

# Met Expectation Variations Across Career Stages: An Empirical Study on Indian Sales Personnel

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## ABSTRACT

*Employees enter a career or an organisation with different expectations. Unmet expectations of the employees influences their performance and commitment and results in their early exit. Therefore, accurately meeting employee's expectations is a concern for every HR manager. However, people have different expectations at different points of their career leading to differences in unmet expectations also. Present study tries to explore the impact of career stage changes on the met expectations. Results indicate significant differences in the met expectations of the employees with all three career stage measures viz. age, occupational tenure and organisational tenure. Theoretical and practical implications of these results and directions for future research have been discussed.*

**Keywords:** Met Expectation, Career Stage, Occupational Tenure, Organisational Tenure, Tractor Industry.

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## INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have focused on the link between met expectations and job outcomes like turnover intentions, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Dean, Ferris & Konstans, 1988; Earl & Bright, 2007; Horner, Mobley & Meglino, 1979; Porter, Steers & Boulian, 1973). However, very few studies have been undertaken to study relationship between met expectations and career stages, though studies have indicated career stage influence on job expectations and the employee's perceptions of their job (Cohen, 1993; Conway, 2004; Mehta, Anderson & Dubinsky, 2000; Morrow & Mcelroy, 1987; Ornstein, Cron & Slocum, 1989). Turnover is generally an outcome of unmet expectations of the employees at work (Bottger, 1990; Porter & Steers, 1973). Meeting employee's expectations is crucial to limit the growing turnover concern and improve employee satisfaction. Motivation behind most of these studies is to anticipate variations in the employees needs so as to effectively meet organisational outcomes. The objective of the present study is to explore variation in

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comprehensive set of met expectation across career stages with age, organisational and occupational tenure measure in Indian tractor industry.

With time, people pass through diverse career phases and at each career point the employees have unique career concerns, personal issues, developmental and psychological needs. National talent survey report by Deloitte (ASIA: "India talent survey report 2012: Perspectives on young talent in India" report, 2013) confirmed the same contention that different job experiences matter for people at different age groups. For example, compensation increase was more important for employees below 35 years whereas trust in leadership mattered more to employees above 35 years of age. After understanding that employees' expectations and perceptions vary with the career stage (Malik & Subramanian, 2015), present study tries to explore if similar variations exist for met expectations of the employees too.

In addition, this study tries to explore the Indian tractor industry which has been ignored till date with research point of view. The Indian Tractor industry with annual turnover of over 24000 crore is the World's largest by volume and is growing at CAGR of 12%. It is also a major agri input to Indian agriculture, a vital sector of Indian economy. All these facts clearly point towards the important role it plays towards the Indian economy, making this study all the more crucial.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of met expectations for the first time was clearly explained by Porter and Steers (1973). He proposed that "Met expectations may be viewed as the discrepancy between what a person encounters on his job in the way of positive and negative experiences and what he expected to encounter." They further added that since employees anticipate job characteristics differently their response towards unmet expectation, in the form of voluntary turnover, is also different. Johnston, Griffeth, Burton and Carson (1993) suggested that with time there is a shift in the job attitude of the employees

from positive to negative specifically due to unmet expectations on different parameters.

Horner et al. (1979) in their study support met expectation hypothesis. They reveal that meeting employee expectations are positively associated with most of the job outcomes viz. job satisfaction, organisational commitment and job performance. Not only this, those employees who found their expectations materialise in the organisation developed a feeling of trust and honesty toward the organisation. Such employees are better able to cope with the job issues. Valadez (2006) also stated that when expectations are not matched by experiences, the results may lead to negative attitudes that will affect the work environment. A more recent research by Brown, Venkatesh, Kuruzovich and Massey (2007) suggested the role of expectations in improving job satisfaction.

