



# THE EFFECT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT ON EMPLOYEE PROMOTION: THE MODERATING ROLE OF THE EMPLOYEE'S SELF-ACTUALIZATION

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**Abstract :** This study assessed the moderating role of self-actualization on the influence of career development on employee promotion with relevant confounding variables adjusted for. This study was a quantitative research that adopted the cross-sectional survey method. Its population was employees of selected bank branches in Accra, and the simple random sampling method was used to select participants. A self-reported questionnaire was used to gather data from participants. Pearson's correlation test, descriptive statistics, and structural equation modelling were used to present the results through SPSS version 22 and its Amos in-built function. After controlling for key job attributes, career development makes a positive influence on employee promotion, whereas self-actualization makes a positive influence on employee promotion and career development. Self-actualization positively moderated the positive influence of career development on employee promotion after adjusting for the said job characteristics. It is concluded that self-actualization is a skill that facilitates the impact of career development on employee promotion. The study recommends that banks and other organizations regularly improve the self-actualization of their employees through training.

**IndexTerms** - Career development, employee promotion, self-actualization, job characteristics, Ghana, banks

## 1.1.INTRODUCTION

Technological advancement has made machines in the form of robots and humanoids very effective in businesses. Many businesses today depend on robots to manufacture their products, and computers and information systems are increasingly replacing human hands. Despite these remarkable headways, humans play a central role in the successful management of businesses. Invariably, employees are always behind decision making, planning and execution of some business tasks. Neto (2015) has reported in line with this observation that there are many business tasks that cannot be executed by robots and artificial intelligence systems, as a result of which companies would ever depend on the ingenuity of humans. Interestingly, companies all over the world continue to employ and develop the best employees as a basis of being competitive. Employee promotion is an important aspect of human capital development in organisations as it benefits both the employer and worker (Gathungu et al., 2015).

Employee promotion is both a developmental and promotional strategy in the human resource management literature. From a promotional point of view, employee promotion increases the rank and status of an employee and therefore accords him or her higher or more responsibilities, power, flexibility, and rewards (Mustapha & Zakaria, 2013). From a human development perspective, it is a form of recognition of an employees' ability to improve job-related competencies and performance over time. In this vein, promotion is a way to motivate an employee for demonstrating the ability to take on higher challenges. Employee promotion is the very opposite of employee demotion and thus changes the status quo from the employee's perspective for the better. Research has shown that employee promotion is more frequent in organisations where career development is strong and is a priority of management (Mustapha & Zakaria, 2013; Gathungu et al., 2015). This is the case because career development is a process by which employees are made to enhance their competencies and productivity. So, having access to career development programs continuously is an opportunity to improve job skills and knowledge.

According to Abraham Maslow's theory of needs, human needs differ across personalities just as personalities differ across needs. The import of this argument is that employees in the organisation have unique needs and personalities that differentiate their commitment to career development programs. For this reason, career development would not make the same impact on employees

– employees who are more committed to it and have some relevant personality traits would be better impacted. Furthermore, employees who are more experienced (in terms of job tenure) and have a higher education may attach more importance to career development. Many researchers and theorists (Nasir & Lin, 2013; Rusilka et al., 2017) have acknowledged self-actualization as the most important behavioral requirement for making the most benefit from career development. It could thus be insinuated that education, job tenure, and other work-related attributes are not the only factors that could influence the ability of one to make the most of career development and relish it to earn promotion on the job.

Self-actualization is a behavioral criterion for reaching goals (Solaja, 2015; Rusilka et al., 2017), and Abraham Maslow's theory of needs recognizes it as a human need. Nasir and Lin (2013) assert that people who are able to actualize themselves are more successful in their daily endeavors than their counterparts who are not able to do so. If so, it can be averred that self-actualization, which is a human need that differs across personalities, can facilitate career development. In other words, self-actualization can empower employees to make the highest gains from career development and as a result improve job promotion. By implication, self-actualization can interact with career development to influence employee promotion. These thoughts suggest that businesses can maximize the frequency of employee promotion and its benefits if they support their employees to actualize themselves in work-related activities. Since employee promotion is positively associated with job performance (Shonubi et al., 2016), companies can benefit significantly from rendering this support to employees.

Admittedly, the role of self-actualization on career development has been empirically examined in the literature in both developed and developing countries. In Pakistan for example, Ghafoor and colleagues (2017) applied a quantitative design to confirm that career development increases as employees' self-actualization increases. Interestingly, this result came from a homogeneous population of employees from different industries, suggesting that self-actualization can predict career development in mixed sectors. In Spain, Jena and Thengal (2017) also confirmed that self-actualization among university workers makes a positive effect on job satisfaction and employee performance. The study of Gathungu et al. (2015) carried out in Kenya also found that professional development makes a positive effect on employee promotion. Last but not least, Parker et al. (2008) also reported a positive impact of career development on employee promotion.

The foregoing empirical contributions in the literature suggest that researchers have tested the association between career development, self-actualization, and employee promotion in parts. However, none of these studies were conducted in Ghana and the researcher's close look into the literature shows that bank employees that may need self-actualization to succeed in their careers have not been part of any related study conducted in Africa as participants. More importantly, no identifiable study has tested the association simultaneously in a single study to increase statistical validity of available evidence and increase the scope of lessons for policy action. The above observed issues conceal implications and opportunities for improving and maximising the effectiveness of career development programs and the promotability of employees. This study therefore examines the said interaction influence and draws on its findings to make recommendations for improving employees' self-actualisation as a precursor to improving firm productivity.

