The Relationship between Goal Setting and Career Advancement: A Case of Women Employees in Kenya

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Abstract

This paper investigated the relationship between goal setting and career advancement among women employees in Kenya. The objective was to establish to what extend women were setting goals to advance in their careers. The study was a survey carried out among women employees of the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) member organizations. The study involved 400 women participants drawn from 32 FKE member organizations in 14 sectors. Data were collected using a self administered questionnaire. Descriptive statistics like the mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze data. Cross tabulations were computed to test the association among variables. The results showed very low cases of goal setting among women employees in Kenya. The analysis further indicates that there most women were not goal oriented with regard to their careers. This research paper contributes a practical view to the issue of the factors that lead to women's career advancement in Kenya. The issue of women's advancement in Kenya requires attention because the women need a better representation in decision making positions.

Introduction

Women and other interest groups have been agitating for equal representation particularly in decision making positions in organizations. In order to succeed in this endeavour, women need to have a focused approach on how to progress. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) say that successful people, irrespective of the nature of their achievements tend to have one thing in common and that is being goal oriented. Setting career goals is a key component of the career advancement process (Greenhaus, 1995). Goal setting in career advancement is based on the Goal Setting Theory which states that performance goals play an important key role in motivation. The leading theorist in goal setting Locke et al., (1990) defines a goal as what an individual is trying to accomplish that is the object or aim of action. In order to attain a set goal one needs determination and commitment to the goal (Robbin's and Coulter, 1999: 488). Goals must be seen as important and achievable in order for them to be of sufficient force to initiate action (Averill et al., 1990) in Zikic, Novicevic, Harvey and Breland, 2005: 637).

Although goal setting is important for career development, Metcalfe and Wedderburn in Davidson and Cooper as Eds (1993) found that several women had advanced to managerial positions by chance. Women therefore had not planned or committed themselves to advance in their careers through goal setting and therefore did not initiate any action towards their promotion. It is against this background, that this study attempts to find out if women are determined to get into decision making positions by involving in goal setting activities. According to Ackah and Heaton (2002), career advancement includes promotions and also how well any individual is doing in his or her career in terms of earnings. The purpose of this study was to establish to what extend women employees are involved in goal setting in order to advance in their careers. Several authors state that setting career goals involves identifying career goals and career planning (Gutteridge et al., 1993; Hughes, 1999; Robbins 2000; Dessler, 2005). Katzell (1990) states that goals influence individual's intentions.

Because of that influence, an employee who establishes career goals is likely to advance his or her career, especially if the goals are specific, challenging and accompanied by regular feedback on progress toward the goals (Desimone et al., 2002 and Robbins 2000). To this end it is reasonable to sum up that one is likely to attain career advancement if one identifies career goals, plans career, sets specific and challenging goals and gets regular feedback on goal attainment.

Identifying career goals

Several strategies for identifying career goals exist. These include; making a list of possible goals, acquiring information about opportunities, working out the pros and cons, and, identifying your strategy. (Hughes, 1990). To this end, Zajas (1995:21) states, that those employees who follow written sets of goals in their career and job performance are more successful than those who do not. According to Watkinson (2008:2) a goal which is not written down is not really a goal. Writing down a goal indicated that one had serious aspirations to achieve. It crystallized the goal and enabled one to follow it through. Following through involves keeping up with scheduled tasks for each accomplishment and could also help one to remember what needed to be done at any particular time. Zajas (1995:19) states that the goals should be based on one's needs and skill assessment and they should be realistic and measurable to take one from where he or she is to where one wished to be. Another strategy that is necessary for identifying career goals is the acquisition of information about career prospects (Ivanovic and Collin, 1997). This means that those who get information about career advancement opportunities are more likely to use that information to advance themselves than those who do not. This necessitates a need for employees to know and understand how information about careers flows in different organizations. In most organizations, information flows through the formal and informal channels.

