Effects of Perceived Career Plateau on Work Related Attitudes: A Study on Employees of Bangladeshi Private Organizations

Tanjela Hossain

(Senior Lecturer in HRM, Department of Business Administration, Central Women's University, Dhaka, Bangladesh)
Corresponding Author: Tanjela Hossain

Abstract: Now-a-days dealing with career plateauing has become a severe issue for both plateaued employees and human resources practitioners. Career plateau is a point of a person's career life where the likelihood of being promoted further is low. I have done a survey on employees of different private organizations to identify the effects of perceived career plateau on their work-related attitudes.Data were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire from a sample of 200 employees working in 20 private organizations located in Dhaka city. 40 employees' personally interviewed and other 160 employees were surveyed thorough e-mail and social network sites. A quantitative approach has been taken to analyze the data It is found that career plateau may be caused by four factors: organization's hierarchical structure, organization's culture, organization's business strategies and employees own psychological factors. Results also indicate that career plateau may causes low level of job satisfaction, poor organizational commitment, higher rate of employee turnover and higher level of job stress. Furthermore, considering career plateauing consequences, this study found that job satisfactions and organizational commitment are negatively related to career plateau whereas intention to quit and job stress are positively related to career plateau. Moreover, the coping strategies for effectively dealing with career plateauing scenarios were discussed from individual and organizational perspectives in my study.

Keywords:career plateau, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, work attitudes.

I. Introduction

The changes in the business environment, such as the restructuring and downsizing trend, have resulted in greater numbers of people competing for fewer promotional opportunities [2]. "Consequently, more individuals are experiencing longer assignments in the same position with fewer prospects for future vertical mobility" [2] In today's context, many managers are more likely to plateau at an earlier age than those a generation ago, and also earlier than they might expect [7]. In any event, it is inevitable that traditional hierarchical pyramid shaped organisations will be flattened by the introduction of the latter reforms. The knock-on effect from these reforms are that employees are likely to remain longer in the same position, narrowing down their career development path and delaying the likelihood of future promotional opportunities.

Conceptually career plateauing can be defined as "the point in a career beyond which further promotion is low [9]. Various factors may result in managerial career plateauing and several of them consist of lack of individual skills and abilities, lack of individual needs and values, lack of intrinsic motivation, lack of extrinsic rewards, stress and burnout, and slow organizational growth [8], and demographic variables, personal orientation factors, and work environment perception [1]. These factors have different degree of impact to make a certain employee plateaued in his or her career.

Despite of the findings of different studies, significant gaps in the career plateauing literature still remain, especially in Bangladesh. For example, there has been very little research directed at examining factors that contribute to the occurrence of career plateauing in Bangladeshi Organizations. Few studies have examined the differential factors related to perceptions of subjective versus objective career plateauing. For understanding of the plateauing phenomenon precisely in Bangladesh, it is important to identify factors that may result in career plateauing and how those variables vary according to the type of plateau. Additionally, this information may help organizations to avoid the potential detrimental outcomes associated with career plateaus.

In the light of above, the focus of this study is mainly on career plateauing aspects with special reference to Bangladeshi managerial employees who are working in different private organizations. This paper explores more specifically, the most critical determinants of managerial career plateauing and potential consequences of it. Further, particular emphasis is given to identify and suggest some coping strategies to overcome the undesirable outcomes of plateauing.

II. Objectives of the study

Broadly, the objective of the study is to Explore and critically analyze the effects of career plateau on work related attitudes of private corporation in Bangladesh.

This main objective can be split into more specified objectives in a way that highlight the stepping stone of the research endeavor.

1. Identify the contributing factors causing career plateauing in a broad way.
2. Analyze the effects of career plateau on an employee and on organization
3. Suggest alternative approaches to partially overcome the undesirable implications of□ career plateau.

Research questions: This research attempts to discover answers to the questions regarding the relationship between career plateau and work-related attitudes of employees in different private organizations of Bangladesh. The study answers the following research questions:

1. What factors are contributing to career plateauing among Bangladeshi private organization's employees?
2. How critical are these factors in terms of its degree of implications?
3. Are they much aware of their plateauing position?
4. What reactions do employees perceive about career plateauing?
5. What consequences may be created due to career plateau?
6. What coping strategies have employees pursued to get rid of career plateauing?
7.

