CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN THE BENUE STATE CIVIL SERVICE

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ABSTRACT
The paper examined the effect of career development on employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service. This study adopted survey research design, the sample size for the study was 200 across the Benue State Civil Service. Data were collected using a self-mixed questionnaire with response rate of 200 percent. Thepaper has a total population of fourteen thousand nine hundred and sixty-six (14,966) (Benue State civil service commission worker's register, 2023). The analysis of data was done using simple frequency distribution and percentages. The multiple regression analysis t-test was used alongside with Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) technique in estimation. The Findings revealed that that effect self-certification has significant relationship on employee retention of Benue State civil service and seminars has significant relationship on employee retention of Benue State civil service. The study revealed that career development affected the employee retention of Benue State civil servants. The study concludes that certification, seminars, internship and coaching positively affected the employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service. This implies that investing in certification, seminars, internship, and coaching programs can effectively enhance employee retention within the Benue State Civil Service. The study recommended among others that Policy makers of various ministries should expand the availability of certification programs relevant to the roles and responsibilities within the Civil Service. And clearly communicate the career advancement opportunities associated with obtaining specific certifications, emphasizing their importance in professional development and progression within the Civil Service. This can be done by partnering with accredited institutions or professional organizations to offer a diverse range of certifications.

1.1 Introduction

Career development plays a crucial role in shaping employees professional growth, job satisfaction, and commitment to their organizations by offering opportunities for advancement, skill enhancement, and personal development, career development initiatives can foster a sense of purpose, engagement, and loyalty among employees. In civil service, where bureaucratic structures and traditional promotion systems may prevail, effective career development practices are essential for attracting and retaining top talents. The retention of talented and experienced employees is therefore, vital for ensuring operational efficiency, maintaining institutional knowledge, and delivering high-quality public services. However, despite the recognized importance of retaining skilled personnel, civil service agencies often grapple with challenges related to employee turnover and retention (Delbari, *et al.,* 2021).

Employee retention is about keeping employees for a large duration of time and the intention of the management of the firm to keep the maximum employee numbers (Muriithi, 2020). Frequent employee loss, according to Rono and Kiptum (2017) drains the organizational assets and resources based on time and costs that is lost during the recruitment and training of new employees. This leads to variation in production rates and service delivery quality. The loss of talent is not only in terms of finance but also loss in intangible resources like the knowledge and experience of the employees that impact the growth and high performances for the organization.

The high employee turnover rates are expensive to the business units, leads to variation in service delivery and losing the loyalty of customers that negatively impacts on the profit margins. The intention to leave an organization is costly to same based on loss of service after training the employees, besides they leave with all their experiences that will benefit their future employer. Chiekezie, *et al,* (2017) contend that organizations must put in place measures that will retain their best employees. The employees drive business performance that gives the firm competitive advantage. The banks in Nigeria give their employees compensation packages inclusive of salary, bonuses and benefits like insurance cover and personal loans as an incentive to retain the bank staff for long periods. In certain organizations, job enrichment, job rotation, training and development could be used as part of employee development programs that led to higher retention rates for its employees.

Given the critical importance of retaining skilled employees within civil service organizations, there is a compelling need to examine the relationship between career development and employee retention. By assessing the effectiveness of existing career development programs, and identifying strategies to improve retention, this study seeks to contribute to the enhancement of workforce stability and organizational effectiveness in the Benue State civil service sector.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In civil service organizations, the retention of skilled and experienced employees is essential for maintaining institutional knowledge, ensuring continuity of services, and promoting effective governance. Despite the recognized importance of career development in enhancing employee engagement and satisfaction, civil service organizations often face challenges in retaining their workforce. One significant issue is the perceived lack of opportunities for career advancement and growth within civil service roles. Many employees may feel that their career trajectories are limited or unclear, leading to frustration and disengagement. Additionally, the bureaucratic nature of civil service organizations and rigid promotion structures may hinder employees' ability to progress professionally. Furthermore, the rapidly changing landscape of public administration, technological advancements, and evolving job roles necessitate continuous learning and skill development. Yet, civil service agencies may struggle to provide relevant training and development opportunities to equip employees with the skills needed to adapt to changing demands.

