

# HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE CAREER SATISFACTION OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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## Abstract

*This study empirically investigated the relationship between human resource management practices and employee career satisfaction in public universities in Rivers State. The cross sectional survey was adopted in the study and a total population of 90 lecturers were covered in the study. The simple random sampling was used in the study and copies of a well-structured questionnaire were used in gathering relevant data for the study. The spearman's rank order correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ) was used in analysing the data with the aid of statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 21. The result indicated significant positive correlation between human resource management practices dimensions (training and compensation system) with affective and cognitive career satisfaction. It was concluded that an increase in a well-planned and effective human resources management practices in terms of training and compensation system, will help enhance career satisfaction of employee in public universities. Thus, it was recommended that government should stop the culture of payment of half salary to workers, as such could intensify dissatisfaction among employees in the public universities.*

**Key Words:** Affective Career Satisfaction, Cognitive Career Satisfaction, Compensation System, Employee Career Satisfaction, Human Resource Management Practices, Training.

## 1.0 Introduction

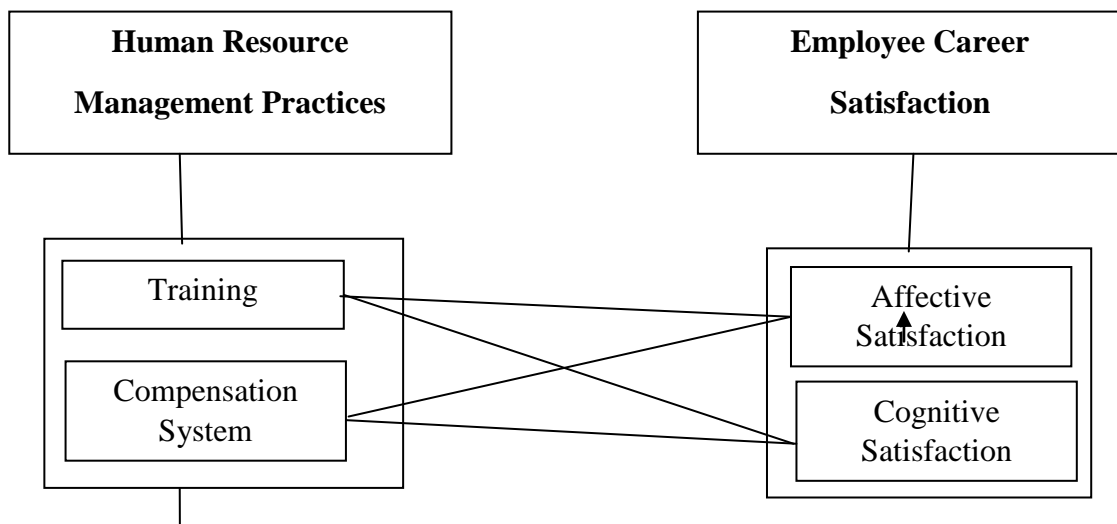
Man is a being who acts or behaves rationally in response to his level of satisfaction. The current labour unrest and inter-professional strife, as well as the high rate of emigration of many university employees, shows that career satisfaction is at a low point in our tertiary institutions (Ogbimi, & Adebamowo, 2006). Satisfaction is a critical factor of any organization and it is directly related to organizational success. Employee satisfaction is a term that refers to an employee's affective feelings about their work (Sree & Satyavathi, 2017). Effectiveness is an aim that all organizations aspire to accomplish on a continuous basis, even in an unpredictable, complex, and uncertain world. It is worth noting that humans in organizations are the engines that propel the organization along in the direction that is most conducive to its effectiveness and performance. Just as a substandard car is incapable of delivering reliably and safely, so are disgruntled workers. Not only can dissatisfied providers deliver lower-quality services more inefficiently, they also have a negative effect on a variety of organizational outcomes and key human resource indices (Al-Aameri, 2000). When workers are unhappy, it shows itself in the form of a high absenteeism rate, high turnover rate, and rebelliousness toward the organization's code of ethics. Additionally, employee satisfaction is often described as a multidimensional psychological response to one's job that encompasses internal affective (emotional) and cognitive (perception) states that can be accessed by verbal or other emotional and behavioral responses (Atefi, et al, 2015; Hayes, Douglas & Bonner, 2015).

The argument above is consistent with Locke's (1976) work, which described career satisfaction as a pleasurable or optimistic emotional condition that results from an assessment of one's career or career experience. Ivancevich et al. (1997) characterize career satisfaction as an attitude toward one's work. It is determined by their perceptions of work and the degree to which individuals and organizations suit together. Career satisfaction is critical because of the organization's influence. Robbins and Judge (2009) observed that consequences abound regardless of whether an employee enjoys or dislikes their work. Additionally, he categorizes it as constructive/destructive and active/passive. In terms of career satisfaction or disappointment, there are four possible responses: departure, speech, commitment, and neglect (Judge, 2009). Exit and neglect are intended to be used in conjunction with negative actions. However, speech and allegiance are intended to promote positive action. Constructive behaviour, also referred to as active behavior, is characterized as a series of actions taken by an employee in order to enhance their condition or performance. Exit reaction, entails steering actions toward the company, such as resignation/turnover. Neglect reaction entails passively encouraging situations to deteriorate, such as absenteeism or tardiness, and thus reducing efficiency. When workers are unhappy, they will pass on disruptive behaviour. Given the undeniable impact of employee career satisfaction, the majority of research into how to ensure employee career satisfaction has been undertaken by scholars such as Adam and Bond (2000), Obasam (2011), and FitzGerald and Clark (2012). However, the majority of this work has been conducted in the western world, with very few being conducted in this part of the world on how to increase career satisfaction in public universities in Nigeria from a human resource management perspective. This lacuna in the field of research and its significance in terms of enhancing the organization's overall success influenced this study.