However, women seem to trust formal information much more than informal information. In this regard, women miss out on critical information about opportunities which is transmitted informally because this may even take place at informal settings between the supervisor and the employee in cases where the supervisor is male. Working out the pros and cons of the job allows employees to judge the long term outlook of a job and consider all the negative and positive aspects because each job has its drawbacks (Robbins and DeCenzo, 2007). For instance, one must think about the job status, earning potential desirability, and if the location is compatible with one's geographical preference. Working out pros and cons also requires one to think about how to adapt to different situations because adaptability is required to make a career transition and pave a pathway for promotion (Zajas, 1995). In this regard, employees identify and set career goals to address the pros and cons of every job of interest to them. There is need to choose goals and identify strategy for one to progress in his/her career. According to Lee (2002) Strategy identification involves a design to help a person to meet career goals. The author found that employees who strategize their careers are more progressive than those who do not.

Career planning

To be able to advance in one's career one must plan. Desimone et al., (2002) say that an individual must take the initiative with the assistance of others to establish his or her abilities and to establish a realistic career plan. Insufficient career planning has been cited as one major constraint to women's career advancement (Webber, 1998). Adler and Izraeli (1994) reiterated this observation by pointing out that knowing how to pace a career is critical to success; too many women get stuck in jobs where careers do not progress. These arguments imply that if women planned their careers adequately, they would advance in their careers. The women would have a reference point to advance. Career planning involves a process whereby one becomes aware of personal skills, interests and knowledge, motivations and establishes action plans to attain specific goals (Dessler, 2005).

That is to say, women must not only plan their careers but that they must also set specific goals for their careers. Cochran (1997) states that a goal may not make much sense except the intention to pursue it and such an intention is elaborated in a plan, which requires one to take account of means, obstacles, resources and the support or hindrance of other people. To develop an action plan, one needs to gather information, in order to be more aware of what is required to reach an occupational goal and then formulate steps for the goal (Career Services, 2007). The next thing to do is to construct a detailed plan for each step and then take action. According to Middlebrooks (2006), for the action plan to work, one should stay focused and take small steps towards, the set goal every day. Obstacles need to be dealt with in order for one to attain the goal. Fine tuning of the actions towards the attainment of career advancement goals and also the need to consult a career professional is necessary so as to keep on track when one gets stuck (Career Services, 2007). To set career advancement goals, an employee must first identify and specify their career advancement goals.

Setting specific goals

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) expound that goal specificity relates to the extent to which a goal is quantifiable. A goal may also be said to be specific when you know exactly what is to be achieved and accomplished and has a definite deadline (Career services, 2007). In this case since the goal is on career advancement a specific goal should state the position which an employee is aspiring to be in terms of job title, grade level and job content. These are the main elements of a job.

Challenging goals

Challenging goals are difficult   and demand a lot of effort to be put in to meet the goals (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2004). Difficult goals which are important to an individual are a constant reminder to the individual to keep exerting effort in the appropriate direction (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2007). Robbins (2000) states that an individual should participate in setting the difficult goals for himself/herself so that he or she can be committed to attaining it. Difficult goals will lead to higher performance and, more earnings and career success (Locke and Latham, 2002). In support of this statement, Mento, Kelein and Locke (1992) state that the pursuit of challenging goals is likely to lead to a higher income, job security and opportunity for promotions. However, setting challenging career goals and working towards their achievement is insufficient for career advancement. One requires to keep track of their performance regarding the attainment of the set goals. Regular feedback is thus a prerequisite to successful goal attainment and by extension, career advancement.

Getting Regular Feedback on goal attainment

To do better in attaining the set goal, one should get feedback on how he or she is progressing towards the successful attainment of the career goal (Robbins 2000). This could be explained by the fact that feedback acts to guide behavior; it can help to identify discrepancies between what one has done and what one intends to do. Feedback provides the information needed to adjust direction, effort, and strategies for goal accomplishment (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2007). Skinner (2009) states that performance feedback ought to be provided in two aspects: the outcome and process of related striving. The outcome related feedback pertains to achieving the expected level of performance. Process related feedback is about the effectiveness of performance plans to achieve the envisaged goal, taking into account achievement of short-term goals that represent incremental progress toward the final goal. From the foregoing discussion it may be argued that for an employee to advance in his/her career,   he/she needs to plan their career advancement which in turn requires that he/she sets career goals. Goal setting makes the assumption that human behavior is purposeful. Goal setting directs individual's efforts at work and is therefore linked to performance which is linked to reward systems in organizations. The purpose of this study was to establish to what extend women employees are involved in goal setting in order to advance in their careers I Kenya.

