is the key to achieving this alignment of goals. 45% of professionals cite the lack of training and growth opportunities as the main barrier to their personal career growth.

FIG. 1



Bayt.com Career Aspirations -January 2015  
Image credit:Bayt.com

FIG. 2



**CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND ITS INFLUENCING FACTORS**

As a career evolves, the person develops a self-concept that includes some explicit answers to these questions:

1. What are my talents, skills and areas of competence? What are my strengths and my weaknesses?
2. What are my main motives, needs, drives and goals in life? What do I want or not want, either because I have never wanted it or because I have reached a point of insight and no longer want it?
3. What are my values? The main criteria by which I judge what I am doing? Am I in an organisation or job that is congruent with my values? How good do I feel about what I am doing? How proud or ashamed am I of my work and career?

This self-concept builds on whatever self-insight an individual has acquired from the experiences of youth and education. However, it cannot be a mature self-concept until a career occupant has had enough real occupational experience to know his or her talents, motives and values. Such learning may require up to ten years or more of actual work experience. If the person has many varied experiences and gets meaningful feedback in each one, a self-concept develops more quickly. If a person has only a few jobs in the early years of the career or obtains minimal feedback, it may take much longer.

Talents, motives and values become intertwined. People learn to be better at those things they value and are motivated to do and learn to value and be motivated by those things they happen to do well. They also gradually learn to avoid those things that they do not do well, though without clear feedback they may cling to illusions about themselves that set them up for repeated failures. Talents without motivation gradually atrophy. Conversely, new challenges can reveal latent or hidden talents that simply had not had an opportunity to appear earlier.

People differ as to whether talents, motives or values initially dominate their self-concepts and provide central themes to their careers. As time goes on however, a need for congruence causes people to seek consistency and integration among the different elements of the self-concept. How is this consistency learned? People first enter the world of work with many ambitions, hopes, fears and illusions but with relatively little good information about themselves, especially about

their interests, motives and values as well as their intellectual and motor skills but they cannot really determine how good they will be at a certain kind of work or how they will react to it emotionally.

Nowhere is this truer than in management, because of the difficulty in simulating some of its key skills and abilities. Until a person actually feels the responsibility of committing large sums of money of hiring and firing people of saying no to a valued subordinate, that person cannot tell whether he or she will be able to do it or will like doing it. This principle applies to many other occupations; a person cannot tell if he or she has a talent in or likes the job without actually performing that job.

The early years in an occupation are a crucial time of learning – learning about the occupation or organisation and learning about oneself in relation to the demands of the job. This process is often painful and full of surprises because of the many misconceptions and illusions with which people typically enter their early work situations. Many of people’s dreams about themselves and what their work will be like may be inconsistent with their work experiences, causing “reality shock” a phenomenon that is observed in all occupations in the early years.

As people accumulate work experience, they have the opportunity to make choices, from these choices they begin to ascertain what they really find important. For each person, dominant themes emerge – critical skills or abilities that an individual want to exercise or crucial needs or values that dominate one’s orientation toward life. Previously, a person may have had a vague sense of these elements, but in the absence of actual life experience, he or she does not know how important they are or how any given talent, motive or value relates in a subjective hierarchy to other elements of the total personality. Only when he or she is confronted with difficult choices does a person begin to decide what is really important to him or her.

## CONCLUSION

None of us have an infinite number of choices when it comes to career management. But all of us have some choices. We need to figure out areas of our choice and become active in managing them. As the world gets more complex, more and more of a burden will fall on each person to manage his or her own career because employers will have a harder time figuring out what is best for everyone. Thus, the most important bit of advice is not to become a victim.

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