### Met Expectations and Career Stage

Met expectation variables part of the study have shown to relate with age, organisational tenure and occupational tenure. Most of the studies hover around variations in expectations and perceptions of the employees but none explored variations in met expectations with career stages. Different researchers have explored different job characteristics and its variation with age, organisational and occupational tenure. Measure-wise literature review has been summarised in the following section:

Cron and Slocum (1986) in their study found age to be associated with people's perception of their work environment and job satisfaction. The results also indicated that employees in the exploration stage perceive their supervisors to be less open, more pressurised to achieve targets and not allowed to take work decisions. Mount (1984) also found association between supervision and careers stage. He reported that managers in the establishment stage of their career are more satisfied with supervision than advancement stages.

On the contrary, Morrow and McElroy (1987) could not establish any relationship between supervisory satisfaction and age or organisational tenure. Slocum and Cron (1985)

also on the same lines could not find any association between satisfaction between pay, supervision and co-workers with career stage. Kowske, Rasch and Wiley (2010) in their study found age as a significant predictor of satisfaction with job security, pay and benefits, career development and advancement. They reported Millennial's more positive attitude towards recognition, job security, career development and advancement than earlier generations. A study by Bottger (1990) reported that magnitudes of the unmet expectations effect are similar for younger ( $\leq 34$  years) and older ( $>34$  years) age groups for instrumental communication and decision influence. He further recommended job security as a crucial factor while examining employee's met expectations.

Promotion is considered as the most important reward and motivator for an employee. Promotion brings with it change in a number of job characteristics including pay, recognition, autonomy etc. Studies have reported a negative relation between promotion satisfaction and age (Cron et al., 1988; Morrow & McElroy, 1987; Ornstein et al., 1989; Slocum & Cron, 1985). Johnston, et al. (1987) supported the contention that younger salesmen with a shorter tenure value promotion highly. It has also been indicated that unmet expectation of promotion significantly affects the employee's desire to leave an organisation. Morrow and McElroy (1987) reported that coworker satisfaction is positively associated with age. Burchell (1999) and Conway (2004), in their study expressed that job security is influenced by employee age.

Research by Stumpf and Rabinowitz (1981) investigated career stage (profession/occupational tenure) as a moderator of performance relationships with role perceptions and job satisfaction. The relation between peer nominations (one of the performance measure) and two role perceptions viz. role ambiguity and intersender role conflict were moderated by career stage. The relationship between peer nominations and role ambiguity is strong and negative in establishment stage, weak in advancement stage and strong and positive in

maintenance stage indicating the importance of communication at different career stages. Employees showed higher satisfaction with promotion in advancement stage only with instructional evaluations and peer nominations. Results indicate relation of satisfaction with pay and co-workers with only peer nominations was stronger and more positive in the maintenance stage. Eddy, Schweitzer & Lyons (2010) further added that initial salary expectations and 5-year salary expectations were higher for those with work experience than without work experience. They also found that compared to people with work experience, those without experience placed greater importance on job security. Miao, Lund and Evans (2009) found significant variation in compensation seeking across career stages. It was also found that compensation seeking were more relevant than challenge seeking and recognition seeking in exploration stage. Mehta et al. (2000) investigated the perceived importance of various rewards across career stages of sales manager.

Conway (2004) stated that organisational tenure appears to have 'real' career stage influence on employee reward. He further highlighted that job design and rewards are viewed more positively, whereas attitudes towards job security and teamwork are viewed less positively, with increase in tenure.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample Design

A sample of 364 employees of sales department was taken from three tractor companies in India contributing to more than 60% of the market share. A sample of 329 employees was finally used for analysis after excluding the incomplete questionnaires. Nationwide data was collected from all the major tractor selling states contributing to 93% of the tractor industry. Statistical description present in the Table 1 gives the overall sample statistical details of the personnel in automobile sector and more specifically tractor industry, who participated in the survey.