Methodology

The study involved Federation of Kenya (FKE) member organizations. A survey was carried out among women employees of the (FKE) member organizations. A random sample of 400 women participants was drawn from 32 FKE member organizations which comprise 14 sectors. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Career advancement the dependent variable was measured with two items: promotion received and increased earnings. The respondents were give using yes and no responses. The independent variable goal setting was measured using 9 items ranging from making a list of career goals to setting challenging goals. The responses were measured using a five-point likert scale ranging from '1' - *strongly disagree* to '5' - *strongly agree*. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation as well as cross-tabulations.

Results

Evidence of cross-tabulations with regard to making a list of career goals from table 1 indicates that the big proportion of the respondents who had been promoted 47.4%(24.6+22.8) were in agreement that they had made a list of career goals. On the other hand, 72.5 %(46.3+26.2) of those who had not been promoted disagreed that they had made a list of possible career goals. On the making a list of possible career goals, 46.2%(22+24.2) of the respondents who had received bonus/merit pay agreed doing so. Many of those who had not received bonus/merit pay 74.5%(47.6+26.9) were in disagreement that they had a list of possible career goals. Mean ratings of 3.09 and 2.10 and standard deviations of 1.491 and 1.318 for the promoted and non-promoted respondents, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means.

Mean ratings of 2.89 and 2.02 and standard deviations of 1.570 and 1.239 for the bonus/merit pay receiving and non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. The standard deviation values for the non-promoted and the non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups are lower indicating that the clustering is more intense in the scores within these groups. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 List of Career Goals and Career Advancement

Indicators of Career Advancement		I always make a list of possible career goals							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Promotion Status	Yes	12	11	7	14	13	57	3.09	1.491
		(21.1)	(19.3)	(12.3)	(24.6)	(22.8)	(100)		
	No	143	81	15	50	20	309	2.10	1.318
		(46.3)	(26.2)	(4.9)	(16.2)	(6.5)	(100)		
		I always make a list of possible career goals							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Bonus/Merit Pay Status	Yes	24	18	7	20	22	91	2.98	1.570
		(26.4)	(19.8)	(7.7)	(22)	(24.2)	(100)		
	No	131	74	15	44	11	275	2.02	1.239
		(47.6)	(26.9)	(5.5)	(16.0)	(4.0)	(100)		

% in Parentheses ( )

SDA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, NS = Not Sure, A = Agree , SA = Strongly Agree

Cross tabulations regarding acquiring information on job opportunities and promotion showed that a cumulative 45.7%(24.6+21.1) among the employees who had received promotions disagreed and similarly, 73.5%(50.8+22.7) of those who had not been promoted also disagreed. Other cross tabulations regarding acquiring information on job opportunities and bonus/merit pay showed that among the respondents who had received bonus/merit pay, 51.7%(31.9+19.8) disagreed that they always acquired information about career opportunities and many more 74.9%(51.6+23.3) of those who had not received bonus/merit pay disagreed with the same. Mean ratings of 2.95 and 2.02 and standard deviations of 1.505 and 1.279 for tthe promoted and non-promoted rrespondents, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. Mean ratings of 2.76 and 1.97 and standard deviations of 1.537 and 1.233 for the bonus/merit pay receiving and non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. The standard deviation values for the non-promoted and the non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups are lower indicating that the clustering is more intense in the scores within these groups. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Information about Opportunities and Career Advancement