Moreover, the competitive job market and attractive opportunities in the private sector pose challenges for civil service organizations in retaining top talent. Without effective career development initiatives and incentives, employees may be more inclined to seek employment elsewhere, resulting in talent drain and turnover. Overall, there is a pressing need to examine the relationship between career development opportunities and employee retention within civil service organizations. To this effect, the Benue State civil service organizations have embarked on several career development programsto enable them retain its workforce for optimum performance. Yet, there appears to be a vacuum to this end. It is on this note that this study deem it fit by assessing the effectiveness of existing career development programs, and exploring strategies to improve retention, this study seeks to contribute to the enhancement of workforce

stability and organizational effectiveness in the civil service sector.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the paper is to determine the effect of career development on employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service. The specific objectives are to:

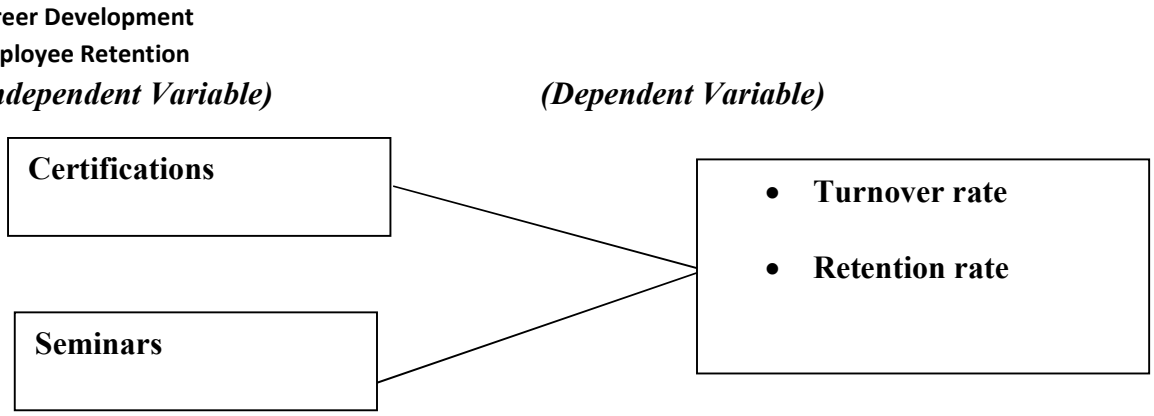
i. assess the effect of certifications on employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service,

ii. examine the effect of seminars on employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service,

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework

This sub-section provides conceptualization of key concepts such as Career Development and Employee Retention.



Conceptual framework on the relationship between Career Developmentand Employee Retention

Source: Researchers model (2024).

2.2.1 Concept of career development

Career development refers to the ongoing process of managing one's professional growth, learning, and advancement over the course of one's career. It involves setting goals, acquiring new skills, seeking opportunities for advancement, and adapting to changes in the workplace. Career development is essential for individuals to achieve their full potential, pursue meaningful work, and progress along their chosen career paths. According to Weinert (2021), the term career can be described as a pattern of workexperiences including the entire life span of a person which is carried out throughdifferent stages reflecting the change from one phase of life to another. Smit, *et al.* (2017) defined career as the sequence of work experiences that an employee acquiresover time. Career may involve not only upwards movement of person in the sameorganization but also working for several organizations during the courses of his work life (Prasad, 2019).

According to Ezeuwa, (2019) career development can be seen as the use of human resources to quantitatively changeman's physical and biological environments to his benefits or ever seen as involving theintroduction of new ideas into the social structure and causing alterations on the patterns of theorganization and social structure. To develop staff, (Daniels, 2019) simply refers to make themgrow with the organization so that they can be fitted for available higher positions within theircapacity. Development deals with improving human relations and interpersonal skill (Iwuoha, 2019).