III. Review Of Literature

Starting in the 1970s and continuing into the 1980s, researchers started identifying and defining a new construct, termed *career plateau*, in the organizational behavior literature **[4].** Ference et al. (1977) defined career plateau as the point where the employee's likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion becomes very unlikely. The definition of career plateau presented by Ference et al. (1977) was narrow focusing on upward movement only

Bardwick (1986) expanded the definition of the construct of career plateau presented by earlier researchers by sub-dividing the construct of career plateau into two dimensions: structural plateau and job content plateau. Bardwick defined structural plateauing using the same definition as the Ference et al. (1977) definition of career plateau; the point where the employee's likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion becomes very unlikely. She defined job content plateauing as the point when an individual is no longer challenged by his or her work or job responsibilities.

Types of Career plateau

Different types of career plateau are found in the career plateauing literature. Basically, Bardwick described three types of career plateauing [3].

1. *Structural plateauing:* results from the combined effects of organizational structure
(pyramidal) and birthrate fluctuations and is largely beyond the control of an individual employee [3]
2. *Content plateauing*: happens when an employee becomes saturated with all available job-related information and consequently lacks further challenge to expand vocational expertise [3]
3. *Personal plateauing*: centers on an employee's personal life and often corresponds to a period in one's life-stage development [3]

Contributing Factors of Career Plateauing

Various factors may contribute for employees becoming plateaued. Determinants of career progress or stagnation may be divided in to two broad categories: Individual and familial factors on one side and organizational factors on the other side [23, 12]

Demographic variables can influence both form of plateauing. Other studies show that organizations develop norms or stereotypes about the age at which one may be promoted [13, 23]. Specific studies of the relationship between age and career plateau have provided only inconclusive results, but several researches have observed negative relationship between age and mobility [11]

Feldman D.C. and Weitz, B.A [9] identified different sources of managerial career plateauing as explained in following Figure.

I. Individual Skills and Abilities	**IV. Lack of Extrinsic Rewards**
-Selection system deficiencies	-Small raises, few promotions
-Lack of Training	-Inequities in reward system
-Inaccurate perception of feed back	-Incontinent rewards
II. Individual Needs and Values	**V. Stress and Burnout**
-Low growth need strength	-Interpersonal relationships on job
-Career anchors of security and autonomy	-Organizational climate
-Self-imposed constraints	-Role conflict
III. Lack of Intrinsic Motivation	**VI. Slow Organizational Growth**

-Lack of skill variety -Low task identity -Low task significance	-External Business conditions - "Defender" corporate strategy

Source: Feldman, D. C. & Weitz, B. A. (1988), Career Plateaus, Reconsidered, *Journal of Management*, Volume 14, p.72.

Effects of Career Plateau:

Studies have been conducted on the impacts of being career plateaued. Not all the studies concluded negative outcomes such as low motivation, low job satisfaction, and low organizational commitment resulting from being career plateaued [3, 18]. These studies suggested that career plateaued employees can be considered solid citizens within their organizations. These employees provide stability and a constant work effort that organizations require for success. There is considerable evidence indicating that plateauing is related to negative job attitudes and behaviors [1, 23, 24].Employees that are structurally plateaued are absent from work more often [16], indicated less satisfaction with their supervisors [18] reported more health problems [18], more stress, greater turnover intensions [23], and greater burnout. Studies have also shown employees who believe they are plateaued report lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment [23] and lower job performance [1]. Studies conducted on job content plateauing reported similar results [1,14] Perceptions of job content plateauing are believed to be related to lower job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and higher levels of turnover. However, most of the literature on career plateauing conclude that there are unfavorable consequences of plateauing toward both individual employee performances and organizational outcomes. For instance, several studies have demonstrated that plateaued employees report lower levels of job satisfaction, [5] lower levels of organizational commitment [2], and greater intentions to quit [1].

Coping Strategies with plateauing career:

There are some alternative solutions that can be pursued in order to minimize the un-favorable consequences of plateauing. In this section I explore the literature on how to deal with career plateauing considering both from individual and organizational perspectives.

Near [18]; Slocum [21] recognize *education* is probably the most beneficial option an organization can make to educate employees regarding the prevalence and career implications of career plateauing. Further Near [17] argues that in doing so, the problem becomes demystified because, clearly, an informed worker is one of the best protections against unproductive plateauing.

In addition to the above mentioned organizationally sponsored coping strategies, Tan, et al., (1994) in their study suggest that following distinctive interventions. [22]

· Job redesign	· Lateral transfers
· Job enrichment programs	· Mutual job switches (temporary or permanent)
· Work projects	· Paid sabbaticals

Currently, some organizations provide continuing education, although it is usually in career related areas only. Connor and Fielden (1973) suggested that "it is actually less expensive for the organization to subsidize educational options related to launching a second career than to continue underwriting the salary of large numbers of deadwood employees [6].

