

The Influence of Strategic Competencies on the Skills Development of Workers with Hearing Impairment in Fako Division South West Region of Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to investigate the influence of "Strategic Competencies on the Skills Development of Workers with Hearing Impairment in Fako Division South West Region of Cameroon". To achieve this, a case study research design was used and the sample of a sample of 39 persons were selected across the seven Sub-Divisions of Fako. 15 workers with hearing impairment and 24 of their colleagues, made up the sample of the study. The sample emerged through the use of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. An interview guide and a focus group discussion guide were used for data collection. Interview and focus group discussion guides were analysed using the process of thematic analysis, whereby concepts or ideas were grouped under umbrella terms of key words with the support of Atlas Ti 5.2 (Atlas Ti GMBH 2006). The findings revealed that, workers with hearing impairment poses strategic competencies such as; self-acceptance, humility, inter-personal fluency, alternative communication approach, experiential learning, creative thinking, emotional control, collaborative strategy, modelling, observational learning, commitment, acceptance of error, problem-solving ability, career exploration, system thinking, openness, emotional control, systematic thinking/strategic intent, humorous strategies and curiosity. The listed qualities of strategic competencies positively influence the career development of workers with hearing impairment, by helping them to be resilient, develop skills, improve on performance, improves on their ability to think hypothetically, improve on their working relationship, and help them dismiss misconception. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that, for persons with hearing impairment who are facing career challenges, should not give up or feel frustrated. Rather they should strategize and develop in their career. For strategic competencies helps in the development of constructive qualities from an individual.

KEYWORDS: Strategic Competencies. Career Development and Workers with hearing impairment

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world of work such as that of Cameroon, where job security and lifetime employment are no longer the norm due to the high rate of unemployment, under-employment and job scarcity, individuals need a continuous appraisal of their situation and be aware of their employment opportunities while constructing and developing in their careers. For persons with hearing impairment, the situation is generally more challenging as the unconscious or unintended isolation due to communication barriers, provokes a negative social, psychological and cognitive problem, which negatively influence their skills development and as such, leaves them with a feeling of tension, inferiority complex, boredom, disaffection, shame and stigma, increased social isolation, loss of self-confidence and self-esteem, and eventually lost of job.

According to the National Association of the Deaf in Cameroon, approximately 60,000 persons in Cameroon are

living with Deafness/hearing impairment (Nobutaka, 2017). A majority of whom are financially dependent on the family and well-wishers (Karl, 2018). As such, the financial or social aid offered in Cameroon for deaf individuals does not help them to become contributors to the Cameroonian society (Fox, 2010).

As a result of the above, there is an increased number of persons with hearing impairment moving in the streets and motor parks with pieces of papers and small bowls appealing for financial support. Their vulnerable nature exposes them to societal ills such as rape, assault, sexual abuses, initiation into drug consumption and further marginalization. Understanding the importance of having a successful career for an individual, and the fact that this can only be obtained through the process of skills development, It is for these reasons that this research sought to investigate the impact of Strategic Competencies on the Skills Development of Workers with Hearing Impairment in Fako Division, South West Region of Cameroon.

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2. Conceptual Review

The two major concepts to be reviewed in this study are strategic competencies and the second is skills development

2.1. The Concept of Strategic Competencies

Strategic competencies is once ability to put his or her resources together, plan and act towards achieving once goals. It goes beyond the ability to think, plan, but also involves the ability to act, think hypothetically, ability to plan, develop a strategic intent, develop an ethical mindset, develop an inter-personal fluency, have a global Mindset, the ability to be creative, plan action and act towards accomplishing goals. Anderson (2015) defined, strategic competencies as the ability to "get things done" by designing and implementing interventions and transformative strategies towards improved sustainability. This competencies equip individuals and the organization to take position and move in a highly dynamic context that poses constantly changing challenges to the realization of their aims. Lacking such competencies undermines the ability to adapt to such changing environments, leading to increasing marginalization. Strategic competencies go beyond a 'how to' approach (Wigboldus, 2009).