## Literature Review

### *Definition of concepts*

Career development is a lifelong process that concerns one's management of learning, work, leisure, and transition in order to advance towards a personally determined and changing preferred future (Ghafoor et al., 2017). This definition indicates that career development has little to do with work and encompasses a whole lot of the individual's social life. It is thus associated with learning, work, leisure, and transition from one stage to another more advanced stage of social and professional life. From an organizational perspective, career development entails how the individual manages his/her career within or between organizations to engender progress and how organizations structure the career progress of their members (Nasir & Lin, 2013). The current study focuses more on this type of career development, whereby the employer and employee play respective roles in career development. Yet, it is important to note that the primary beneficiary in any career development process is the employee, and the secondary beneficiary is the employer or organisation.

Personal development is that part of career development (from an organisation view point) that draws entirely on the employee's responsibility (Ghafoor et al., 2017). In self or personal development therefore, the employee is required to make effort to advance his or her career as well as social life and how these transform progressively over time. The management of learning, work, leisure, and transitions is also a part of career development. The management of learning is about the employee focusing on an area where he or her strength lies and can therefore build skills and knowledge continuously (Parker et al., 2018). For example, an employee could decide that, as an accountant, he has to build job knowledge and skills through learning accounting. Management of work often includes lifelong learning. This is rightly so because modern jobs require higher qualifications to secure them. Because employers are always looking for employees with better qualifications, who are readily available, it has become necessary particularly in recent years, for employees to always upgrade their academic credentials. Though upgrade of one's education is the basic goal behind lifelong learning, it is also a major aim in managing work, considering that employees' priorities keeping their jobs secure.

Leisure is an important part of life as it fosters psychological health and support for high individual productivity. Some psychologists argue that life without leisure is full of stress and boredom (Ordun & Akün, 2017), as a result of which people's quality of life can badly be affected if they fail to regularly engage in leisure activities. Transition management is another important part of career development and concerns being able to manage new responsibilities, posts, and successors (Nasir & Lin, 2013). This aspect is important because the goal of career development is to move from one rank of profession to a higher one, and a successful transition from one phase to another requires being able to handle new responsibilities and posts and training productive successors. In many cases, employees are unable to succeed in their transition from one phase to another, and this leaves a bad impression on their career history. However, those who are able to implement their career development plans well would normally have a more progressive career and merit promotion frequently.

Every human has an urge to work out personal development and change in the desired direction. In conformity with the way the physical body develops and grows, human beings expect their social and professional improvement to be continuous over the lifespan. If someone had a reputable social status yesterday, such a fellow would under normal circumstances desire a better status today. These illustrations imply that career development is motivated by the desire to make substantial professional progress – to

rise up the professional or career ladder. This is to say that every career person would want to achieve career goals toward the end of life, and the need to increase in one's professional rank and recognition is one of the overriding goals. Gathungu et al. (2015) were indeed not wrong when they opined that the main inspiration behind hard work at work is the chance of being promoted to higher responsibilities and positions. This assertion brings to mind what job promotion and its importance are in career development.

Job promotion, also referred to as employee promotion, and is a term used to describe an employee's recognition whereby he or she is given added authority, privilege, responsibility and influence in an organisation environment (Gathungu et al., 2015). In employee promotion, a worker moves from one known lower rank to a higher one in the organogram of the organisation. Such an employee receives higher responsibilities, authority, and influence. As Mustapha and Zakaria (2013) put it, it sometimes accords an employee more flexibility in doing things as well as discretionary power that involves the ability to make decisions independently. A key feature of employee promotion is that it offers one a higher status in the organisation and therefore serves as a source of prestige and job satisfaction. In the academic world, a typical form of promotion is formal recognition of a senior lecturer as an associate professor. In the military, a form of promotion is moving a constable to the rank of corpora. In industry, a teller could be promoted to a line manager or chief accountant.

The opposite of promotion is demotion, which is used to refer to reducing the rank, responsibility, authority and influence of a person in a position (Gathungu et al., 2015). Demotion comes following the employee's underperformance or misbehavior in any way. This said, it is important to understand the purpose of promotion. From the point of view of the Two-Factor Theory of Motivation, promotion is a motivational tool that can lead to satisfaction and commitment. For this reason, employers can promote employees to motivate them to do better in the organisation. Similarly, employee promotion is a way to give rise to a positive change for the entire organisation. If the organisation sees a crisis that it thinks can be solved by a particular employee, that employee is promoted to occupy a position that would enable him or her lead the remedy of that problem. Another goal of employee promotion is to sensitize other employees to work hard (Huss & Magos, 2012). Because all employees want to rise up the career ladder, the promotion of peers motivate them to work harder, as hard work and accomplishment can warrant their promotion. Sometimes, an employee is promoted simply because a vacant position that needs filling requires an internal employee with a specific rank. In this vein, the organisation considers the most eligible candidate. Worth noting is the fact that the employee's eligibility could be affected by self-actualization.