**Table 1: Demographic Details of Respondents**

(In Years)	Career Stage: Nomenclature	Respondents
Age		
<25	Trial (T)	101
25-30	Exploration (Ex)	103
30-35	Establishment (Es)	77
35-40	Advancement (A)	16
>40	Maintenance (M)	32
Occupational tenure		
<1	Exploration (Ex)	60
1-5	Establishment (Es)	109
5-9	Advancement (A)	50
>9	Maintenance (M)	110
Organisational tenure		
<1	Exploration (Ex)	111
1-5	Establishment (Es)	167
5-9	Advancement (A)	34
>9	Maintenance (M)	17

### Statistical Techniques

SPSS Version 18 was used for the data analysis. Cronbach alpha test was applied to check the internal consistency of job expectation and job perception variables used for the calculation of met expectation variable. Paired Sample t-test was used to access significant differences between the average met expectation score. Further one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to study met expectation variations across career stages. Post-hoc tests were carried out to test significant differences across career stages.

### Measures

**Met expectation scale.** There are very few studies actually measuring met expectations and most of them focus on measuring few specific job attitudes rather than the largest part of it. These studies measuring met expectations were based on the self-constructed scale by the author. Since these scales have not been tested for their validities there are hardly any standardised met expectation scales. Therefore

priori expectations and posteriori job evaluations were measured using a self-formulated scale. Met expectations were computed with job expectation score subtracted from job perception score. Similar measurements were done by Lam (2003). The questionnaire included 36-Likert scale questions each in job expectations and job perception scale.

A 36-item questionnaire was developed with 10 constructs as part of the two questionnaire sets viz. promotion opportunity, work environment, career development, job security, recognition, compensation, autonomy, communication, peer relationship and superior support. Internal reliability of job expectation and perception was above 0.7 for most and above 0.6 for all variables (Table 2), indicating good reliability of met expectation scale. Inputs from academicians and professionals from the industry were incorporated so as to ensure face and content validity of the questionnaire (Malik & Subramanian, 2015).

**Table 2: Reliability Scores of Different Constructs**

	Job Expectations	Job Perception	No of Items
<b>Overall Scale</b>	.924	.934	36
Work Environment	.719	.767	5
Job security	.744	.771	3
Compensation	.800	.777	3
Career development	.781	.836	4
Autonomy	.754	.807	4
Promotion Opportunity	.738	.680	3
Recognition	.683	.690	3
Communication	.795	.760	3
Peer relationship	.672	.826	3
Superior support	.788	.890	5

**Career Stages.** Employees were requested to state their age, experience in the current company and overall experience (years and months). Therefore, age, occupational tenure and organisational tenure were all initially coded as continuous variables. subsequently they were defined by sub- categories for each career stage (Table1).

Automobile Sector – Tractor Industry is different at different career stages using occupational tenure as measure.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Met Expectations of Sales managers in the Automobile Sector – Tractor Industry is different at different career stages using organisational tenure as measure.

## HYPOTHESIS

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Met Expectations of Sales managers in the Automobile Sector – Tractor Industry is different at different career stages using age measure.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Met Expectations of Sales managers in the

## RESULTS

Paired Sample t-test was applied on all ten met expectations parameters to access significant differences between their average met expectation score. T-test indicates which met expectations were met better than others.

**Table 3: Descriptives of Met Expectations**

Variables	Average Gap Score	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Career development Gap	-.6102 <sup>h</sup>	.87228	-4.00	2.25
Autonomy Gap	-.5600 <sup>h,g</sup>	.86625	-4.00	3.00
Work Environment Gap	-.5258 <sup>h,g</sup>	.73292	-2.80	1.40
Job security Gap	-.5053 <sup>g,f</sup>	.78859	-4.00	1.00
Compensation Gap	-.4139 <sup>f,d,e</sup>	.94306	-3.67	1.33
Recognition Gap	-.3802 <sup>e,d,c</sup>	.75020	-2.67	1.67
Communication Gap	-.3588 <sup>d,c,b</sup>	.83478	-3.33	1.67
Promotion Opportunity Gap	-.2994 <sup>c,a,b</sup>	.73363	-3.00	2.33
Peer relationship Gap	-.2599 <sup>b,a</sup>	.74375	-3.33	1.33
Superior support Gap	-.2413 <sup>a</sup>	.79847	-4.00	2.00
Overall sample	-4.1549	5.23842	-28.33	13.90