2.2. The Concept of Skills Development

Skills development is the ability and capacity acquired through training and exposure. It involves deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to efficiently and adaptively carryout complex activities or occupational task. Skill development can be grouped in; cognitive skills, technical skills, and/or interpersonal skills. According to Chua (2020), skills development is the process of (1) identifying your skill gaps, and (2) developing and honing these skills. It is important because your skills determine your ability to execute your plans with success. Relating to once career life, skills development has to do with ideas and insights needed to enhance or improve in once career. Acting from this point of view, Doyle (2020), grouped skills relating to employment into two main heading. The first is known as hard skills and the second are soft skills

Hard Skills

Hard skills are learned abilities acquired and enhanced through practice, repetition, and education. Hard skills are important because they increase employee productivity and efficiency and subsequently improve employee satisfaction. However, hard skills alone don't translate into business success as employees also need to employ other skills, such as soft skills, that contribute to customer satisfaction (Kagan, 2020). This are teachable abilities or specific knowledge and abilities that are learned through education or training. Example of hard skills are; the diploma you have, the ability to perform daily task, Project management, marketing and craft work.

Soft Skills

Doyle (2020) stated that, soft skills on the other hand are subjective skills that are much harder to quantify. Also known as "people skills" or "interpersonal skills," soft skills relate to the way you relate to and interact with other people. They involve a combination of the following:

- Effective communication skills.
- Flexibility
- Dependability
- Leadership

- Motivation
- Patience
- Persuasion
- Problem solving abilities
- Collaborative ability
- Self confidence

For an individual who want to get the job of his/her dreams or excel in the career they are already following, there is need to look at the skills below, assess where you stand, and find a way to polish the areas you are not doing so well in (Christodoulou, 2013). This is because, without the right skills, an individual will only be frustrated within the work place, be effective, and spend a lot of time dealing with elementary issues caused by the lack of knowledge or lack of skills, as opposed to progressing in your goal. Worst of all, there is high risk of career failure and low self-esteem in the midst of coworkers. Among workers with hearing impairment, the ineffective flow of communication and situational differences, limit their ability to develop work skills. Supporting the above, Colledge et al (1999) in Kramer (2020) expressed that, in the world of employment, hearing impairment has been recognized as one form of disabilities that limit a person's involvement at work

3.1. Research Objective

The main research objective was to explore the influence of "Strategic Competencies on the Skills Development of Workers with Hearing Impairment in Fako Division South West Region of Cameroon"

3.2. Research Question

The main research question was, what is the role of strategic competencies on the skills development of workers with hearing impairment in Fako Division South West Region of Cameroon?

4. Methodology

To achieve the above objective, this study employed a qualitative research method with a case study research design in order to get an in-depth or detailed understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This research design helped the researcher to adopt ideas and produce novel propositions which could be used for later testing. Adding to the above, the case study research design was more flexible and allowed the researcher to probe or make enquiries into what the respondents were saying as the research progressed. Finally, a case study research design was used to explore and describe the phenomenon under investigation.

4.1. Population of the Study

The population of this study was made up all workers with hearing impairment in Fako Division in the South West Region of Cameroon. Adding to this, it was considered in a study of this nature, it is important to use every opportunity to get a very rich information. Based on this, it was recognised that, those who are working with these workers with hearing impairment on a daily base, may have some contributions to make on the impact of strategic competencies on the career development of workers with hearing impairment. In that light, colleagues of workers with hearing impairment, were also considered to be a relevant source of information on the "Influence of Sstrategic Competencies on the Skills Development of Workers with

Hearing Impairment in Fako Division South West Region of Cameroon”.

4.2. Target population

Purposively, this study targeted workers with hearing impairment in Fako Division, South West Region of Cameroon, who have gone through training, be it formal, informal or non-formal, who have being working for at least four years and are at establishment or maintenance stage of their career. The choice of this target population was based on the fact that, workers who have not being working or functioning in a particular career for at least four years, may not have sufficient information in relation the career, as he/she may still be exploring and not yet steady. As a result, nineteen (19) workers with hearing impairment together with seventy two (72) of their colleagues, made up the target population of the study.

4.3. Accessible Population

The accessible population of this study consisted of eighteen (18) workers with hearing impairment from the target population, who have being working for a minimum of four years, and whose location could be traced by the researcher with the help of the South West Regional Delegation of Social Affairs, some friends and some workers with hearing impairment themselves, together with 72 of their colleagues, made the accessible population.