Self-actualization is an aspect of subjective experience conceptualized by Abraham Maslow in his study. Maslow defined self-actualization as striving for one's reaching and fulfilling own potential. This definition is the most comprehensive and has only been adapted in different contexts. For example, some researchers (Ghafoor et al., 2017; Bulut, 2018) reasoned based on Maslow's conceptualization that self-actualization is the realization of the best aspirations by making the most of one's potential. Invariably, self-actualization is about realising one's strength and potential, which are applied in achieving personal dreams. That is, self-actualized people conceive reasonable aspirations and endeavor to reach their highest potential to realize their aspirations. Such people are as a result determined, focused, resistant to failure, and assiduous (Huss & Magos, 2012). The psychological profile of self-actualized people has two dimensions, which have been treated as measures of self-actualization. The first of the two is openness to experience, which is concerned with being aware of one's emotions and having sufficient insight, empathy, and healthy interpersonal relations (Ordun & Akün, 2017). Because people, particularly self-actualized persons, cannot achieve their dreams in isolation, the foregoing domain is an asset for leveraging social ties and capital toward achieving goals. That being so, interpersonal relationships constitute friends and relations, whereas insight is relevant to navigation of the social system. Emotions, including empathy, are the psychological elements that sensitize the individual in the face of social threats and opportunities, enabling him or her to tap into opportunities and avoid social threats.

The second domain of self-actualization, reference to self, is about being responsible for self, having a positive well-developed orientation to ethics and self-esteem, expressing self cognitively and emotionally, and not being too sensitive to other people's initiatives, influences, and criticisms (Ordun & Akün, 2017). This dimension is about being one's own self rather than other people and striving to relate daily and professional activities with one's potential and aspirations. If one decides to make too much reference to others (Jena & Thengal, 2017), he is likely to lose focus on what best relates to his strengths and dreams. As a consequence, the individual is likely to fail because his actions would be driven by other people's influences and ideas that are not identical to his initiative. This second domain therefore requires self-actualized people to be themselves and make the most of strengths that are unique to them through self-belief. In his teachings and professional coaching activities, Maslow explained that self-actualization is a need in professional development (Neto, 2015). He was of the view that professional and career development do not occur in a vacuum but can only flourish in a social setting where interpersonal relationships are leveraged (Nyameh, 2013). Moreover, career development is a way of making the most of one's potential and pursuing aspirations to the peak of one's longevity. It is, therefore, apparent that self-actualization is needed in career development to navigate social structures and make the most of one's unique strengths and aspirations. This thinking is better coherently discussed in the study's theoretical framework.

#### *Theoretical framework*

To recall, career development is a lifelong process through which the individual achieves goals toward life satisfaction over the lifespan. To the employee or working professional, professional development is necessary to make sustained progress in one's career and maintain life satisfaction. To the employer, employee career development facilitates productivity and organizational growth. From either perspective, career development is beneficial, at least by virtue of improved job competence that makes an employee more competitive and productive in his occupation. This input draws on the Job Characteristics Theory (JCT), which was originally formulated by Hackman and Oldham (1975). This theory recognizes job knowledge and skills to be one of the predictors of several performance indicators, including job performance. As a prolonged process in which people improve their competencies in a field of profession, career development is expected to equip employees with relevant competencies. The JCT thus insinuates that career development can contribute to high performance over time owing to its continuous impact on skill development.

Within an organisation, employees are often promoted based on performance. That is, one needs to demonstrate high performance and make key achievements to merit consideration for special positions, especially leadership positions. Pay increase as an annual routine in the organisation is also based on the employee's performance scores. These illustrations indicate that promotion on the job depends on one's performance. If so, career development, which is one of the main means by which employees develop relevant skills and enhance their performance, can make a positive influence on employee promotion. By deduction, the more frequent an employee is promoted in an organisation, the more that employee is recognized to have contributed to organizational success through high performance. From this standpoint, promotion frequency is an indicator of the level of contribution an employee makes to the organisation.

According to Maslow's theory of needs, self-actualization is a requirement for success and needed by everyone. Some researchers (Andrijašević et al., 2014; Bulut, 2018) recently argued based on the theory of Maslow that self-actualization is relevant in professional development programs as it fosters key virtues necessary for progress in a career development process. For example, self-actualization is said to drive resilience and determination, which are vital traits in career development. This thinking distinguishes between employees who have self-actualization and those who do not. According to Maslow, the later are more enterprising and promising individuals who can succeed in career development with ease because they are able to make and execute relevant plans in their career development effort. It could be said therefore that the influence of career development on job promotion would be stronger when the employee has self-actualization. In other words, career development would make a stronger or better contribution to job performance improvement and consequently employee promotion in the light of self-actualization. So, employee promotion is more frequent as self-actualization increases with career development effort.

Indeed, the interaction between self-actualization and career development as demonstrated above can predict employee promotion for theoretical reasons. The theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is one of the justice theories formulated to explain human behavior determinants or why people can behave in a particular way. It insinuates that people behave in a particular way because of the rewards or expected outcomes that the behavior would bring them (Neto, 2015). For instance, if an employee knows that working hard and producing satisfactory performance scores can impress employers and lead to promotion, he would take measures that would facilitate his high performance. The TRA therefore connotes that getting promoted is an incentive for employees that would motivate them to engage in career development in the lifespan. Thus, the TRA provides a basis for the relationship between career development and job promotion.

The employer can also be under the influence of the employee's behavior (Bulut, 2018). For instance, it is rational for every employer to appreciate and maintain employees who are productive. Of course, such employees contribute to organizational performance and growth. To the employer therefore, promoting employees is a way to motivate them to do more for the organisation and encourage other employees to emulate hardworking workers. If so, it is understandable that employers promote employees because of the reward of high performance that can come from it. Apparently, some employers would want to facilitate career development for employees to maximize this reward. According to Bulut (2018), the said reward is the incentive that impels employers to support the career development programs of their employees.