**Note:** Variables with same superscript have similar values i.e. are not significantly different

Positive met expectation score indicates more positive job experiences and negative score indicates negative job experiences (Table 3). The negative average met expectation score results suggest that the perceptions of the employees are much lower than their expectations. Employees perceived lower met expectations in case of career development, autonomy and work environment variables with average gap score lower than -0.5. Table 3 indicates highest gap for Career Development for it had the highest negative average gap score of -0.61. Expectations which were met better than others included superior support, peer relationship and promotion opportunity since they had low negative average gap scores.

To test differences in met expectations across career stages; all the ten met expectations variables were subjected to one way-ANOVA one by one with all the three career stage

measures viz. age, occupational tenure and organisational tenure.

The results exhibit met expectation differences at different career stages with all three measures. Hypothesis  $H_1$  states; job gap of sales managers in the Tractor Industry is different at different career stages with change in age. Since employees at different career stages have different met expectations  $H_1$  is accepted. Further to find significant differences across age groups; Tukey's HSD test was used and table 4 gives details of variables where the test results were significant. When tenure was used as a measure of career stage, met expectations again differed with the career ladder. Therefore we accept both  $H_2$  and  $H_3$  indicating differences in met expectation with occupational and organisational tenure also. Null hypothesis test results for differences in met expectations variables across career stage have been indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4: Results of Hypothesis Testing Met Expectations Gap \* Career Stages (Age/Occupational/Organisational Tenure)**

Dependent variable	Met Expectations Gap(Age)			Met Expectations Gap (Occupational tenure)			Met Expectations Gap (Organisational tenure)		
	F	Sig.	Career stage Variation	F	Sig.	Career stage Variation	F	Sig.	Career stage Variation
Work Environment	1.820	.125	NH	3.979	.008*	Es>Ex	3.206	.023*	Ex<A
Job security	2.965	.020*	Ex<T,A	3.228	.023*	M>A	.519	.670	NH
Compensation	7.403	.000**	Ex<T,A,M Es<A,M	2.598	.052	NH	7.068	.000**	Ex,Es,M<A Es,A>M
Career development	2.592	.037*	T<M	10.955	.000**	Es, A,M>Ex	5.636	.001**	Es, A>Ex
Promotion Opportunity	3.894	.004**	Es<A,M	4.420	.005**	Es, A<M	.725	.538	NH
Autonomy	3.682	.006**	Ex, A<T T,Ex,M>A	3.455	.017*	Ex, Es>A	3.781	.011*	Ex,Es>M
Recognition	2.402	.050*	T,Ex,Es<M	3.341	.020*	M>Ex	5.245	.002**	Es, A>Ex
Communication	.950	.435	NH	6.516	.000**	Es, M>Ex	10.09	.000**	Ex,A<Es
Peer relationship	5.596	.000**	Ex,Es,M>T Ex,Es<M	10.512	.000**	A, M>Ex	6.497	.000**	Es,A>Ex Ex,M<A
Superior support	3.066	.017*	Ex>T	4.926	.002**	Ex, A<Es	1.665	.174	NH
Overall perception	-	-	-	6.661	.000**	Es, M>Ex Ex, A<M	3.911	.009**	Es>Ex

\*Significant at 0.05 level

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level

## Discussion of Results

The job expectations of managers are significantly higher than job perceptions for all job characteristics indicating unmet expectations on all fronts. The largest gap was found for career development and autonomy whereas peer and superior support expectations were least unmet making them the priority areas. Since most of the employees were in the early years of their career (belonging to Millennial cohort), they rated good training and developing new skills among leading attribute, indicating a strong desire for professional growth to take on high impact positions.