4.4. Sampling Technique and Sample

A purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to select 15 workers with hearing impairment from the accessible population, whose location could be reached by the researcher, with the help of the South West Regional Delegation of Social Affairs, some members in the community and some persons with hearing impairment themselves. And who could use the formal sign language. In the same light, using a purposive and snowball sampling techniques, 24 colleagues with hearing impairment in Fako Division, South West Region were also selected and added to the 15 persons with hearing impairment sampled above making a total of 39 persons.

4.5. Research Instruments

Research instruments are measurement tools designed to obtain data on a topic of interest from research respondents. The research instruments used for data collection in this study were an interview guide for fifteen workers with hearing impairment and a focus group discussion guide for 24 of their colleagues. The main objective of the interview guide and the focus group were to explore the impact of strategic competencies on the skills development of workers with hearing impairment in Fako Division, South West Region of Cameroon.

4.6. Procedure for Data Analysis

Interview guide and focus group guide were analysed separately, using the process of thematic analysis whereby concepts or ideas were grouped under umbrella terms or key words in the context of this study. Thematic analysis consisted in depicting the perceptions of workers with hearing impairment in Fako Division, South West Region of Cameroon on influence of strategic competencies such as; the ability to plan, the ability to manage your weaknesses, strategic intent, historical thinking and collaboration on their career development.

The first stage involved deciding on the level of analysis. At this level, single words, clauses and sets of words or phrases were coded. The researcher did not initially decide on the number of concepts to code and for this reason, a pre-defined or interactive set of concept categories was not initially developed and concepts or umbrella terms were emerged from the data. To be more specific, the researcher did not have an initial code list earlier developed based on the major indicators of the study and umbrella terms or codes were generated following the standard process of thematic analysis. The primary documents of textual data were coded for existence and for frequency of concepts by coding for every independent idea as it emerged from the data.

5. Presentation of Findings

Research question: How do strategic competencies influence the career development of workers with hearing impairment in Fako Division, South West Region Cameroon?

A. Strategies put in place by persons with hearing impairment, to overcome career development challenges

Findings revealed that, to overcome career development challenges, workers with hearing impairment have learn to accept themselves for who they are and to be humble as seen in these quotations: *“To overcome this challenges, I learn not to feel bad about myself, I accept my-self for whom I am”* *“try to learn from others”* *“But to overcome my professional challenges I learn from people”* some of them expressed the use of inter-personal fluency to bring back people on board when communication breakdown *“sometimes I call them back,”* *“to overcome these challenges, I need to learn how to do hair, so that they will understand that I am mentally fine.”* *“I try to touch my customers, to bring back their attention and facilitate our communication, they letter expressed the development alternative communication strategies to facilitate communication and work better”* *“I may try local signs”* *“For parents who do not understand the English sign language, I try to use local signs and to write when communicating with them.”* *“To overcome this challenges, sometime I draw and use pictures for us to agree on a design”* *“because use pictures and drawing, most often we agree and work effectively.”*

Furthermore, it was revealed that, to overcome the challenges, they learn from an everyday experience *as they expressed: “But to overcome my professional challenges I learn from my every day experience.”* *“I use every teaching as an experience. When I started my career, I was not as experienced as I am today. As days go by, I learn, change the behaviours which I had, which was making people feel uncomfortable around me. I use my past experiences to guide my present actions and this help to prevent the problems I should have in my career.”* Adding to this, they try to be creative and to model what they see *“be creative, think better, remember things and be creative”* *“to overcome these challenges, I call most of their attention, in order for us to work”* *“I repeat what I see”*

In continuation with the strive to overcome career development challenges. They stated that, they work collaboratively and 6.7% of them learn by observation: *“In order to improve on my career, I ignore when people behave poorly and I try not to get angry.”* *“I observe and learn from anything happening around me.”* *“I do a lot of observation”*

B. The influence of plans to overcome career related challenges on the search for new knowledge by persons with hearing impairment

Findings exposed that, the plans to overcome career challenges, improve on the search for new knowledge of workers with hearing impairment by helping them to be curious and be committed as seen in these quotations: *"One very important strategy I used to overcome my career challenges is to learn more."* *"I try to get possible information, because information is power."* *"Information helps me to be strong."* *"I focus on my daily activities, in order to perform better in my career"* *"Because I want to succeed, I need to stay committed to my job."* *"I stay focus in order to overcome career challenges and learn in my career."* *"I go to work daily in order to learn."*