#### *Conceptual framework and hypotheses*

The JCT, as indicated earlier, indicates that a variety of skills relevant to a job can predict job performance because relevant skills and knowledge are technical requirements for carrying out job activities. If an employee should be able to do what an employer assigns him/her to do, he/she must have the right repertoire of skills. This notion resonates with the AMO theory, which posits that job performance is an outcome of the ability of people to apply the right abilities (i.e. skills and knowledge) to accomplish job responsibilities. Interestingly, job abilities are not static but keep changing over time because of changing job demands and responsibilities. Career development is the ideal way through which this change takes place (Nasir & Lin, 2013; Parker et al., 2018). This happens if the employee is able to improve existing skills and build new ones over time. Career development goes beyond skill building – it encompasses professional development in a manner that promotes happiness, self-actualization, and lifelong career goals, which are relevant to job productivity (Weng et al., 2010; Parker et al., 2018). For an employee to be promoted on the job, he or she must necessarily demonstrate maturity, leadership potential, and above all high performance. This idea is supported by some empirical studies. In Malaysia, for example, Mustapha and Zakaria (2013) found a positive influence of career development programs on the promotion of employees. In Kenya, Gathungu et al. (2015) found that employee promotion increases with career development efforts. This evidence, coupled with the above views, form the basis of the first hypothesis of this study, which states:

*H<sub>1</sub> – Career development is associated with employee promotion so that an employee is promoted when his/her career development improves.*

Maslow's theory of needs recognizes self-actualization as a requirement for achieving goals. Undoubtedly, career development is a goal-oriented program that requires one's focus and self-actualization. This is another way of saying that self-actualization is needed in succeeding in any career development program, owing mainly to the protracted and challenging nature of the process. For example, career development requires employees to be able to manage time and schedule properly since, traditionally, employees have to handle job responsibilities and activities of career development simultaneously. Travelling for a conference or training program does not exempt one from performing his or her job tasks, and vice versa. Self-actualization would thus be helpful in career development because it can enable goal setting, proper time management, and purposefulness. Further to this, the study of Ghafoor et al. (2017) conducted in Pakistan has shown that self-actualization increases the ability to succeed in career development programs. Jena and Thengal (2017) also discovered in their observational study that self-actualization is positively associated with job indicators of career development including prolonged tenure and high job incomes. If so, self-actualization can influence career development among employees as hypothesized below:

$H_2$  – Self-actualization makes a significant influence on career development so that career development outcomes improve as self-actualization increases.

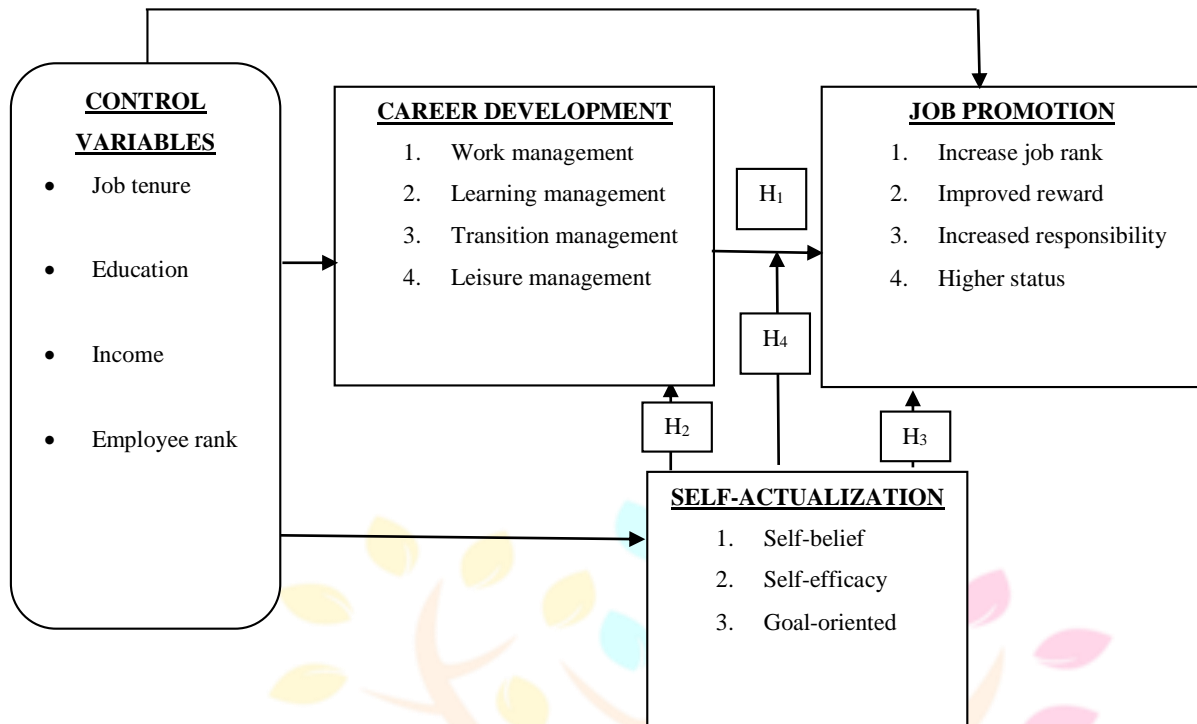


FIGURE 1. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK SHOWING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN CAREER DEVELOPMENT, SELF-ACTUALIZATION, AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