Indicators of Career Advancement		I always acquire information about opportunities							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Promotion Status	Yes	14	12	5	15	11	57	2.95	1.505
		(24.6)	(21.1)	(8.8)	(26.3)	(19.3)	(100)		
	No	157	70	12	59	11	309	2.02	1.279
		(50.8)	(22.7)	(3.9)	(19.1)	(3.6)	(100)		
		I always acquire information about opportunities							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Bonus/Merit Pay Status	Yes	29	18	5	24	15	91	2.76	1.537
		(31.9)	(19.8)	(5.5)	(26.4)	(16.5)	(100)		
	No	142	64	12	50	7	275	1.97	1.233
		(51.6)	(23.3)	(4.4)	(18.2)	(2.5)	(100)		

% in Parentheses ( )

SDA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, NS = Not Sure, A = Agree , SA = Strongly Agree

On cross tabulation of "working out the pros' and cons of career goal possibilities and promotion", many employees who had been promoted 50.9%(31.6+19.3) were in agreement that they did so.

Many more among those who had not been promoted 70.2 %(46+27.2) disagreed with the same. Cross tabulations of working out the pros' and cons of goal possibilities and bonus/merit pay showed that the bigger proportion, 45.1%(26.4+18.7) of the employees who had received bonus/merit pay disagreed that they worked out the pros' and cons of goal possibilities. Additionally, a majority of those who had not received bonus/merit pay 74.9%(47.3+27.6) were in disagreement. Mean ratings of 3.12 and 2.10 and standard deviations of 1.452 and 1.311 for the promoted and non-promoted respondents, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. Mean ratings of 2.90 and 2.04 and standard deviations of 1.484 and 1.281 for the bonus/merit pay receiving and non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. The standard deviation values for the non-promoted and the non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups are lower indicating that the clustering is more intense in the scores within these groups. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Working out Pros and Cons and Career Advancement

Indicators of Career Advancement		I Work out the pros and cons of the career goals							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Promotion Status	Yes	12	9	7	18	11	57	3.12	1.452
		(21.1)	(15.8)	(12.3)	(31.6)	(19.3)	(100)		
	No	142	84	14	49	20	309	2.10	1.311
		(46.0)	(27.2)	(4.5)	(15.9)	(6.5)	(100)		
		I Work out the pros and cons of the goals							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Bonus/Merit Pay Status	Yes	24	17	9	26	15	91	2.90	1.484
		(26.4)	(18.7)	(9.9)	(28.8)	(16.5)	(100)		
	No	130	76	12	41	16	275	2.04	1.281
		(47.3)	(27.6)	(4.4)	(14.9)	(5.8)	(100)		

% in Parentheses ( )

SDA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, NS = Not Sure, A = Agree , SA = Strongly Agree

Cross tabulations of identified career strategy and promotion showed that in total, those who agreed that they had identified their career strategy among those who had received promotions were 45.6%(28.1+17.5). However, a majority of those who had not received promotions 71.2%(42.4+28.8) were for disagreement. Cross tabulations on identified career strategy and bonus/merit pay showed that the portion of respondents among those who had received bonus/merit pay who disagreed to have identified their career strategy 50.6 %(26.4+24.2). Further, a majority of those who had not received bonus/merit pay, 72.4%(43.3+29.1) were in disagreement with the same. Mean ratings of 2.98 and 2.18 and standard deviations of 1.445 and 1.331 for the promoted and non-promoted respondents, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. Mean ratings of 2.82 and 2.13 and standard deviations of 1.488 and 1.299 for the bonus/merit pay receiving and non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. The values of the standard deviation for the non-promoted and the non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups are lower indicating that the clustering is more intense in the scores within these groups. The results are shown in Table 4

Table 4 Identifying Career Strategy and Career Advancement

Indicators of Career Advancement		I identify my career strategy							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Promotion Status	Yes	12	13	6	16	10	57	2.98	1.445
		(21.1)	(22.8)	(10.5)	(28.1)	(17.5)	(100)		
	No	131	89	12	56	21	309	2.18	1.331
		(42.4)	(28.8)	(3.9)	(18.1)	(6.8)	(100)		
		I identify my career strategy							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Bonus/Merit Pay Status	Yes	24	22	6	24	15	91	2.82	1.488
		(26.4)	(24.2)	(6.6)	(26.4)	(16.5)	(100)		
	No	119	80	12	48	16	275	2.13	1.299
		(43.3)	(29.1)	(4.4)	(17.5)	(5.8)	(100)		