These workers with hearing impairment further explained that plans to overcome career challenges improve on their search for new knowledge, by helping them to be resilient and work effectively as seen in these quotations expressed by them respectively; *"This has a lot to do on my career, because I can resist and stay focused at work. I cannot give up, because I know of means to overcome and manage my challenges"* *"this help me to work effectively and not to give up"* *"I call most of their attention, in order for us to work and this help me to work effectively"*

Finally, workers with hearing impairment revealed that, the plans to overcome career related challenges help them to gain new knowledge by working collaboratively, learn from others and to strive for recognition as seen in the following quotations: *"I work as a team with my customers."* *"I learn and develop new knowledge by working with others."* *"We share information and learn from each other."* *"I try to make them understand me and how to better relate with me. Together, we develop our communication styles and we enjoy ourselves and work effectively."*

C. How workers with hearing impairment manage their weaknesses and focus on your strength?

They revealed that, to manage their weakness and stay on their strength, they are curious as quoted: *"Because I am aware of my weaknesses, try to learn from others, I am humble, because I want to learn."* *"I feel like any other person, I have some weaknesses. I am a teacher, I try to learn every day, I cannot effectively teach, if I don't learn, so the awareness of my weaknesses, help me want to learn more"*. Some of them try to be creative as seen in this quotations; *"Because I know I cannot communicate in a way that the majority of the population I am interacting with will understand, I create local signs to communicate with the population."* and sometime isolate themselves as a form of emotional control *"I isolate myself from others when I am angry until I am able to calm down"* *"in order not to get very angry, I isolate myself from others."*

Adding to the above, further revealed that, to manage weaknesses and stay focused on strengths, persons with hearing impairment try to be creative and to be patient as seen in these quotations; *"Because I know I cannot communicate in a way that the majority of the population I am interacting with will understand, I create local signs to communicate with the population."* *"To manage my weakness and focus on my strength by being patient."* *"Patience helps"* *"I cannot communicate as fast as them, so sometimes I stay quiet and wait."*

Finally, workers with hearing impairment revealed that, they isolate themselves when they are angry to overcome the negative effects of anger as quoted *"I isolate myself from others when I am angry until I am able to calm down"* *"in order not to get very angry, I isolate myself from others."* *"I stay away from others until I feel better."*

D. How the ability of workers with hearing impairment to manage their weaknesses influence their skills development

Responses expressed that, the ability to manage weaknesses improves on the skills development of persons with hearing impairment by improving on their productivity and work growth as expressed by them: *"This improve my performance and keep me going in my job because at the end I still manage to teach very well."* Some of them further explained that, this help them to retain their job, they stated that, this help them to gain job satisfaction and improves on their job commitment *"this improves my performance and keeps me going in my job."* *"All this help me work very well and to work in happiness."* *"This make some people to enjoy my presence so I work with happiness."* *"Being focus will help me to be organised"* *"this make me work better"* *"I enjoy working."*

To add to the above, they stated that, this helps them to enjoy a conducive working environment and to develop skills *"When I am interacting with people and I face communication breakdown, I bring new methods such as drawing and pictures to facilitate communication. This helps me to work without stress."* *"Being focused will help me to be organised"* *"this makes me work better"* *"I enjoy working"*.

E. What workers with hearing impairment do in order to help others understand them

In helping others to understand them, workers with hearing impairment expressed, they accept their errors as seen in these expressions: *"When I experience communication breakdown, I try to resolve it, I may need to apologize."* They further expressed that, they improve on their interpersonal fluency as quoted; *"to help people understand me, I go extra, on the days when I am not angry, I work very hard so that people will love me and manage my weaknesses"* *"I try to understand them and this makes grow in my career."*

Adding to the above, they use alternative communication approach to help others understand them as seen in these quotations; *"This helps me to try to show those who can sign to see, I sometimes use local signs to help others."* *"When I am interacting with people and I face communication breakdown, I bring new methods such as drawing and pictures to facilitate communication. This help me to work without stress."* Finally, workers with hearing impairment, said they use hypothetical thinking to help others understand them as quoted: *"Sometime I need to think of alternatives to improve on the communication"* *"I think many times in my head before I take actions."* *"Think of suggestions to a problem."*