Definitions of Key Concepts

Career Plateau: The point in a career beyond which further promotion is low [10]. The likelihood of not receiving further assignments or increased responsibility [9]

Objective Career Plateau: Refers to structural and observable aspects and associated with the time spent in the current position [23].

Subjective Career Plateau: The feeling of having been in one's level for too long and of having reached a dead end in one's progress [23]

Job Satisfaction: A collection of feelings that an individual hold toward his or her job [20]. "Degree to which an individual's feel positively or negatively about work [26].

Organizational Commitment: A state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization [20].

Intention to Quit: The voluntary and involuntary permanent withdrawal from an organization [20].

Job Induced Stress: An awareness of personal dysfunction, leading to an uncomfortable short-term psychological state such as anxiety, tension or depression caused by opportunities, constraints, or demands relating to potentially important work-related outcomes [19, 11]

IV. Research Methodology

The research has made extensive use of both primary and secondary data. We have collected all the primary data by administering a questionnaire to respondents in the selected companies. Interviews have also been conducted to access the information about the career plateau and its effects on work-related attitudes.

The population of study

The population of the study is all of the private ltd companies of Bangladesh. As it is not possible to cover all private ltd. companies of Bangladesh under a survey, a sample survey was conducted in this study.

The Sample Selection and Sample Size

I have selected the sample companies through convenience sampling and judgment or purposive sampling method. Some companies were taken where it was possible to gain access to the information and the personnel who were interested in helping with the study. It was tried to cover as many types of companies as possible. Convenient sampling method was used to select the sample from the population. The sample of 200 employees was selected covering different industries: Agriculture, Banking, Insurance, Textiles, Hotel and Tourism, Education, Food Processing, Health and Care, Engineering and Transportation. Following criteria were taken in to account when selecting managers.
· Remaining in the same position for more than three years
· Over and above twenty-five years of age
· Subordinate per manager is more than five
 In total there are 20 (twenty) companies which were chosen as sample. The sub-sample size is 200 employees from 20 companies, to whom the survey was administered.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested by using chi-square test,
H 1: Career plateauing is positively related to job satisfaction.
H 2: Career plateauing is positively related to organizational commitment.
H 3: Career plateauing is negatively related to intentions to turnover.
H 4: Career plateauing is negatively related to job stress & frustration.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used for collecting responses from the subject selected for the study. In total there are 31 fixed-alternative checklist questions, three open-ended questions and a personal information section.

The questionnaire contained five parts denoted as A, B, C, D, and E. Part-A was on personal information from which demographic information such as name, profession, organization, training experience, etc. could be known.

Part-B was used to find the Perceptions of respondents toward various factors Causing Career Plateau. Part-C was designed to find the Status of Career Plateau for employees. Part-D emphasized on Effects of Career plateau on work related attitudes. Five-point Likert-type scales are used to get answer from respondents. They were asked to indicate whether they Strongly agree or Strongly disagree with each statement using a five-point Likert-type scale. Responses for these questions ranged from 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree. Last part-E of questionnaire focused on Coping Strategies to get rid of career plateau by using three open-end questions**.**The survey questionnaire is found in appendix.

Data Collection Procedure

An open discussion, observation of activities and a survey were done to gather information from the people working at mid & top level of management in different private organizations of Bangladesh. From the 20-private ltd. company's 200 respondents were interested in the study. I have taken 40 employees' personal interview and other 160 employees were surveyed thorough e-mail and social network sites. There were many more questionnaires un-answered which were sent via e-mail to employees.

To make the Study more meaningful and presentable, secondary sources of data and information have been used extensively. The sources are-

The **Secondary Sources** are as follows:
* Office files and documents.
* Study-related books and journals.
* Reports on career plateau.
* Official websites of the related companies.
* Other information provided in different websites.

Data Processing & Analysis:

Upon completion of the survey, a quantitative approach has been taken to analyze the data. The data collected by means of the survey and interviews was first, coded and then feed into the SPSS analytical program. With the help of **SPSS** and **MS Excel**, raw data from the questionnaire could be processed through frequency and descriptive statistics to get meaningful information. To measure the data, an ordinal scale has been used. The gathered information regarding the qualitative part was processed & compiled with the aid of MS Word and necessary tables, Detailed interpretation and analysis have also been incorporated in the Study.