% in Parentheses ( )

SDA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, NS = Not Sure, A = Agree , SA = Strongly Agree

Cross tabulations of awareness of employment skills and promotion showed that a cumulative 47.4%(28.1+19.3) of the respondents who had received promotions agreed that they were aware of their employment skills. However, 69.2%(45.3+23.9) of those who had not received promotion were in disagreement with the same. Cross tabulations of awareness of employment skills and bonus/merit pay showed cumulative 45.3%(28.6+18.7) of the respondents who had been given bonus/merit pay disagreed that they had been aware of their employment skills and also, 70.6(46.2+24.4) of those who had not received bonus/merit pay also disagreed with the same. As shown on Table 41, mean ratings of 3.04 and 2.21 and standard deviations of 1.476 and 1.387 for the promoted and non-promoted respondents, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. Mean ratings of 2.86 and 2.16 and standard deviations of 1.517 and 1.361 for the bonus/merit pay receiving and non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. Again here, the values of the standard deviation for the non-promoted and the non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups are lower indicating that the clustering is more intense in the scores within these groups. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5 Awareness of Employment Skills and Career Advancement

Indicators of Career Advancement		I am always aware of my employment skills							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Promotion Status	Yes	13 (22.8)	10 (17.5)	7 (12.3)	16 (28.1)	11 (19.3)	57 (100)	3.04	1.476
	No	140 (45.3)	74 (23.9)	8 (2.6)	65 (21)	22 (7.1)	309 (100)	2.21	1.387
		I am always aware of my employment skills							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Bonus/Merit Pay Status	Yes	26 (28.6)	17 (18.7)	8 (8.8)	24 (26.4)	16 (17.6)	91 (100)	2.86	1.517
	No	127 (46.2)	67 (24.4)	7 (2.5)	57 (20.7)	17 (6.2)	275 (100)	2.16	1.361

% in Parentheses ( )
SDA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, NS = Not Sure, A = Agree , SA = Strongly Agree

Cross tabulations of awareness of interests and promotion indicated that many respondents among those who had been promoted, 56.1(22.8+33.3) were in agreement with being aware of their interests, while a majority of those who had not been promoted comprising 67.9%(38.8+29.1) disagreed. Cross tabulations of awareness of interests and bonus/merit pay indicated that a big proportion of 51.7%(25.3+26.4) among those who had received bonus/merit pay showed agreement but many more of those who had not received bonus/merit pay 69.8 %(40.7+29.1) also indicated disagreement on the same element. As given on Table 42, mean ratings of 3.39 and 2.31 and standard deviations of 1.521 and 1.396 for the promoted and non-promoted respondents, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means.

Table 6 Awareness of Interests and Career Advancement

Indicators of Career Advancement		I am aware of my interests							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Promotion Status	Yes	10 (17.5)	9 (15.8)	6 (10.5)	13 (22.8)	19 (33.3)	57 (100)	3.39	1.521
	No	120 (38.8)	90 (29.1)	10 (3.2)	60 (19.9)	29 (9.4)	309 (100)	2.31	1.396
		I am aware of my interests							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Bonus/Merit Pay Status	Yes	18 (19.8)	19 (20.9)	7 (7.7)	23 (25.3)	24 (26.4)	91 (100)	3.18	1.517
	No	112 (40.7)	80 (29.1)	9 (3.3)	50 (18.2)	24 (8.7)	275 (100)	2.25	1.377

% in Parentheses ( )
SDA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, NS = Not Sure, A = Agree , SA = Strongly Agree

Mean ratings of 3.18 and 2.25 and standard deviations of 1.517 and 1.377 for the bonus/merit pay receiving and non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. The values of the standard deviation for the non-promoted and the non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups are lower indicating that the clustering is more intense in the scores within these groups. The results are shown in Table 6.

On cross tabulations of established action plans to accomplish goals and promotion, a big proportion of the respondents who had received promotions 43.8%(26.3+17.5) disagreed that they had established action plans to accomplish goals. A big number of 68.6%(40.1+28.5) of those who had not been promoted also were in disagreement with the same.