F. How ability to help others understand you, influence career expectations of persons with hearing impairment

Workers with hearing impairment revealed that, this helps them to be able to bounce back in the face of challenges by being resilient as they quoted: *"I do not give up when I have problems with others"* *"I am able to overcome challenges."* This behavior equally reduces misconception and promote

job effectiveness as cited by them *"When people understand me, they become very surprised with the things I can effectively do."* *"They develop interest in me and want to learn from me"* *"they see reasons to work with me."* *"We in turn understand each other better."* *"I use every experience as an opportunity to learn. I feel the only secret in life is to learn and respect others, so that you can work effectively with them"* *"we work better"*

Adding to the above, Workers with hearing impairment stated that, helping others to understand them, build a conducive working environment: *"When others understand me, they start enjoying my company"* *"we work in happiness"* *"we share information as we work together."*

G. How well workers with hearing impairment benefit from their everyday working experiences

Workers with hearing impairment expressed that, from their daily working experience, they learn a lot through observation as they expressed: *"I learn everyday by watching how others are working."* *"I learn new hair style as I come to work every day."* *"I see what is happening and I learn a lot every day."* They equally said they get to understand themselves and others as seen in this quotations; *"I get to understand what I am doing better by learning every day"* *"where I am confused, I ask questions."* *"Working every day I help me to understand myself and others"*

Adding to the above, they revealed that they, this make them be job committed as cited by them and quoted as follows *"I learn every day from others at work."* *"I work better because of my daily experience."* *"I understand other people as I come to work every day and we work well"* *"because I know those things which make me angry within the work environment, I try to avoid them and stay focused in my career."*

H. How using past experiences influence work performance of workers with hearing impairment

In responding to this, workers with hearing impairment stated that, this help to improve on their problem solving ability and improve on their career exploration, quoted as follows: *"I learn a lot from my past experience. I have gone through many challenges, which have exposed me to some life experiences. These experiences help me to reason better and be smart to respond to challenges."* *"To improve on my career, I try to see where I have challenges and see how to help myself, this help me to be focus and keep me going."* They also expressed that, this equally help them to be effective and be committed to their job and to be system thinkers as seen in these quotations; *"I am very active within the work environment, I try to avoid them and stay focus in my career."* *"My job commitment increases, because I know certain things and how they happen."* *"I come to work daily."* *"I know my limit, so I do what I am supposed to do."* *"Because I know those things which made me angry within the work environment, I know how to manage myself so that others can work with me."* *"I know how to make others feel happy."* *"The past help me to think and know what to do, in order to keep others and help me work."*

Adding to the above, using past experiences, improve on environmental awareness as cited by workers with hearing impairment; *"because I know those things which cause me to get angry within the work environment"* *"I need to understand my working environment."*

I. What workers with hearing impairment do, to work with others towards solving career challenges

Finding revealed that, to work with others solving career challenges, workers with hearing impairment try to control their emotion as cited: *"I try not to get angry because that will make me not to work effectively"* *"I try to manage my own emotions and to be open"* *"To overcome challenges at work, I try to understand other people."*

They added that, they use their creative thinking and 6.7% of them said they are curious *"I try to be creative by using drawing and pictures."* *"I try new drawings, to represent new hair style"* *"Learning through questioning."* They continued by saying that, another strategy used is that of observational learning and further cited that they use systematic thinking/strategic intent to work with others in solving career challenges as quoted; *"some other strategies I use to improve my career are, learning through observation"* *"I observe a lot when working with others"* *"I try to think of possible solutions to any problem we have in the office and I try to be creative"*

Finally, they stated that, being humorous is another strategy used, to make others feel comfortable with them in order for them to overcome career development challenges and improve on career as they quoted cited by them: *"When there is a communication breakdown, I bring in humour to make them laugh and continue"* *"When we laugh, we relax and continue with work"*.

J. How working with others to overcome career development challenges, influence their career growth

In depicting from the responses, workers with hearing impairment expressed that, working with others, help them build a collaborative working environment as seen in these quotations: *"This makes some people to enjoy my presence so I work with happiness"* *"all this helps me work very well and to work in happiness."* *"Showing love make me to feel comfortable, flexible and relate with people freely"* *"we work as family."* *"I am comfortable working with others."* Person with hearing impairment added that, these strategies facilitate learning as stated by 60% of them quoted as follows; *"Because I do a lot of observational learning, I know so many things in career, and to know which area in my career I need to develop."* *"I learn from others without fear"* *"I learn better by observation"* and finally that, the strategies help them to resilient and to stay focused as stated by 20% of them. *"Because I do a lot of observational learning, I know so many things in career, and to know which area in my career I need to develop."* *"I learn from others without fear"* *"I learn better by observation"* *"Bring in new strategies, help me stay focus at work."* *"I am able to concentrate on my career."* *"They help me to overcome communication barriers."* *"I stay focused to my work no matter the challenges."*