The analyses of the open-ended questions were based on the grouping of similar responses from the questions and the categorizing of various descriptions provided by the respondents. These questions were used to identify what actions employees suggest to minimize unfavorable outcome of the career plateauing. Listing out and prioritizing was performed to recognize the most prominent strategic solutions to minimize career plateauing.

V. Analysis and Findings

Respondents were asked a series of open questions, semi-open questions, multiple choice questions, dichotomous questions. Findings and Analysis are presented below based on the questions of the questionnaire used in this study:.

5.1 Demographic profile of the respondents:

At the very beginning of our data collection we classify the respondents on the basis of their age, monthly family income, qualification, experience and marital status for their responses regarding quality of work life.

Table 1: Demographic factors of the respondents:

Demographic factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender		
a) Female	74	37%
b) Male	126	63%
Age		
a) Below 30 years	52	26%
b) 30-40 years	86	43%
c) 41-50 years	43	21.5%
d) 51 and above	19	9.5%
Educational Qualification		
a) Diploma	37	18.5%
b) Graduate	116	58%
c) Post Graduate and above	47	23.5%
Experience		
a) Less than 4 years	57	28.5%
b) 4 years – 6 years	97	48.5%
c) 7 years -10 Years	26	13%
d) More than 10 years	20	10%
Marital Status		

a) Unmarried	32	16%
b) Married	121	60.5%
c) Divorced	23	11.5%
d) Single Parent	24	12%
Job Position		
a) Mid-level	136	68%
b) Top-level	64	32%

Table 1 highlights that the age range of majority (43%) of employees is 30 to 40 years out of 200 respondents, 26% were in below 30 years age group, 21.5% belonged to 41-50 years age group. 9.5% respondents were in age group of 50 years above. The table also indicates that a majority of employees (58%) have graduation, 18.5% have Diploma. Only 23.5% are post graduates and above educational degrees. It is also clear from the table that 28.5% of the respondents had experience less than four year, 48.5% had experience between 4-6 years, 13% of the respondents had 7-10 years of experience ,10% of the respondents hold more than 10 years of experience. In this study, most of the employees (60.5%) are married, 16% are unmarried, 11.5% are divorced and 12% are single parents.

As Career plateau is a mid-career crisis, so employees were chosen from mid-level to top level. Majority (68%) of employees were in mid-level of management and other 32% were in Top level of management.

5.2 Perceptions of respondents toward various factors Causing Career Plateau:
Once an employee acknowledges that a plateau has occurred, an attribution to explain why it happened is a common psychological process. Firms may plateau employees for either organizational or personal reasons. So, some questions were designed to find the causes of career plateau before analyzing its effects. There are many contributing factors to career plateau. The respondents were asked to rate 11 influential factors on five-point Likert-scales where these 11 factors were grouped into four categories: **Hierarchical Structure, Organizational Business Strategy, Organizational Culture and Psychological factors of employees.**

Table 2: Perception of respondents towards various factors Causing Career Plateau:

Sl. No.	Various Parameters regarding Career plateau ("Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree")	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Variance
Hierarchical Structure				
1.	There are not enough promotional opportunities in my organization	2.88	1.321	1.744
2.	Current organizational structure in my organization block my promotions	3.195	1.325	1.756
3.	My organization often launches organizational structural changes	3.795	1.058	1.119
Organizational Business Strategy				
4.	Top management often formulates business strategy that may causes plateau	3.7	1.19	1.417
5.	Top management prefers new entrants rather giving promotion existing employees	3.515	1.352	1.829
6.	There are no training opportunities related to my next promotion initiated by the organization	3.46	1.31	1.171
Organizational Culture				
7.	I have full freedom to explore career opportunities	2.225	1.293	1.673
8.	I belief that my supervisor will promote me if I am eligible	2.96	1.111	1.235
Psychological factors of employee				
9.	Lack of individual skill and abilities can lead to career plateau	3.125	1.186	1.406
10.	Lack of intrinsic motivation can lead to career plateau.	3.29	1.092	1.192
11.	Lack of career exploration and planning can lead to career plateau	3.315	1.373	1.885

The measure of central tendency was calculated to interpret the variability of the scores for Hierarchical structure. Table 2 provided the average responses on analysis of Hierarchical Structure of an organization.

The highest mean score was 3.795 on the first three questions as employees neither agreed nor disagreed with these statements, apart from the first question relating to future career progression in the same organisation where the mean was 2.88 indicating that most employees disagreed with this statement.