If self-actualization can predict career development outcomes, then it is logical to say that it can influence employee promotion. As seen in Figure 1, a direct impact of self-actualization on employee promotion can be explained from other perspectives. For instance, self-actualization is needed for an employee to properly organize work and make key achievements. As the empirical review indicates, employees are more likely to make achievements on the job when they have self-actualization. This is rightly so because self-actualization, apart from predicting career development outcomes, is essential to building resilience, communication, and ethical behaviour that enable the employee to improve leadership and communication performance (Gathungu et al., 2015; Ghafoor et al., 2017). What is being said in essence is that self-actualization can predict other performance indicators that influence employee promotion, which is supported by positive effect of self-actualization on job tenure, job income, and other measures of career progression in the study of Jena and Thengal (2017). Because promotion on the job is primarily influenced by job performance (Gathungu et al., 2015), the evidence of Shonubi et al. (2016) regarding the positive influence of self-actualization on job performance and employee satisfaction suggests that promotion on the job can increase with self-actualisation. It is therefore hypothesized that:

$H_3$  – self-actualization makes a significant influence on employee promotion so that the likelihood of employees being promoted increases as self-actualization increases.

$H_4$  – self-actualization moderates the influence of career development on job promotion so that the effect size of career development on job promotion increases.

The fourth hypothesis above implies that self-actualization can increase the influence of career development on job promotion as reported by Ghafoor et al. (2017) and Gathungu et al. (2015). Thus, if self-actualization can support career development to engender job promotion, it can maximise the influence that career development makes on the likelihood of promotion. This thinking forms the basis of the fourth hypothesis. Notable is the fact that the four hypotheses can be confounded or influenced by some job characteristics. For example, having a longer job tenure is an opportunity for one to learn and make more from career development and therefore earn promotions (Shonubi et al., 2016; Ghafoor et al., 2017). Education can also be part of a career development process and can facilitate job accomplishment and performance (Ghafoor et al., 2017; Asiamah, 2017a; Asiamah, 2017b). Employee rank and income are variables that change with tenure and can also confound the hypotheses (Asiamah et al., 2018). As Figure 1 shows therefore, tenure, education, income, and employee rank are controlled for in testing the four hypotheses.

## Methods and Materials

### Design and approach

This study employed the quantitative design, specifically the correlational and cross-sectional approaches. The use of the foregoing approaches has been reported the best way to test fixed associations (Williams, 2007; Allwood, 2012).

### Population and selection

The study population was employees of banks in Accra Central that consented to participate in the study. The specific banks were Stanbic Bank, National Investment Bank, Barclays Bank, Ecobank, Fidelity Bank, and Bank of Africa. The accessible population was 1,193 employees who met the following selection criteria: (a) being a permanent employee involved in career development

programs; (b) having worked in the bank for at least a year; and (c) having at least a basic educational qualification, which was an indicator of the ability of an employee to read and write in English, the medium in which questionnaires were administered. The simple random sampling method was used to select representative samples from each bank to make up the overall sample size of 844. The Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling process, which uses a population proportion of 5% and a confidence level of 95%, was used to determine the appropriate sample size for each bank. This table is a global gold standard that provides the population size corresponding to a particular sample. To select members of the sample, employees of each bank were listed in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and assigned unique codes. A number of codes that was equal to the sample size for a bank were selected using the Random Sampling Function in SPSS. Employees who represented the codes became part of the sample for each bank.

#### *Variables and their operationalization*

This study measured three main variables, the dependent variable, which is employee promotion, and the predictor variable, career development. Self-actualization is the moderating variable measured as a construct using a standard scale borrowed from Bulut (2018). This scale had seven (7) descriptive anchors ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Career development was measured using an 18-item standard scale adapted from Ghafoor et al. (2017). Employee promotion was measured in accordance with Asiamah et al. (2018) in terms of the number of promotions the employee had received in the current organisation since he or she was employed. Both career development and employee promotion were associated with the foregoing descriptive anchors. The above scales were preferred to others because they have been used on African populations and produced satisfactory psychometric characteristics. Gender, education, job tenure, gross income, and employee level were measured as confounding variables. Gender (which was dummy coded to fit into the parametric analysis) was the sex of the individuals; education was the highest educational qualification acquired; job tenure was measured as the number of years spent on the job; gross income is the employees' gross monthly salary; and employee level is the rank of the employee.

#### *Instrumentation*

A self-reported questionnaire was used to gather data. The questionnaire had three sections, with the first part measuring the confounding or demographic variables as well as employee promotion. The second part presented items on career development while the third section captured items on self-actualization. Preceding these sections was a rubric for completing the questionnaire. Because each scale used was adopted to some degree, a robust statistical procedure demonstrated elsewhere (Asiamah et al., 2018) was used to validate all scales. In the validation process, the psychometric properties of each scale were assessed. Tables 1 and 2 show results of this process.

**Table 1. Validity and internal consistency indicators**

Construct	Factor	Items	Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted	Maximum shared variance				
Career Development	1	F1	0.789	0.911	0.855	0.702	0.101				
		F2	0.564								
		F3	0.904								
		F4	0.654								
		F5	0.489								
	2	F6	0.603					0.832	0.621	0.543	0.101
		F7	0.822								
		F8	0.811								
		F9	0.401								
Self-actualization	1	F1	0.409	0.919	0.843	0.713	0.133				
		F2	0.832								
		F3	0.842								
		F4	0.777								
		F5	0.909								
	2	F6	0.555					0.9	0.821	0.655	0.133
		F7	0.591								
		F8	0.522								
		F9	0.822								
		F10	0.643					0.888	0.721	0.699	0.133
	3	F11	0.709								
		F12	0.922								
		F13	0.811								
		F14	0.855								
		F15	0.731								

In Table 1, factor loadings and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) are indicators of scale reliability. According to studies (Morse, 2002; Drost, 2007), reliability of a scale is met when CA > 0.7 and when factor loadings are not less than 0.2. It can be seen that these conditions are met for all items in Table 1. Reliability of the scales for measuring career development and self-actualization is therefore met. Composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and maximum shared variance (MSV) are indicators of validity. Researchers (Kelava, 2016; Asiamah, 2017) are of the view that validity is met when the following conditions are met: AVE  $\geq$  0.5,

CR > AVE, and MSV < AVE. In Table 1, these conditions are met; hence validity is established for the measurement scales. Table 2 shows the model fit statistics resulting from the measurement and structural models.