In summary, findings revealed that, strategic competencies has an enormous impact on the career development of workers with hearing impairment. As it help them to solve career development challenges by using strategies such; self-acceptance, humility, interpersonal fluency, the use of alternative communication approach, learning from experience, use creative thinking, develop collaborative strategies, model others, do a lot of observation, use isolation when necessary, acceptance of error, strive to understand

self and others, and job commitment. These strategies further influence the career development process by helping workers with hearing impairment to be; resilient, improve job commitment, reduce misconceptions, help them strive for acceptance, produce a conducive working environment,

improve on skills development, help them develop hypothetical thinking, facilitate learning, improve work relationship, increase job satisfaction and job retention. All these information was summarized in the conceptual diagram below.

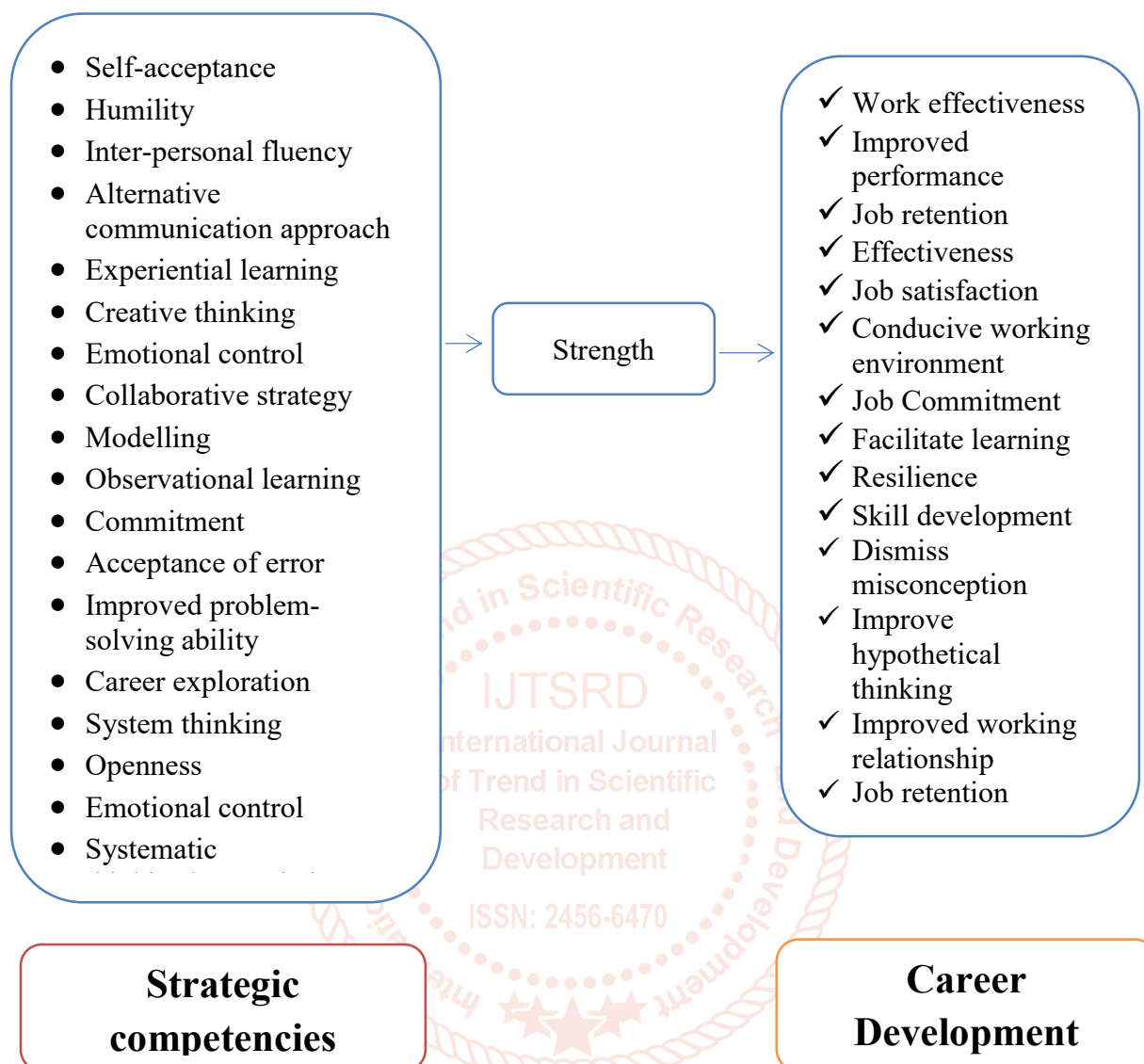


Figure 1: Conceptual diagram depicting the influence of strategic competencies on the career development of workers with hearing impairment

Colleagues' perspectives on the influence of strategic competencies on the career development of workers with hearing impairment

A. Efforts made by workers with hearing impairment to overcome career related challenges, as opined by their colleagues

Colleagues of workers with hearing impairment explained that; workers with hearing impairment use creative communication strategies to overcome career related challenges as seen in these quotations: *"When people come to the workshop, he relates with them through pictures and actions," "I see her using a lot of actions, to facilitate communication."* *"I notice she is looks at the mouth of any person he is communicating with, in order to understand better."* They further said that, workers with hearing impairment pay attention to details, that is, they try not to miss out in anything *"She pays a lot of attention when working with people."* *"He does a lot of observation to anything happening in the workshop."* *"I notice she is so focus on everything in relation to work."*

These colleagues further expressed that, workers with hearing impairment are also very curious and maximize their past experiences as quoted; *"I notice she ask a lot of questions."* *"He is always interested to know."* *"She pays a lot of attention when working with people."* *"He does a lot of observation to anything happening in the workshop."* *"He uses every available opportunity to learn."* The colleagues further stated that, persons also try to cooperate with others as expressed: *"Most often, she does things together with others, especially when she has to relate with a strange figure."*

B. The influence of strategies to overcome career challenges on the career maturity of workers with hearing impairment as opined by their colleagues