Analogous to Hierarchical Structure coding, a scale average of three or above on Business Strategy indicated a Neutral view with the three questions (4-6) on Business strategy of an organization. On these set of questions, the 200 respondents had an average mean score of 3.7 (*SD* = 1.19) indicating that the employees somewhat agreed or neutral with the statements, suggesting that they are predicting their opportunities to increase in the future which will allow them to learn and grow (Table 2).

The mean value in Table 2 also provided the average responses on Organizational Culture and Psychological aspects of an employee. The highest mean score was 2 and above which indicates that employees disagreed the statements asked on organizational culture.

In most cases the highest mean score was 3 which suggested the employees were not sure about these statements regarding the psychological factors of employees.

5.3 Analysis of Career Plateau: Subjective and Objective Plateau:
To learn about the Status of career plateau, two questions were asked to the respondents. On the questionnaire, question number- 12, and 13 are the questions used to measure the objective and subjective career plateau.
Scenario of Objective Plateau:
Question number 12 was asked directly to the respondents to know the status of objective plateau. A simple **percentage analysis was administered in the following table:**

Table 3: Scenario of Objective Plateau:

No	Sustaining years in same position	No. of respondents	Percentage %
a.	3 years - 5 years	88	57.14%
b.	6 years - 8 years	37	24.02%
c.	8+ years	29	18.84%
	Total	=154	=100%

Table # 03 shows that only 154 respondents respond to the question regarding sustaining in same position. 57.14% of them belong to 3 years to 5 years, 24.02% are in 6 years to 8 years, and rest 18.84% are in 8+ years.

Questions-13 includes five statements (i-iv) about subjective career plateau. Five-point Likert-type-scale were used. The scales are- Strongly Disagree to strongly agree, numbered in 1 to 5 respectively.

The frequencies found by using **SPSS** program from the above numbered ordinal scale questions are shown in the following Table 4:

Table 4: Scenario of Subjective career plateau:

No.	Question Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
i.	I believe that I have been in the same level for much too long	2.9	1.371	1.879
ii.	I think that I have already gained the last position in my field or profession (dead-end position)	2.76	0.825	0.686
iii.	I believe that I am not getting ahead in theorganization	3.21	1.309	1.714
iv.	I believe that my promotion opportunitieshave been limited in my organization	3.45	1.34	1.796
v.	I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated	3.665	1.3	1.691

Table 4 shows the responses towards Influential Parameters regarding the Subjective career plateau. The mean scores infer (as the scale is taken from highly satisfied=5 to Highly dissatisfied=1) that the employees are disagreed with the statements regarding their present position (2.9). It also infers that employees are somehow disagreed with the given feedback on their job performance (3.665).

5.4 Analyzing the Effects of Career plateau on work related attitudes:
These sets of questions (14-31) were included to understand the after effects of career plateau on work related attitudes like Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Employees intention to quite the organization, Job stress and frustration, etc.

Table 5: Effects of perceived career plateau on work related attitudes			
Employee attitudes	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Job Satisfaction			
14. I am satisfied with work itself	3.19	1.339	1.793
15. I am satisfied with our promotional scheme	2.845	1.143	1.308
16. I am satisfied with supervisory support	3.05	1.125	1.266
17. I am satisfied with colleagues	3.1	1.156	1.337
18. I am generally satisfied with the firm	3.08	1.254	1.571
19. I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career so far.	2.84	1.136	1.291
Organizational Commitment			
20. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	2.925	1.129	1.276
21. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	2.65	1.097	1.204

22.	I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar	2.88	1.025	1.051
23.	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave.	2.63	1.192	1.42
24.	I will probably not stay at the same company until I reach retirement	3.11	1.314	1.727
Intention to Quit				
25.	I am ready to change organization in order to have a better chance for promotion only	3.32	1.366	1.867
26.	I will definitely quit my job	2.69	1.217	1.481
27.	I am searching for outside job opportunities	3.16	1.347	1.813
28.	I have already applied for outside jobs	2.81	1.258	1.582
Stress and frustration				
29.	I work under great deal of tension	2.965	1.365	1.863
30.	If I had a different job, my health would probably improve	2.69	1.233	1.522
31.	I am frustrated at my current position	3.205	1.196	1.43

The mean value in Table 5 provides the average Job satisfaction levels of participants. All six questions (14-19) of Job Satisfaction obtained an average mean value among participants of nearly 3, which meant that they do not have a positive or negative experience with this concept. Apart from questions relating to promotional scheme and the success rate in the same organisation where the mean was 2.845 and 2.84 indicating that most employees disagreed with these statements.

The highest mean score was 2 and above which indicates that employees disagreed the statements asked on organizational Commitment.

Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the intention to quite the organization. The mean score indicates that they are neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements. Mixed reaction is also found regarding Stress and frustration. Most of the employees are not tensed or stressed about their job.

5.5 Analysis of Relationship between Career plateau and (a) job satisfaction (b) organizational commitment (c) intentions to turnover & (d) job stress & frustration:

Here I try to find out the relationship between Career Plateau and some work-related attitudes by using Chi-Square analysis.

Relationship between Career plateau and job satisfaction

Null Hypothesis: Career plateauing is positively related to job satisfaction.

Alternate Hypothesis: Career plateauing is negatively related to job satisfaction.

Table 6 (i): Scenario between the career plateau of employees and their level of Job Satisfaction:

Job Satisfaction	Career Plateau		
	Yes	**No**	**Total**
Satisfied	22	56	79
Dissatisfied	89	33	122
TOTAL	=111	=89	=200

Table 6 (ii): Calculated Chi-Square value and Table Value.

Factor	Calculated χ^2 Value	*df*	Table Value	Remarks
career plateau of employees and their level of Job Satisfaction	**38.5722**	**1**	**3.841**	Calculated χ^2 value is more than the Table value and the null hypothesis is rejected

Table 6(i) & Table 6(ii) shows the calculated value 38.572 is more than the table value at 5% level of significance. So, the null hypothesis is not accepted. Hence, Career plateauing is negatively related to job satisfaction.

Relationship between Career plateau (b) organizational commitment

Null Hypothesis: Career plateauing is positively related to organizational commitment. **Alternate Hypothesis:** Career plateauing is negatively related to organizational commitment.

Table 6(iii): Scenario between the career plateau of employees and their level of organizational Commitment:

Organizational commitment	Career Plateau		
	Yes	**No**	**Total**
Yes	21	77	98
No	65	37	102

TOTAL	86	114	=200

Table 6 (iv): Calculated Chi-Square value and Table Value:

Factor	Calculated χ^2 Value	*df*	Table Value	Remarks
career plateau of employees and their level of organizational commitment	**36.4813**	**1**	**3.841**	Calculated χ^2 value is more than the Table value and the null hypothesis is rejected

Table 6(iii) & Table 6(iv) shows the calculated value 36.4813 is more than the table value at 5% level of significance. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence Career plateauing is negatively related to organizational commitment.

Relationship between Career plateau and intentions to turnover:
Null Hypothesis: Career plateauing is negatively related to intention to Turnover.
Alternate Hypothesis: Career plateauing is positively related to intention to turnover.

Table 6 (v): Scenario between the career plateau of employees and their level of intention to turnover:

Intention to Turnover	Career Plateau		
	Yes	**No**	**Total**
Yes	56	23	79
No	34	87	121
TOTAL	90	110	=200

Table 6(vi): Calculated Chi-Square value and Table Value.

Factor	Calculated χ^2 Value	*df*	Table Value	Remarks
career plateau of employees and their level of intention to turnover.	**35.3532**	**1**	**3.841**	Calculated χ^2 value is more than the Table value and the null hypothesis is rejected

Table 6(v) & Table 6(vii) shows the calculated value 35.3532 is more than the table value at 5% level of significance. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. So, Career plateauing is positively related to intention to turnover.

Relationship between Career plateau and (d) job stress & frustration:
Null Hypothesis: Career plateauing is negatively related to job stress & frustration.
Alternate Hypothesis: Career plateauing is positively related to job stress & frustration.

Table 6 (vii): Scenario between the career plateau of employees and their level of job stress & frustration:

Job stress & frustration	Career Plateau		
	Yes	**No**	**Total**
Yes	61	27	88
No	33	79	112
TOTAL	94	106	=200

Table 6(viii): Calculated Chi-Square value and Table Value.

Factor	Calculated χ^2 Value	*df*	Table Value	Remarks
career plateau of employees and their level of job stress & frustration.	**31.4223**	**1**	**3.841**	Calculated χ^2 value is more than the Table value and the null hypothesis is rejected

Table 6(vii) & Table 6(viii) shows the calculated value 29.4245 is more than the table value at 5% level of significance. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence Career plateauing is positively related to job stress & frustration.