**Table 2. Model Fit Statistics**

Model	$\chi^2$	$p$	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	Tucker-Lewis Index	Goodness-of-Fit Index	Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index
1	7.121	0.000	0.176	0.862	0.821	0.881
2	10.011	0.000	0.182	0.822	0.792	0.861
3	2.661	0.201	0.021	0.983	0.962	0.988
4	1.932	0.332	0.012	0.997	0.995	0.999

**Note:** Model 1 = measurement model for career development; Model 2 = measurement model for self-actualization; Model 3 = structural model for direct effects; Model 4 = structural model for moderation effect

Based on popular recommendations in the literature (Kelava, 2016; Asiamah, 2017), models 3 and 4 (in Table 2) through which the hypotheses were tested yielded a good fit because they have met the following criteria with respect to the absolute fit indices:  $p$ -value > 0.05; RMSEA < 0.08; TLI > 0.90; GFI > 0.80; and AGFI > 0.90. The measurement models, however, did not meet these criteria and are therefore of poor fit. This poor fit did not, however, affect the main results negatively because the main structural models produced a good fit. Table 4.6 shows summary statistics for career development items.

#### Data collection

Data collection was made possible only after official letters were written to the various banks to seek permission for the study and inform management about the information needs of the researcher. This step provided access to the list of employees of the banks from which the sampling frame was made. Informed consent forms, which detailed the objectives, benefits and possible risks of the study, were then issued to respondents for signing. Questionnaires were administered in hand at the premises of the banks. Three hired field workers assisted the researcher in data gathering. To avoid high non-response, participants were asked to complete questionnaires instantly, though those who could not return the questionnaire immediately were given two weeks of grace period. It took about three weeks for data to be gathered. A total of 694 out of 844 questionnaires were returned and analyzed. That is, 82% of questionnaires administered were analyzed.

#### Data analysis method

Data was analyzed using SPSS (IBM Inc., New York, U.S.A.) 24 and Amos. Exploratory data analysis and Pearson's correlation analysis were conducted in SPSS whereas Amos was used for conducting psychometric analysis and hypotheses testing. At the exploratory stage of the analysis, descriptive statistics (i.e. mean, standard deviation, z-scores) were used to summarize the data to identify outliers and missing items. After using this procedure to confirm the absence of outliers and missing items in the data, Amos was used to assess the psychometric properties of the scales through confirmatory factor analysis. In this evaluation, measurement models were specified for each measurement scale. Through the structural model in which hypotheses were tested, relevant assumptions (i.e. multivariate normality of data, multicollinearity, and independence of errors assumption) were assessed and met. Pearson's correlation test was used to assess bivariate correlations prior to fitting the structural model. Structural equation modelling (SEM), through the structural model, was used to test all hypotheses simultaneously and adjust for the relevant confounding variables. Statistical significance of effects and correlations was at  $p < 0.05$ .

#### Findings

Table 3 shows the correlation matrix of relevant variables. In the table, promotion is positively correlated to career development at 1% significance level ( $r = 0.442$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ; two-tailed), which means that employee promotion increases as career development increases. Career development is also positively correlated to self-actualization at the same level of significance ( $r = 0.267$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ; two-tailed). That is, career development improves as self-actualization increases. Self-actualization and career development are positively correlated to job tenure and employee rank at 1% significance level. Table 4 shows the regression coefficients resulting from these correlations.

**Table 3. Correlation Matrix of Relevant Variables**

Variable	No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Promotion	1	1	.441**	.201**	-0.043	0.042	0.066	-0.056
Career Development	2		1	.267**	0.059	.147**	.126**	-0.014
Self-Actualisation	3			1	0.005	.153**	.161**	0.018
Education	4				1	.351**	.315**	.335**
Employee level	5					1	.656**	.371**
Job tenure	6						1	.297**
Job income	7							1

\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 4. SEM Estimates of Direct Effects**

DV	Path	IV	B	S.E.	$\beta$	t	95% CI	Tol.	VIF
<i>Main effects</i>									
Promotion	<--	Career Development	0.89	0.10	0.40	8.60**	±0.41	0.92	1.09
Promotion	<--	Self-Actualisation	0.32	0.15	0.10	2.214*	±0.57	0.92	1.09
Career Development	<--	Self-Actualisation	0.31	0.07	0.22	4.55**	±0.27	0.96	1.04
<i>Covariate effects</i>									
Promotion	<--	Education	-0.24	0.08	-0.15	-3.09*	±0.30	0.82	1.23
Promotion	<--	Employee rank	-0.07	0.10	-0.05	-0.71	±0.40	0.49	2.04
Promotion	<--	Job tenure	0.10	0.05	0.12	1.93	±0.21	0.54	1.84
Promotion	<--	Job income	-0.02	0.06	-0.02	-0.354	±0.25	0.80	1.25
Career Development	<--	Education	0.08	0.04	0.13	2.40*	±0.14	0.82	1.21
Career Development	<--	Employee rank	0.07	0.05	0.10	1.44	±0.19	0.49	2.06
Career Development	<--	Job tenure	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.03	±0.10	0.54	1.87
Career Development	<--	Job income	-0.05	0.03	-0.10	-1.83	±0.12	0.81	1.23