Other cross tabulations of established action plans to accomplish goals and bonus/merit pay in total, those who disagreed that they had established action plans to accomplish their goals among those who had received bonus/merit pay were 50.6%(29.7+20.9). Also, a majority of those who had not received bonus/merit pay 69.4%(40.7+28.7) were in disagreement. Mean ratings of 2.82 and 2.26 and standard deviations of 1.416 and 1.349 for the promoted and non-promoted respondents, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. Mean ratings of 2.71 and 2.22 and standard deviations of 1.463 and 1.323 for the bonus/merit pay receiving and non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. The standard deviation values for the non-promoted and the non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups are lower indicating that the clustering is more intense in the scores within these groups. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Action Plans and Career Advancement

Indicators of Career Advancement		I always establish action plans to accomplish my goals							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Promotion Status	Yes	15 (26.3)	10 (17.5)	9 (15.8)	16 (28.1)	7 (12.3)	57 100)	2.82	1.416
	No	124 (40.1)	88 (28.5)	12 (3.9)	64 (20.7)	21 (6.8)	309 100)	2.26	1.349
		I always establish action plans to accomplish my goals							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Bonus/Merit Pay Status	Yes	27 (29.7)	19 (20.9)	11 (12.1)	21 (23.1)	13 (14.3)	91 (100)	2.71	1.463
	No	112 (40.7)	79 (28.7)	10 (3.6)	59 (21.5)	15 (5.5)	275 (100)	2.22	1.323

% in Parentheses ( )

SDA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, NS = Not Sure, A = Agree , SA = Strongly Agree

Cross tabulations of specific career goals and promotion, among the employees who had been promoted, the big proportion of 47.4%(31.6+15.8) were in disagreement that they had set specific career goals. Many of those who had not been promoted 68.9%(42.4+26.5) also disagreed with the same. Pertaining to cross tabulations of specific career goals and bonus/merit pay, of the respondents who had received bonus/merit pay, 53.9%(36.3+17.6) disagreed they had set such goals for their career advancement. Another big proportion of disagreeing with the same 69.5%(42.2+27.3) was found among those who had not received bonus/merit pay. Mean ratings of 2.63 and 2.24 and standard deviations of 1.410 and 1.392 for the promoted and non-promoted respondents, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. Mean ratings of 2.56 and 2.22 and standard deviations of 1.492 and 1.360 for the bonus/merit pay receiving and non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. The results are indicated in Table 8.

Table 8 Specific Career Goals and Career Advancement

Indicators of Career Advancement		I have set specific career goals							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
	Yes	18	9	13	10	7	57	2.63	1.410
Promotion Status		(31.6)	(15.8)	(22.8)	(17.5)	(12.3)	(100)		
	No	131	82	15	52	29	309	2.24	1.392
		(42.4)	(26.5)	(4.9)	(16.8)	(9.4)	(100)		
		I have set specific career goals							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Bonus/Merit Pay Status	Yes	33	16	14	14	14	91	2.56	1.492
		(36.3)	(17.6)	(15.4)	(15.4)	(15.4)	(100)		
	No	116	75	14	48	22	275	2.22	1.360
		(42.2)	(27.3)	(5.1)	(17.5)	(8.0)	(100)		

% in Parentheses ( )

SDA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, NS = Not Sure, A = Agree , SA = Strongly Agree

On cross tabulations of challenging goals and promotion, a total of 54.3%(36.8+17.5) of those who had been promoted disagreed that they had set challenging goals. Additionally, 65.3%(36.2+29.1) of those who had not been promoted also disagreed that they had set challenging goals. Other cross tabulations of challenging goals and bonus/merit pay, a cumulative 57.2%(34.1+23.1) of those who had received bonus/merit pay disagreed that they had set challenging goals. Additionally, 65.8%(37.1+28.7) of those who had not received bonus/merit pay also disagreed that they had set challenging goals. Mean ratings of 2.49 and 2.34 and standard deviations of 1.453 and 1.362 for the promoted and non-promoted respondents, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. Mean ratings of 2.51 and 2.32 and standard deviations of 1.440 and 1.353 for the bonus/merit pay receiving and non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. The results are indicated in Table 9