Career development covers an employee's working life. It starts with staff orientation, on-jobtraining, experience, short courses, professional courses, post graduate degrees or diplomas. According to the National Strategy for the Development of the social service workforce in Scotland (2015), employee development is the foundation on which the confidence and competence ofindividual staff is built, (Robbins,

2020). Employees are major assets of any organization, theyplay an active role towards organizational success that cannot be underestimated. Equipping theseunique assets through effective training becomes imperative in order to maximize the jobperformance. Career development is often used to close the gap between current performances andexpected future performance. Many employees in different organizations' have trained but theyhave remained stagnant with little evidence of career advancement. Rivai andSagala (2013), was of the view that career development is a process that enhances the individual's ability towork in order to achieve the desired career. Career development is expected by everyemployee, as it provides for better rights than ever before. Like a raise and get moreperks from the company.

2.2.2 Dimensions of career development

The dimensions of career development considered in this study include certification, seminars, internship and coaching.

i. Certifications

According to Noe and Hollenbeck, (2019), certifications are formal credentials or qualifications awarded by a recognized authority, institution, or organization to individuals who have demonstrated a certain level of knowledge, skills, competence, or expertise in a specific field or subject matter. These certifications serve several important purposes in various industries and professions. To Lussier andHendon, (2020)certifications provide tangible evidence that an individual possesses the required skills and knowledge in a particular area. They demonstrate that the individual has met a certain standard of competence as defined by the certifying body. Many certifications require individuals to undergo training, coursework, or practical experience to earn the credential.

ii. Seminars

Seminar is defined according to Rivai andSagala (2013) as a structured and organized meeting or gathering where a group of individuals, often with shared interests or expertise in a particular subject, come together to discuss, present, and exchange ideas, information, or research on a specific topic. Prasad (2019) also asserts that seminars are typically more interactive and participatory than traditional lectures or presentations. They provide a forum for participants to engage in discussions, ask questions, and collaborate with each other to deepen their understanding of the subject matter. Seminars can vary in format, ranging from academic seminars held at universities to professional development seminars in the workplace or community-based seminars on various topics of interest.

2.2.3 Employees retention

Employee's retention refers to an organization's capacity to keep its personnel, and while they respect dedicated individuals and know how to retain them by spending large sums of money on acquiring and training them, many firms continue to experience a significant loss of talent each year (Rakhra 2018). Employee retention can be described as the strategies and methods that firms adopt to keep their most valuable people on the job (Abba 2018). The management techniques, which are comprised of numerous components, are likely to aid increasing staff retention. Employee retention is intimately related to the policies developed and enforced by a company's human resources department (Kundu and Gahlawat 2016). By identifying, examining, and criticizing employee motivation ideas and demonstrating the link between employee motivation and employee retention, the author thereby clarified the significance of keeping key people and demonstrated how employee retention methods might be more effective (Olson and Zanna 1993).

2.2.4 Dimensions of employee retention

The success of every organization depends on the performance of the employees of the organization concerned. Therefore, each work unit in an organization must assess its retention, so that the retention of human resources contained in units of an organization can be assessed objectively. On this note; Mangkunegara (2013), identifies retentionindicators include which comprises of turnover rate, retention rate, and length of employment as discussed as follows:

i. Turnover rate

Employee turnover is the percentage of employees that leave your organization during a given time period. Organizations typically calculate turnover rates annually or quarterly. Employee turnover rate is a good indicator of an organization's work culture, the effectiveness of hiring policies and overall employee management (Kundu and Gahlawat 2016). An understanding of turnover rate compared to industry standards as well as global employee retention benchmarks can

help businesses drive growth and improve workforce engagement.

ii. Retention rate

Employee retention rate measures the percentage of employees that stay at your company over a specific period of time. It complements your turnover rate, or churn rate, providing a more complete view of employee transition than calculating either metric alone. Employee retention rate would be the percentage of employees who stay with your organization during that time (Kundu and Gahlawat 2016). The retention rate is a key metric used by organizations to measure the percentage of employees who remain with the company over a specific period of time, typically on an annual basis(Mangkunegara2013). It is a critical indicator of workforce stability and the organization's ability to retain talent.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the human capital theory.