**Note:** DV = dependent variable; IV = independent variable; S.E. = standard deviation; CI = confidence interval; Tol. = tolerance; and VIF = variance inflation factor

In Table 4, career development makes a positive effect on employee promotion at 1% significance level ( $\beta = 0.4$ ;  $t = 8.6$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). This outcome confirms that employee promotion increases when career development increases. Self-actualisation makes a positive influence on career development ( $\beta = 0.22$ ;  $t = 4.55$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) and employee promotion ( $\beta = 0.1$ ;  $t = 2.21$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) at 1% and 5% significance levels respectively. The data thus affirms that career development and promotion increase as self-actualisation increases. This means that employee promotion decreases as education increases, but career development improves with education. The first three hypotheses of the data are, therefore, supported. Table 5 presents regression coefficients on the hypothesized moderation influence.

**Table 5. The moderation influence of self-actualization on the association between career development and employee promotion**

DV	Path	IV	B	S.E.	$\beta$	t	95% CI	Tol.	VIF
<i>Main effect</i>									
Promotion	<---	CDxSA	0.20	0.02	0.58	9.455**	±0.09	0.96	1.04
<i>Covariate effect</i>									
Promotion	<---	Education	-0.20	0.08	-0.13	-2.588*	±0.30	0.83	1.20
Promotion	<---	Employee rank	-0.06	0.10	-0.04	-0.62	±0.40	0.49	2.04
Promotion	<---	Job tenure	0.09	0.06	0.10	1.71	±0.22	0.54	1.84
Promotion	<---	Job income	-0.03	0.06	-0.03	-0.51	±0.25	0.80	1.25

**Note:** DV = dependent variable; IV = independent variable; S.E. = standard deviation; CI = confidence interval; Tol. = tolerance; and VIF = variance inflation factor

In Table 5, the interaction term 'CDxSA' makes a positive influence on employee promotion ( $\beta = 0.58$ ;  $t = 9.45$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) at 1% significance level. It can be seen that the interaction term produces an effect size that is 0.18 in excess of the effect of career development on promotion (in Table 4). In other words, self-actualization has intervened in the relationship between career development and job promotion by increasing the strength of this relationship. This confirms that self-actualization positively moderates the career development and employee promotion nexus. The fourth hypothesis of the study is, therefore, confirmed.

## Discussion

This study found a positive effect of career development on employee performance, which means that employee promotion increases as career development improves. This finding supports the idea that career development constitutes means for improving job competencies that are relevant to the improvement of job performance. Having special job skills and achieving high performance are the main requirements for employee promotion (Mustapha & Zakaria, 2013; Gathungu et al., 2015), an explanation that gives credence to career development as a determinant of employee promotion. The above result can also be explained from the point of view of the JCT, which asserts that having a variety of skills is a condition that can predict job performance. If job performance is a factor that employers consider to promote employees and is improved by accruing the relevant skills, then career development can predict employee promotion. Moreover, employee promotion in the organisation is a situation that can encourage hard work and positive behaviors because of the reward that these behaviors can produce. This thinking suggests that the current study's



adaptation of the TRA is supported by the data. That being so, firms can increase their productivity by supporting employees to partake in career development programs and promoting high performing employees.

Though no identifiable study has tested the association between career development and job promotion, some related studies have drawn conclusions that imply that this relationship exists. For instance, Nasir and Lin (2013) in Malaysia confirmed a positive nexus between self-concept, which is a domain of self-actualization, on career awareness. These researchers argued based on their result that having career awareness as a result of one's self-concept can positively influence personal performance variables like job performance and promotion on the job. In Pakistan, Ghafoor et al. (2017) found that employees who have a higher level of self-actualization are more frequently promoted to receive higher pay and recognition. This evidence better squares with the current study. While there are many other related findings in the literature, the foregoing relationship has not been tested in any identifiable study conducted in Ghana. As a consequence, the current result cannot be compared to any study conducted, which suggests that the current study fills an important gap.

By examining the above relationship, the current study makes a methodological contribution, whereby it controls for relevant background or worker characteristics that are potential confounders. As mentioned elsewhere (Asiamah et al., 2019) in the literature, failure of a cross-sectional study to control for potential confounders can lead to misleading findings and decisions in practice. Yet, none of the studies reviewed controlled for confounders that possibly underpinned their population, revealing that researchers are often reluctant to adjust for alternative explanatory variables. By incorporating confounders into the current hypothetical models therefore, this study shows the importance of adjusting for confounders and demonstrates how alternative explanatory variables can be adjusted for.

This study also confirms that self-actualization makes a positive effect on career development, which insinuates that career development is supported to advance by self-actualization. This result confirms the second hypothesis and backs Maslow's theory of needs, which posits that self-actualization is a need for building self-efficacy for success in every endeavor, including careers. Though no studies that the researcher is aware of have confirmed this evidence, some studies have confirmed close findings. Solaja (2015), for example, confirmed that self-actualization makes a positive effect on organizational performance. In North America, Rusilka et al. (2017) also found that self-actualization predicts career progression. In Ghana, however, no identifiable study has examined the effect of self-actualization on career development. However, in the face of the above finding and supporting evidence, the current study suggests that training programs aimed at equipping employees with self-actualization can contribute to career development and organizational performance variables.