Table 9 Challenging Goals and Career Advancement

Indicators of Career Advancement		I have set Challenging goals							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
	Yes	21	10	11	7	8	57	2.49	1.453
Promotion Status		(36.8)	(17.5)	(19.3)	(12.3)	(14)	(100)		
	No	112	90	24	55	28	309	2.34	1.362
		(36.2)	(29.1)	(7.8)	(17.8)	(9.1)	(100)		
		I have set Challenging goals							
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD
Bonus/Merit Pay Status	Yes	31	21	14	12	13	91	2.51	1.440
		(34.1)	(23.1)	(15.4)	(13.2)	(14.3)	(100)		
	No	102	79	21	50	23	275	2.32	1.353
		(37.1)	(28.7)	(7.6)	(18.2)	(8.4)	(100)		

% in Parentheses ( )

SDA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, NS = Not Sure, A = Agree , SA = Strongly Agree

Discussion and Implications

Several authors state that setting career goals involves identifying career goals and career planning (Gutteridge et al. 1993; Robbins 2001; Dessler, 2005). Katzell (1990) states that goals influence individual's intentions. Because of that influence, an employee who establishes career goals is likely to advance his or her career, especially if the goals are specific, challenging and accompanied by regular feedback on progress toward the goals (Desimone et al. 2002; Robbins, 2001:166). In exploring the findings this study found that very few women among those who had not been promoted had a list of career goals. Further findings showed that the women had not written down any list of career goals as suggested by Zajas (1995). This implies that the women had no not set any standard to follow to manage their career advancement. Regarding acquiring information on job opportunities, from the results of the cross tabulations, there was a difference in perceptions between the women who had advanced and those who had not. Those who had advanced seemed to have acquired information about promotion opportunities more than those who had not. Acquisition of information about career prospects is necessary for career advancement (Ivanovic & Collin, 1997).

This means that the women who get that information about career advancement opportunities are more likely to use that information to advance themselves than those who do not. The findings of this study showed that women in Kenyan organizations miss out on critical information about opportunities which is transmitted informally because the dissemination may even take place at the informal settings between the supervisor and the employee in cases where the both supervisor and employee are male.

According to Lee (2002), strategy identification involves a design to help a person to meet career goals. Employees who strategize their careers are more progressive than those who do not (Lee, 2002). Insufficient career planning is cited as one major constraint to women's career advancement (Webber, 1998). Adler and Izraeli (1994) reiterate that statement by pointing out that knowing how to pace a career is critical to success; too many women get stuck in jobs where careers do not progress. These arguments imply that if women planned their careers adequately, they would advance in their careers. In Kenyan organizations and with particular reference to women employees, there is a lack of career strategy identification. This could be attributed, among other factors, to the women's inability to discuss their career plans with their supervisors. In addition, most women are not aware of their employment skills and interests. Many respondents among those who had been promoted indicated that they were in agreement with being aware of their interests, while a majority of those who had not been promoted disagreed. The women reasoned that they were investing in their education to further their interests.

A big proportion of the respondents who had received promotions disagreed that they had established action plans to accomplish goals. The study found that a majority of the women who had advanced in their careers and those who had not did not have detailed action plans to accomplish career goals. The reason for lack of an action plan was because of lack of a goal in the first place. An action plan is based on a set goal so without a set goal there is no action plan. Among the employees who had been promoted, a big number disagreed that they had set specific career goals. A majority of the employees who had been promoted disagreed that they had set challenging goals. Additionally, those who had not been promoted also disagreed that they had set challenging goals. This study established that both the women who had advanced in their careers and those who had not advanced were in disagreement in setting specific career goals, or challenging goals. Lack of being goal specific may imply that women were not focused to advance while lack of challenging goals means that the individuals may not exert effort in their job. Robbins (2000:166) and, Locke and Latham, (2002:707) say that it is difficult goals are important to an individual to progress are a constant reminder to the individual to keep exerting effort in the appropriate direction.

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