2.2.1 Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory was propounded by Schultz (1961). The Human capital theory explains that education or training raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills, hence raising workers' future income by increasing their lifetime earnings. The human capital theory suggests that an individual's decision to invest in training is based upon an examination of the net present value of the costs and benefits of such an investment. Individuals are assumed to invest in training during an initial period and receive returns to the investment in subsequent periods. In this view, human capital is similar to "physical means of production", e.g., factories and machines: one can invest in human capital (via education, training, medical treatment) and one's outputs depend partly on the rate of return on the human capital one owns.

The theory prescribes education, training and skills acquisition as mechanisms for attaining productivity, workers' efficiency and overall socio-economic development. The human capital theory advocates education and training as a tool for improving human capital, stimulating labour productivity and boosting the levels of technology across the globe. Human capital enhancement through quality education and training is a critical factor that is responsible for economic growth and development of nations. While formal education has expanded rapidly in many countries, a large portion of human capital accumulation in the forms of on-the-job training and other modes for working adults actually take place both inside and outside the workplace.

2 .3 Empirical Review

Naw., et al.(2023) examined the impact of career advancement on employee retention of public sector inLincoln, Malaysia. The study employed a survey design, using a sample of 373 medical employees of six ministries in Lincoln. A questionnaire using a 5-point Likert type scale was used for data collection and data analysis was conducted using Regression with the aid of SPSS version 23. According to the findings, firms that focus on employee career development have a positive impact on employee satisfaction because the impact of employee satisfaction is larger when long-term objectives and goals are met. The study discovered that (i) organizational career development planning is connected to employee retention through organizational goals, training and development, and career ladders, all of which have an effect on employee satisfaction and subsequently support the development of organizational effectiveness. (ii) Individual career planning will affect employee satisfaction, causing employees to experience varying levels of satisfaction. This study is closely related to the current research however it was conducted in the context of Malaysian so the current research is being conducted to fill the gap in the Nigerian context in order to see if the findings will be same or vary.

Iyke-Ofoedu, Okafor and Ogbuagu (2023) examined the effect of career development techniques on employee performance in deposit money banks in Nigeria. The research design employed in this study was the descriptive survey research design. The sample size of 231 respondents was drawn from population of the study which consists of 548 employees of Wema Bank Plc, Sterling Bank Plc, First Bank of Nigeria Plc and Access Bank Plc in Enugu State. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses stated were tested using single regression analysis. The empirical result shows that there is a positive and significant effect of induction training on employee quality of service delivery (t-statistics (58.161) > critical value (0.000). Again, the study revealed that there is a positive and significant effect of job rotation on employee punctuality (t-statistics (59.146) > critical value (0.000). The study also revealed that there is a positive and significant effect of formal education on employee transparency (t-statistics (53.984) > critical value (0.000).

Michael et al. (2022) determine the effect of career development practices on employee attraction and retention in the mining industry in Namibia. This study is quantitative in nature and questionnaires were used to collect the data from participants. The researchers used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyse the data and to provide descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and graphical analyses with the use of tables and calculation of statistics for central tendency, variability, and distribution. The major findings of the study revealed that the career management plans do not align with employees' personal career goals and that the employee commitments and performance in the mining industry are constrained due to the lack of structured career planning and management. It is also evident from the findings that career development practices would increase the profitability of the mining industry as a result of satisfied and high performing employees. Although the employees have adequate resources to carry out their duties, the lack of career advancement as well as adequate training and development is a great concern. This study is closely related to the current research but the gap this study left to be filled by the current research is that it focused on employees in the mining industry in Namibia which has a different culture so the current study covers the gap in the public civil service in Nigeria.

3.0 Methodology

3 .1 Study Design

This study adopted survey research design, this is due to the fact that primary data is required for the study and also that this research design provides the researcher with the opportunity of gathering first hand and current information that is reliable and authentic for the intended purpose. The survey design, through the use of questionnaires as instrument for data collection is deemed suitable for this study; the questionnaire is considered suitable because it will enable the researcher to collect data from respondents, regarding their views and knowledge concerning the study variables in order to achieve the objective of the study.

3.2 Population of the Study

The target population of this study comprise of the entire number of civil servants across the eighteen ministries in Benue State. Hence, the study has a total population of fourteen thousand nine hundred and sixty-six (14,966) (Benue Statecivilservicecommissionworker's register, 2023).