### Met Expectations and Age

Exploration and establishment stage employees have better met promotion expectations than the latter stages. Most of the job aspects are inter-related and center around promotion which improves job security, compensation, autonomy, recognition and superior support. Positive perception about these parameters can be achieved if promotion opportunities are there. However as one moves up the ladder the promotion opportunities are less frequent and available only to very high performers especially in maintenance stage. Therefore even average performers in this stage have to stay without any promotions or delayed promotions leading to unmet expectations.

Recognition expectations are also least met in later career stages probably because of the pyramid effect on the hierarchical ladder. The career advancement goes slower because of lower job opportunities and lesser promotion opportunities in the later stage. Career development opportunities are also not much available to maintenance stage employees. This is probably because of less concern of the organisation in providing trainings to the employees in the latter career stages or lesser interest of older employees in career development programs.

Job Security expectation is left unmet in the trial and advancement stage. Generally new entrants are insecure about their newly acquired jobs. Conway (2004) in his study pointed out that

older employees have a more negative attitude towards employment security than their younger counterparts.

Employees in exploration and establishment stage are able to better meet their compensation expectations than other stages. During trial stage employees have unrealistically high expectations leading to their being unmet. In advancement and maintenance stage employees have acquired competence and skills and expect hefty compensations for the acquired skills. But only high performers are able to fetch expected remuneration and others have to be contented with the available.

Employees in the advancement stage have highest autonomy perceptions there by leading to best met autonomy expectations. On the contrary employees in trial and maintenance stage have least met autonomy perceptions. Cron and Slocum (1986) also found employees in the exploratory stage (here trial stage) are less satisfied from their supervisor for not being allowed to take work decisions.

Peer relationship score is the highest in the trial stage (Buchanan II, 1974). New entrant at this point of time is a bit insecure, curious and nervous about the new changes to be faced and is therefore keen to make friends to settle in the new environment. Since people have highest peers in this phase with each one needing the other, peer relationship expectation is easily met. But with time, as employees move up the ladder the number of peers come down. For example if one is an area manager or regional manager or a zonal manager by advancement or maintenance stage, one is all alone in the area or the zone with no peers around; with most of them either looking after other areas or had moved on to other companies. In sales department of tractor industries employees reach the level of area manager early in their careers leaving them alone in the process of handling their jobs. Therefore in the later stages since the closeness to the peers come down, peer relationship expectations are least met. Secondly, as one moves up the ladder the competition among the peers increases. Since with time the meaning

of the peer relationship changes from support to competition it results in lower met expectations in the later career. Moreover, Conway (2004) also observed that older employees have relatively less indication towards opportunities for involvement and teamwork than their younger counterparts.

Superior behavior expectations are also best met in trial stage. Employees at this point in their careers have more positive perception of their superiors because of more supportive attitude of their superiors towards them. Since the employees are in their learning phase and new to their careers, they are guided more positively by their superiors and less job pressure is placed on their backs resulting in their expectations being met.

### **Met Expectations and Occupational Tenure**

Job security is not a concern for employees in the advancement stage of the career. The employees who have already spent 5 years in understanding the job skills are now more confident of their professional competence and have established themselves in the new job in less job security concern. However, in the exploration stage employees are in new and ambiguous environment and really concerned about their job security. In the establishment phase employee are still in the process of learning job skills and understanding their jobs. Task mastery is undertaken as the frame of reference in this stage (Isabella, 1988). They are still to make their mark, show their competence and make relations in the job, making job security an obvious concern. By maintenance stage when the employees have settled down in their family and are conversant with the job role also, sales pressure mounts up leading to job insecurity.

Results indicated that employees in the exploration stage have highest met expectations on most of the parameters except autonomy. However, since autonomy is perceived negatively in the early career phases as compared to later ones, so autonomy gap is higher in the early career stages viz. exploration, establishment.