Apart from the fact that the current study makes a methodological contribution by adjusting for potential confounders, it unfolds results that could mean that job-related activities need self-actualization. If so, the study makes a relevant contribution by unfolding the need for Maslow's theory of needs to be adapted to develop a theory of self-actualization that sufficiently explains how self-actualization affects organizational and employee activities like career development. This contribution is highly relevant to academic debate because this and previous studies have been conducted as pure quantitative studies that have not given much information about the mechanism by which self-actualization affects employee behavior. As Parker et al. (2018) put it, Maslow's theory provides a broader overview of the role of self-actualization in human performance, but it does not explain how it affects individual employee behavior. Similarly, Mustapha and Zakaria (2013) opined that if self-actualization can influence worker performance indicators, studies are needed to give a full explanation of the mechanism by which self-actualization drives employee behavior. This study makes it more obvious that explanations are not only needed to throw light on the said mechanism but an adapted theory is needed to drive future research on the topic.

The above result is of particular practical significance. First, if there is a significant association between career development and promotion, organizations might benefit from taking measures to enhance career development. Of course, several studies have reported this course of action in the literature (Gathungu et al., 2015; Parker et al., 2018), but what this study is newly advocating is the need to support employees to prolong their tenure and improve their education. This point draws on the fact that increasing tenure and education automatically increases job income and employee rank, which the correlation analysis reveals as potential determinants of career development and promotion. That is, it is found that organizations may not only encourage their employees to pursue career development programs but can also increase the impact of career development on employees by increasing job security and education. Invariably, employees can better make the most of career development if they have more income and prolonged tenure (which comes with job security).

The third hypothesis of the study was also confirmed in data analysis, which indicates that employee promotion increases as self-actualization increases. This result can be explained from the point of view of the impact of self-actualization on career development in that employees who have self-actualization are able to succeed in career development. One of the benefits of a successful career development is high performance and its potential promotional rewards. It could be deduced that job promotion is a secondary outcome of self-actualization facilitated by career development. This notion is in line with some studies (Neto, 2015; Ordun & Akün, 2017) that have found that self-actualization can encourage job achievements and consequently job recognition. The fourth hypothesis is also backed in this study, which confirms that self-actualization increases the positive effect of career development on employee promotion. As seen in the review of literature, no identifiable study has examined the foregoing influence in Ghana, and there is a paucity of studies that have tested related relationships globally. This situation attests to the importance of the current study, which by virtue of its result, implies that when employees are made to possess a higher level of self-actualization, they are more likely to increase their promotion through high performance. In line with some researchers (Gathungu et al., 2015; Jena & Thengal, 2017), this result indicates the need for organizations to adopt specialized training programs for equipping employees with the skill of self-actualization. In essence, this study provides empirical evidence that backs the use of relevant training models to regularly improve the self-actualization tendencies of employees.

The use of specialized training models or methods is increasingly advocated in the literature (Rusilka et al., 2017). This specialization requires that models originally developed to impart specific skills be used in organizations, basically because they are more effective. Given the above finding and practical implication, it is necessary for psychometricians and training model developers to develop a specialized self-actualization training tool. Hoffman and associates (2009) contend that the few specialized training models available were developed in developed countries and are very unpopular, which requires that tools that are validated for developing African countries are currently needed. Needless to say, the absence of models developed in Ghana and other developing countries can be blamed on a lack of studies that show that self-actualization can be improved continuously. Hence, by indicating that job promotion increases as self-actualization improves, this study affirms the need for a training tool that facilitates the improvement of self-actualization. The most important contribution of this study is the moderation influence of self-actualization on the relationship between career development and job promotion. This is the case because no identifiable study, on a global scale, has confirmed this influence, though existing empirical evidence connotes that it possibly exists (Nasir & Lin, 2013; Ghatungu et al., 2015). This relationship implies that though career development makes a positive influence on employee promotion, self-actualization (of employees) is needed to maximize this relationship or influence. This outcome bolsters the importance of the said specialized training models and need for training programs to be used to enhance self-actualization over time.

The moderation influence much more supports the need for an adapted theory or a set of adapted theories that explains the mechanism by which self-actualization influences employee behavior. Since there are many performance outcomes in the human resources management literature, this adaptation may have to explain how each performance outcome is influenced by self-actualization from the point of view of Maslow's theory of needs. This implication of the study has been endorsed in some previous studies (Neto, 2015; Ordun & Akün, 2017) on the basis of the influence of self-actualization on job performance, commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and job satisfaction. More interesting is the statistical validity of the moderation effect resulting from the fact that relevant confounders were adjusted for. Apart from controlling for potential confounding variables to reach precise estimates, this study tested hypotheses simultaneously and therefore reduced the risk of type 1 error. Moreover, this study is the first of kind in the literature, to the best of the researchers' knowledge. It is therefore believed that the current study unfolds findings that accurately guide practice and academic debate.

## Conclusion

Employees are more likely to be promoted when their commitment to career development improves. As a result, organizations and their employees would benefit from investing more in career development. Moreover, career development is more effective and successful when employees' self-actualization increases. This result suggests that organizations can benefit from routine training programs geared towards the improvement of employees' self-actualization. In addition, employees' promotion frequency increases as their self-actualization increases. Last but not least, self-actualization makes a moderating influence on the relationship between career development and employee promotion. That is, self-actualization increases the impact of career development on employee promotion.

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