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study was 200 across the Benue State Civil Service. A two-staged sample technique was used to select the sample. The first stage involved a purposive selection of four ministries (ministry of health and human services, ministry of information and culture, ministry of education and ministry of finance) the State.

3.4 Variable/Model Specification

Multiple regression model was adoptedfor this study, where career development was considered as the independent variable and was measured by (Certifications, Seminars, Internships and Coaching) and employees' retention was the independent variable which was also measured by (turnover rate, retention rate, and length of employment). The model used in the study was stated using both implicit and explicit functions. The implicit for of the model was stated as follows:

$ER = f(CD)$

$ER = f(CR, SM, IT, CC)$ (3)

Thus the explicit function of the model is as follows:

$CS= b_0 + b_1CR + b_2SM + b_3IT + b_3CC + \mu$ (4)

Where;

CD = Career Development

CR = Certifications

SM = Seminars

IT = Internships

CC = Coaching

ER= Employees Retention

μ= error term

A priori expectation: $b_1>0$, $b_2>0$, $b_3>0$, $b_4>0$. This means that career development, measured by certifications, seminars, internshipsand coachingare expected to positively influence the retention of employees of Benue state civil service.

4.0 Data presentation and Analysis

This section deals with the presentation of the results obtained from the field. It is made up of four subsections namely; data presentation, regression analysis, test of hypotheses and discussion of findings.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	df1
1	.826[a]	.681	.674	.239	.681	92.533	4

a. Predictors: (Constant), CC, IT, SM, CR

Source: Computation of Field Survey, 2024.

4.8 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The result from the ANOVA statistics in Table 2 indicates that the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of .000 which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population's parameter as the value of significance (p-value) is less than 5%. This implies certifications, seminars, internships and coaching significantly affect the employee retention of Benue State civil service. The significance value was less than 0.05 which indicates that the model was statistically significant (F =92.533, P = .000 < 0.05).

Table 2: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.091	4	5.273	92.533	.000[b]
	Residual	9.858	173	.057		
	Total	30.949	177			

a. Dependent Variable: ER

b. Predictors: (Constant), CC, IT, SM, CR

Source: Computation of Field Survey, 2024.

4.9 Regression Coefficients

From the data in the Table 3, the established regression equation is presented thus:

Employee Retention = 1.994 + .311(certifications) + -.211(seminars) + .278(internships) + .128(coaching). The regression equation above indicated that, a unit increase in certification learning to a constant zero, affect employee retention in the Benue State Civil Serviceby 31.1%, whereas a unit increase in seminars would affect employee retention Benue State Civil serviceby 21.4%, a unit increase in internship would affect employee retention in the

Benue State Civil Service by 27.8%, meanwhile, a unit increase in coaching would affect the employee retention Benue State Civil serviceby 12.8%. Furthermore, the study found that the p-values for certifications, seminars, internships and coaching (.000, 00, .000, .040) respectively were less than 0.05 which is a signal that each variable has a positive effect on employee retention of Benue State Civil service. The result by implication suggests that certifications, seminars, internships and coaching have more significant effect on employee retention of Benue State civil service.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.994	.140		14.205	.000
	CR	.311	.049	.588	6.326	.000
	SM	.214	.053	.345	4.028	.000
	IT	.278	.053	.372	5.292	.000
	CC	.128	.062	.208	2.068	.040

a. Dependent Variable: ER

***Source**: Computation of Field Survey, 2023.*

4.2 Test of Study Hypotheses

Four hypothesis were stated for empirical testing in section one; under this section, the hypotheses are re-stated and empirically tested using the *t*-test statistics and *p*-value that is associated to each variable. Results in table 14 at 95%confidence level are used to test the hypotheses. The decision rule is that, if the computed *t*-statistics fall within the limit of two critical values (±1.96) accept the null hypothesis (Ho), otherwise reject the null hypothesis. Alternatively, accept the null if *p*-value is greater than 0.05.

4.2.1 Hypothesis one

$H0_1$: Certifications has no significant effect on employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service.