In the first year of the career one focuses on knowing their job and superiors also don't place much sales pressure on new employees leading to more positive perceptions. By the end of first year sales manager is conversant with his role and sales pressure from the boss starts building up leading to lowest met expectations in establishment stage. Employees in this stage feel their superiors are less supportive, giving less decision making power and more pressure to achieve sales targets (Cron & Slocum 1986). Employees by the advancement stage have not only been able to develop relations with their colleagues and their superiors but has also learnt to cope superior pressure there by leading to better superior support perceptions and met expectations in the later stages. Therefore superior support expectations are least met in establishment stage.

Maintenance stage employees have low met expectations on all parameters except superior support. Overall employees in exploration and advancement stage have been able to satisfy their expectations better than other career stages. Exploration phase also accompanies learning skills, building competencies and experiencing success giving clarity and direction to the career with time (Super et al., 1957). Exploration employees are able to do so because of the reasons already stated above. However, employees in the establishment phase are also not able to satisfy their expectations due to stress arising in the process of integrating the mounting sales pressure with learning new skills and developing competence. Consistent with Mount (1984) maintenance stage employees have the least met expectations. Katz (1976) indicated that satisfaction decreases with increasing longevity, for the same reason, advancement stage employee's expectations are better met than maintenance stage. Mount (1984) also found employees in the establishment (here exploration stage <1 year) stage (occupational tenure < 2 years) to be more satisfied than other two stages.

### **Met Expectations and Organisational Tenure**

Employees generally enter an organisation with positive attitude towards them, therefore

employees in exploratory stage have lower met expectation gap. After spending more than five years in an organisation employees start getting a negative feel about organisation and its environment. Therefore work environment expectations of the employees are least met in advancement stage.

Compensation is found to be positively associated with organisation tenure. Conway (2004) also submitted similar results. He stated that organisational tenure proves 'real' career stage influence on resourcing and integration and employee reward. He further highlighted that job design and rewards were viewed more positively, with increase in tenure. For example it was found that respondents with longer service held more positive attitude towards reward practices. Bedeian, Ferris and Kacmar (1992) also indicated linear relationship between pay satisfaction and organisation tenure. However, advancement stage employees had higher compensation gap because of lower compensation perceptions. Conway (2004) found that longevity in the organisation positively influences affective commitment and continuance commitment primarily because with time employees have developed stronger ties with the coworkers, have received higher levels of extrinsic rewards and desirable positions (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Further, a relationship was observed between organisation tenure measure and meeting peer relationship need. Peer relationship indicated higher met expectations in exploration and maintenance stage, a curvilinear trend with highest satisfaction in maintenance stage. Results go in line with Morrow and McElroy (1987) findings that satisfaction with co-workers showed curvilinear relation (U-shaped relation) with higher satisfaction in exploration stage and maintenance stage and lowest satisfaction in advancement stage.

Career development and recognition perceptions are best met in the exploration stage. Employees in this stage have more positive career development and recognition perceptions than establishment and advancement stage, leading to higher met expectation.

Autonomy met expectation indicated a positive relationship with tenure. Autonomy expectation is best met in the maintenance stage and least in exploration stage. Katz (1976) suggestion looks quite apt here that autonomy should be delivered gradually with time. But generally employees who already have experience in the field start expecting it much earlier than given.

Communication perception of the employee in the exploration stage is high enough to meet his expectations with people around him try to help him socialise in the new environment. But by the establishment stage everything gets normalised and that extra concern is over and he is considered as a settled employee. At this point in time when the employee has not yet been able to develop strong bond with the organisation or the people working in it, receives inadequate information leading to decreased met expectations. After employment of 5 years in the organisation, he is able to develop relations and rapport with various support functions which helps him to get faster access to all the relevant and important information, thereby leading to better performance. This simply helps them to meet their expectation better.

Overall though employees with longer tenure have been able to satisfy their expectations better than previous stages, the difference was not significant (Table 4).