Colleagues opined that, these strategies help workers with hearing impairment to improve on their communication strategies and improve on their problem solving ability as cited correspondingly: *"When people come to the workshop, he relates with them through pictures and actions," "he use drawing to communicate with customer and even colleagues."* *"She does a lot to solve problems. She does not forget the things you show her, so when faced with a new situation, you will be surprised to see her using something you showed her days ago"* *"he try's in his own way to solve problems among others colleagues."*

Adding to the above, colleagues of workers with hearing impairment opined that, the ability to strategize also improve their ability to collaborate with others as seen in these quotations; *"She does a lot to improve on herself and this improve her relationship with others"* *"some customers work and interact freely with her because she is making efforts to relate with them"* *"he works with others."* *"She feels comfortable around others."* *"This make his to feel comfortable and work with others without problems."* They also said, these help workers with hearing impairment to develop skills as expressed in these quotations: *"she does a lot to improve on herself and this improve her relationship with them"* *"some customers work and interact freely with her because she is making efforts to relate with them"* *"because he is forcing himself to relate with others and learn from them, he develops new skills"* *"she learns a lot from others"*

Further colleagues explained that, the strategies used by workers with hearing impairment to overcome the career challenges they face, help to improve the self-pride of persons with hearing impairment as seen in these quotations; *"She learns a lot from others by asking a lot of questions. This is helping her to know many things and be proud of herself"*. And this develop in them the ability to be resilient, as seen in these quotations *"She learns a lot from others by asking a lot of questions. This is helping her to know many things and be proud of herself"* *"In struggle to communicate with others, people then to understand her better. This will help her not to give up in her career."*

In summary, the colleagues of workers with hearing impairment revealed that, workers with hearing impairment possess characteristics of strategic competencies such as: the ability to be creative, use communication strategy, pay attention to details, being curious, maximize past experience and collaborate effectively with others. These strategies influence their career development by bringing out certain positive characteristics in them such as improved communication strategies, improved problem solving ability, improved collaboration, help them to be resilient, improved skills development and self-pride. A summary of this is presented in the conceptual diagram below.