5.6 Coping strategies to career plateau
In order to find out what employees think about possible alternative solutions, from their perspective, to minimize consequences from the career plateauing situation, three open end questions were asked in the questionnaire. As the open-ended questions were optional all 200 respondents did not answer this question, and only 117 (58.5%) responded. 83 (41.5%) of 200 respondents reported nothing. It should be mentioned here, the

results from the interviewing 40 employees before conducting comprehensive survey revealed almost same responses in this regard. Both interview and survey responses are summarized and presented in a point form as follows:

Table 7: Coping strategies to deal with career plateau

Educational Aspects	✓ Develop job related skills especially managerial level qualities
✓ Pursuing higher educations	✓ Improve leadership qualities
✓ Continuous learning towards expertise in current job responsibilities	✓ More focus on time management
✓ Increase workload	✓ Create a strong self-image
✓ Participating and initiating External professional events	✓ Set personal challenges and goal
	✓ Prepare to accept more responsibilities
Networking Strategies	✓ Accept challenges
✓ Maintaining god relationship with top management and peers and build up more contacts with head office	*Own Career Planning Strategies*
	✓ Set the right values and priorities.
	✓ Emphasize on career satisfaction
Skill Development Strategies	✓ Maximize performance in current position
✓ Improve communication, presentation skills and personality qualities	✓ Refocus career goals and formulate new career strategies
✓ Having a good mentor may a great aid to be proactive in case of plateauing.	✓ Emphasis more on target achievement in due time
	✓ Redesign the career anchor

As far as the alternative actions mentioned by respondents, it is obvious that many employees believe that maintaining and marinating tight relationship with top management without making damages is identified as the prominent option. Apart from that, many employees considered that demonstrating exceptional, impressive performance in the present position lead to minimization of being plateaued. However, the results of the survey found that educational level is not the most important predictor of career plateauing. Finally, but most importantly, upgrading the range of skills including communication, presentation, leadership, and personality qualities is recognized as the viable options.

5.7 Organizational Level Coping Strategies

Dealing with career plateaus is not only a responsible for employees. This study also addressed this phenomenon and tried to find out what plateaued employees suggest that management could undertake to deal with career plateaus. The findings from the interviewing and surveying managers are listed below. These strategies can be sorted out into two groups:

Table 8: Human resources policy and Business strategy.

Human resources policy	*Business Strategy*
✓ Transfer plateaued employees to the most relevant sections	✓ Establish and practice transferable and flexible communication system
✓ Plan for career and retirement	✓ Undertake structural changes
✓ Change the present performance appraisal system	✓ Focus on decentralization and employee's empowerment
✓ Design proper career path for employees	✓ Develop new roles
✓ Introduce mentoring system	✓ Expand new channels and sections
✓ Perform fair evaluation by supervisors	✓ Carry out horizontal expansion
✓ Provide adequate training and developments opportunities	✓ Formulate and actual implementation of growth business strategies

From the above discussion it is cleared that many employees emphasized the importance of undertaking structural changes. If possible, horizontal expansion might be the most interesting actions that can be undertaken by the organization. Not only these structural changes, emphasizing more on decentralization and empowering employees could also play a critical role in getting rid of adverse impact of plateauing to a greater extent. Especially, the interview conducted with 40 employees revealed more interesting findings about the coping strategies. Many employees believed that career plateauing occurred due to the fact that less promotional opportunities and then they emphasized the necessity of designing and launching new product areas, new distribution channels, and new roles. Altering present performance system, conducting fair evaluation by supervisors also was treated as important coping activity. Eventually, introduce mentoring system, establish and practice transferable and flexible communication system and plan for career and retirement in essence, were more interesting findings of the survey.

VI. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact a career plateau has on employees of different private organization of Bangladesh. Most importantly the study has found the dependency and significance of the four dimensions of career plateau with job performance and organizational commitment, quitting tendency of plateaued employees, and Job stress & Frustration. The findings are important because it raise question on the idea of secret career plan for promotion where everyone knows when a promotion is due, and if promotion does not happen and plateau occurred then it obviously affects the level of job performance, organizational commitment, employee turnover rate, and level of employee frustration. This interpretation highlights that private organizations in Bangladesh do not have strict policy for promotion, which ultimately effects the performance and loyalty of employees. The study found that career plateau and job satisfaction & organizational commitment was negatively correlated with each other. Again, it is also found that career plateau and employee turnover & level of employee frustration was positively correlated with each other. Finally, this study draws the conclusions regarding the coping strategies for overcoming the unfavorable outcomes of the career plateauing. Launching structural changes, developing honest and equitable performance appraisal system, planning for career and retirement, offering more training and development opportunities, changing personnel policies play a critical role in preventing negative consequences of the career plateauing. Last, but not the least, based on the survey results and interviewing employees, undertaking higher education and obtaining greater experience, engaging with continuous learning, developing and maintaining good rapport with top management and performing well in present job are the best individual level coping strategies.