### Future Research and Limitations

Porter and Steers (1973) and Mobley et al. (1979) all noted that the type of job being considered in a study has a major impact on the findings. Job expectations and therefore met expectations along with career stage measures may get influenced by the job under study. Results of the present study can't be therefore generalised over to other occupations, industries or cultures. Results are specific to sales and marketing personnel of automobile sector. Secondly, difference scores of pre-entry expectations and post-entry experiences were used to measure met expectations in the present study, as conceptualised by Porter and Steers (1973). On the contrary, Irving and Meyer (1994) have indicated limitations of using difference score

as a measure of met expectation. However, met expectation score gives an indication of the unfulfilled expectations of the employee that one needs to improve upon. By studying gap expectations one is better able to understand expectation mismatches and accordingly formulate policies. Future research can involve similar studies with employees in different occupations, industries and cultures. Direct measure of met expectation can be used instead of difference score so as to compare the results.

## CONCLUSION

Job outcomes like job satisfaction, performance, employee turnover etc. act as manifestations of employee's unmet needs, and therefore needs to be looked into with priority. Study guides HR people to understand the behavioural pattern of employees across different career stages to achieve positive job outcomes. More concrete evaluation of employees needs results in more accurate predictions of employee actions thereby resulting in effective job design and organisational career planning programs. Met expectations of the employees have been found to differ with variation in the career stage irrespective of the measure in the present study.

Expectation are generally met better in exploration and establishment stage of the career at expectations are much higher. By the establishment stage, however, focus is more on learning the job because of more realistic expectation. By the later career stage, employees who have acquired experience on account of learning different job aspects, start expecting a great deal from the organisation. On the same ground employees in these stages have better met promotion expectations thereby leading to met compensation, job security, recognition expectations too. Employees in the trial stage have a more positive perception of not only skill enhancement workshops but also their peers and superior. Career stage analysis indicated maintenance stage employees showing low met expectations on all parameters except superior support, with age and occupational tenure measure. Morrow and Mcelroy (1987) findings also partially support our research observations. They, with positional tenure as the

measurement criterion observed highest positive perception in the initial stages and lowest in the final stage similar to findings in the current study.

With occupational tenure measure, employees in the trial stage have highest met expectations on parameters like work environment, recognition, career development, peer relationship, superior support and communication except autonomy. Since, career starters perceive most of the job characteristics positively therefore they should be provided with Realistic Job Previews (RJP), supportive supervisor and right induction clearly communicating all the organisational aspects. Study reveals that career starters strive for learning opportunities, as opposed to veterans who are less keen on putting in efforts for the same. They should be introduced to skill enhancement programs so that they are more confident of themselves and their skills. Overall employees in exploration and advancement stage have been better able to satisfy their expectations.

Even organisational tenure measure reported similar results indicating exploratory stage employees having highest met expectations on parameters like career development, recognition, peer relationship, communication and overall met expectations. However, here contradiction arises for work environment and compensation expectations being least met in advancement stage and best met in maintenance stage. Therefore an appropriate compensation scheme is required for employees in advancement stage. Irrespective of the measure used autonomy expectation is best met in the advancement and maintenance stage and least in exploration stage. Most of the employees in establishment stage have negative perception of their job and a decision of exit is generally made in this stage. Few employees who have more positive perception of their jobs stick with the company and move over to the next stage. Employees in this stage are not ready to compromise on compensation, efforts not being recognized, ineffective communication and growth opportunities. Except in the first year of the career autonomy is crucial for employees of all ages.

This paper tries to highlight the psychological needs of the employees at each career stage in the form of their met expectations. Better understanding of the impact of career stages on met expectations in relation to different job characteristics will help sales manager in effective job design decide on appropriate leadership styles and the components of RJP.

As rightly stated (Conway, 2004) "in diverse organisational settings correct HR practices will lead to positive performance outcomes." Therefore an HR professional should bear in mind that Career stage influences employees' attitude towards HR practices thereby affecting the organisational outcomes.

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