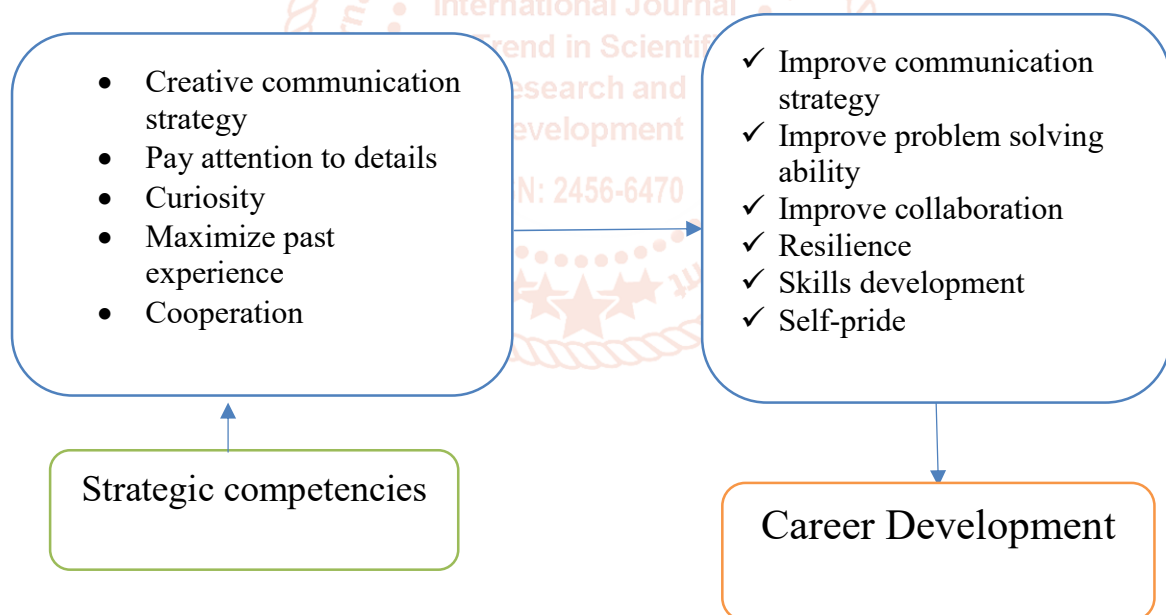


Figure 2: Conceptual diagram depicting the influence of strategies to overcome career challenges on the career maturity of workers with hearing impairment as opined by their colleagues

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS,

Responses portrayed that, workers with hearing impairment face certain challenges related to their career which demotivate them and sometimes act as a hindrance to their career development. Such challenges are high perception of difficulties, communication barrier, isolation, and discrimination, lack of working equipment, misconception, financial difficulties, socio-political crisis and temper-tantrums.

To overcome these challenges, workers with hearing impairment have developed certain strategic competencies. These competencies are self-acceptance, humility, inter-personal fluency, alternative communication approach, experiential learning, creative thinking, emotional control, collaborative strategy, modelling, observational learning, commitment, acceptance of error, improved problem-solving ability, career exploration, system thinking, openness,

emotional control, systematic thinking/strategic intent, humorous strategies and curiosity. The exhibition of the above qualities, was prove that persons with hearing impairment have strategic competencies. Their possession of this quality, was also supported by the finding opined by their colleagues. These characteristics of strategic competencies exhibited by workers with hearing impairment, falls in line with those of Wigboldus (2009) and wordpress.com (2012).

With regard to the impact of strategic competencies on career development, the findings revealed that, the above qualities of strategic competencies possessed by workers with hearing impairment, have improved on their career development, by making them to be effective, develop skills, improve on performance, be resilient and retain their jobs. This conforms to the creative investment theory by Lubart (1991-1995), who explained that creative individuals, mentally buy cheap and sell high, because they think ahead of others and therefore are very resilient.

The study revealed that, these positive impact of strategic competencies on career development of workers with hearing impairment were also supported by their colleagues, who added that, it improves on their communication strategies, improve on their problem solving ability, improve collaboration and self-pride.

In summary, findings on the extent to which strategic competencies influence the career development of workers with hearing impairment, portrayed that, strategic competencies help in facilitating learning, help workers with hearing impairment to improve on hypothetical thinking, improve on their working relationship, ensure a conducive working environment and to dismiss misconception.

7. Recommendation

Based on the finding of this study, it is recommended that, for persons with hearing impairment who are facing career challenges, should not give up or feel frustrated. Rather they should strategize and develop in their career. For strategic competencies helps in the development of constructive qualities from an individual.

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