References

[1]. Allen, T. D., & Poteet, M, L. (1998), "Attitudes of Managers Who Are More or Less Career Plateaued", *Career Development Quarterly*, Vol.47, No. 2, pp.159-172.

[2]. Allen, T.D., Russell, J. E. A., Poteet, M. L., & Dobbins, G.H. (1999), "Learning and development factors related to perceptions of job content and hierarchical plateauing", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 20, No. 7, pp.1113-1125.

[3]. Bardwick, J.M. (1986). *The plateauing trap* (1st ed.). New York: American Management Association.

[4]. Carlson, D.S. and Rotondo, D.M. (2001) "Difference in promotion stress across career stage and orientation". *Human Resource Management*, 40(2): pp. 99-110.

[5]. Clay, Y.W., Aryee, S., & Chew, I. (1995), "Career plateauing: reactions and moderators among managerial and professional employees", *International Journal of HumanResource Management*, Vol. 6, No.1, pp.61-78.

[6]. Connor and, S. R, Fielden J.S (1973) R for managerial Shelf Sitter, Harvard Business review, 51-113-120

[7]. Elsass, P.M., & Ralston, D.A. (1989). Individual responses to the stress of career plateauing. *Journal of Management, 15*(1), 35-47.

[8]. Ettington, D. (1997), "How Human Resource Practices Can Help Plateaued Managers Succeed", *Human Resource Management,* Vol.36, No.2, pp.221-234.

[9]. Feldman, D.C., Weitz, B. A.(1988), "Career Plateaus Reconsidered", *Journal of Management*, Vol.14, No. 1, pp.69-80.

[10]. Ference, T, P., Stoner, J. A., & Warren, E. K. (1977), "Managing the Career Plateau", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 2, No.4, pp.602-612.

[11]. Kalleberg, A.L., &Loscococco, K.A. (1983), "Aging, values, and Rewards: Explaining age differences in job satisfaction", *American Sociology Review*, Vol. 48, No. 1, pp.78- 90.

[12]. Latack, J.C., (1984), 'Career Transitions within Organizations: An Exploratory Study of Work, Nonwork, and Coping Strategies", *Organizational behaviour and humanperformance,* Vol. 34, pp.296-322

[13]. Lee, P.C.B. (2003). Going beyond career plateau: Using professional plateau to account for work outcomes. *The Journal of Management Development, 22*(6), 538-551.

[14]. Milliman, J.F.(1992). Causes, consequences, and moderating factors or career plateauing. University of Southern California.

[15]. Nachbagauer, A.G.M. and Riedl, G. (2002) "Effects of concepts of career plateaus on performance, work satisfaction and commitment". *InternationalJournal of Manpower*, 23(8): pp. 716-733.

[16]. Near, J.P. (1980). The career plateau: Causes and effects. *Business Horizons, 23*, 53-57.

[17]. Near, J.P. (1984). Reactions to the career plateau. *Business Horizons, 27(4)*, 75-79

[18]. Near, J.P. (1985). A discriminate analysis of plateaued versus non-plateaued managers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 26*, 177-188.

[19]. Parker, Donald F., DeCotiis, Thomas A. (1983/10)."Organizational determinants of job stress." Organizational Behavior and Human Performance 32(2): 160-177.

[20]. Robbins, S.P. (2005), "Organizational Behaviour" (11 th edition), *Upper Saddle River*, NJ: Prentice Hall.

[21]. Slocum, J. W., Hansen, w., & Rawlings, S. (1985), "Business Strategy and the Management of Plateaued Employees", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 133-154.

[22]. Tan, C. S., Salomone, P.R. (1994), "Understanding career plateauing: Implications for counseling", *Career Development Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4.

[23]. Tremblay, M., & Roger, A. (1993), "Individual, Familial and Organizational Determinants of Career Plateau", *Sage publication Inc. Group & OrganizationManagement*, Vol.18, pp.411-435.

[24]. Tremblay, M., Roger, A., & Toulouse, J.M. (1995), "Career Plateau and Work Attitudes: An Empirical Study of Managers", *Human Relations*, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp.221-237.

[25]. Weiner, A., Remer, R., & Remer, P. (1992), "Career Plateauing: Implications for Career Development Specialists", *Journal of Career Development,* Vol. 19, No.1, pp.37-48

[26]. Wood, B, W, Grauke,L, J, and Payne J, A, (1998) "Province variations in pecan" J. Am. Soc, Hortic, Sci, 123:1023-1028