To test this hypothesis (table 14), the strength of the effect of certification on employee retention of Benue State civil service, was measured by the calculated p-value = .000 at a significance level (α) of 0.05. Since the computed p-value is less than the significance level (α) of 0.05 (*p-value* .000< α 0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected. It is therefore concluded that certificationhas significant effect on employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service.

4.2.2 Hypothesis two

$H0_2$: Seminar has no significant effect on employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service.

To test this hypothesis (table 14), the strength of the effect of Seminars on employee retention of Benue State Civil Service., was measured by the calculated p-value = .000 at a significance level (α) of 0.05. Since the computed p-value is less than the significance level (α) of 0.05 (*p-value* .000 < α 0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected. It is therefore concluded that seminarshas significant effect on employee retention of Benue State Civil Service.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings is primarily based on objectives by objectives of the study as stated below:

4.3.1 To assess the effect of certifications on employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service

Hypothesis one and research question one sought to examine the effect of certification on employee retention of Benue State civil service. The objective of this study examined the link between certification and employee retention. This study tests that assertion and the result from the analysis is reported in table 14. It was found that t = 6.326, p = 0.000. The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis accepted and we therefore conclude that effect self-certification has significant relationship on employee retention ofBenue State civil service. That is, we accept the estimate a_1 is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. This implies that certification has a positive effect on employee retention on employee retention of Benue State civil service, and the relationship is statistically significant (p< 0.05) and line with *a priori* expectation. By implication, a unit increase in earning certificates will result to a corresponding increase in employee retention by 31.1%. The result of this study is in line withNaw., *et al.* (2023) who examined the impact of career advancement on employee retention of public sector in Lincoln, Malaysiaand found that organizational career development planning is connected to employee retention through organizational goals, formal training and development, and career ladders, all of which have an effect on employee satisfaction and subsequently support the development of organizational effectiveness. The finding is also in agreement with that ofIkechukwu and Adighije, (2017) who found that career growth on employees' performance of Academic Staff of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike in Abia State, Nigeria.

4.3.2 To examine the effect of seminars on employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service

Hypothesis two and research question two sought to examine the effect of seminars on employee retention of Benue State civil service. The objective of this study examined the link between seminars and employee retention. This study tests that assertion and the result from the analysis is reported in table 14. It was found that t = 4.028, p = 0.028. The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis accepted and we therefore conclude that seminars has significant relationship on employee retention of Benue State civil service. That is, we accept the estimate a_1 is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. This implies that seminars has a positive effect on employee retention on employee retention, and the relationship is statistically significant (p< 0.05) and line with *a priori* expectation. By implication, a unit increase in learning through seminars will result to a corresponding increase in employee retention by 21.4%. The result of this study is in consonant with Wau and Purwanto (2021);Qingxiong and Rongzhi (2020) andIkechukwu and Adighije, (2017) who both advanced that career development variables of attending seminars have significant positive relationship on employee retention in terms of employee commitment, employee well-being and employee recognition.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on findings of the study which states that career development affected the employee retention of Benue State civil servants. The study concludes that certification, seminars, internship and coaching positively affected the employee retention in the Benue State Civil Service. This implies that investing in certification, seminars, internship, and coaching programs can effectively enhance employee retention within the Benue State Civil Service.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on findings of the study which states that certification, seminars, internships, and coaching have positive effect on employee retention within the Benue State Civil Service, the following recommendations can be made to further enhance the impact of career development initiatives:

i. Policy makers of various ministries should expand the availability of certification programs relevant to the roles and responsibilities within the Civil Service. And clearly communicate the career advancement opportunities associated with obtaining specific certifications, emphasizing their importance in professional development and progression within the Civil Service. This can be done by partnering with accredited institutions or professional organizations to offer a diverse range of certifications.

ii. Management of various ministries should offer a wide range of seminars covering various topics such as leadership development, communication skills, and industry-specific knowledge. This can be done by tailoring seminars to address both the immediate needs of employees and the long-term goals of the Civil Service as well as actively promote seminar participation among employees through regular communication, incentives, and recognition for attendance and engagement.

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