### Statement of Problem

Career satisfaction among employee in the tertiary institution is an important determinant of productivity and organizational success. Most of the employees in the tertiary institutions as a result of dissatisfaction have involved in several unethical practices which over the years have impacted negatively on the performance of the educational sector. Ogunsaju (2004) stated that the academic standard in Nigeria educational institution has fallen considerably below society expectations. Improving the quality of the lecturing force in schools is seen as a key to raising students' performance and unsatisfied lecturer cannot adequately prepare students for the task required in their prospective jobs because it is unlikely that they could achieve success. Inability for the university lecturers to deliver effectively because of dissatisfaction has led to most Nigeria institutions producing half-baked graduates which cannot compete with their international counterparts and most of these employees suffer psychological trauma and teach with anger while insulting students in class as a result of career dissatisfaction, and this has negatively affected the educational performance of most Nigeria students. Hence this study seeks to investigate how HRMP can help improve career satisfaction of employees in public universities in Rivers State.

### Operational Framework



**Figure 1:** An operational framework showing the link between HRMP and employee career satisfaction.

**Source:** Adapted from Shipton et.al, (2005); Thompson and Phua, (2012).

### Aim and Objectives

The general aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between HRMP and employee career satisfactions in public universities in Rivers state, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to;

- i. Examine the relationship between training and affective career satisfaction.
- ii. Examine the relationship between training and cognitive career satisfaction.
- iii. Investigate the relationship between compensation system and affective career satisfaction.
- iv. Determine the relationship between compensation system and cognitive career satisfaction.

### Research Questions

In order to achieve the study objectives, the following research questions guided the action of the researcher.

- i. What is the relationship between training and affective career satisfaction?
- ii. What is the relationship between training and cognitive career satisfaction?
- iii. What is the relationship between compensation system and affective career satisfaction?
- iv. What is the relationship between compensation system and cognitive career satisfaction?

### Research Hypotheses

Based on the stated research questions, the following null hypotheses are formulated for the study;

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between training and affective career satisfaction.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between training and cognitive career satisfaction.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between compensation system and affective career satisfaction in public universities in Rivers state.
- Ho<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant relationship between compensation system and cognition career satisfaction.

## 2.0 Review of Related Literature

This work is informed by both affective and equity theories. Locke (1979) proposed this theory, which is widely regarded as the most popular theory on career satisfaction. The central principle of this theory is that satisfaction is determined by the contradictions or gaps in what one desires in a work and what one has in a job. Additionally, the theory notes that how much an individual values a particular aspect of work (e.g., the degree of authority in a position) influences how satisfied/dissatisfied he becomes, as desires are realized/are not realized. Additionally, the theory notes that when an individual enjoys a particular aspect of his or her work or career, his or her satisfaction is enhanced both positively (when expectations are met) and negatively (when expectations are not met), in comparison to an individual who does not appreciate that aspect. However, this theory asserts that the more a worker loves a single facet, the greater the feelings of discontent would be. The equity theory elucidates how an individual considers justice in social links, such as those with an employer. An individual calculates the input/output ratio by comparing the things obtained from a partnership to the things given. They then apply this ratio to the ratios of other individuals in order to determine whether or not their link is equitable.

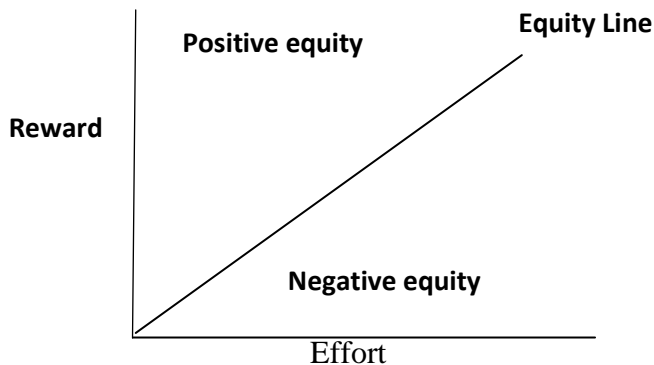


Fig 2: employee perception of equity.

From figure 2, when employees are in a position of positive equity, they tend to feel higher level of satisfaction with their career. Employees on the position of negative equity tend to be dissatisfied and distressed thereby producing behaviour of withdrawal. These theories are relevant in this study because the perception of the employees regarding the equity of their work based on the human resource practices has a way of influencing their satisfaction.

### Concept of Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP) and Its Dimensions

HRMP encompass managerial activities pertaining to staffing, employee relations, training, development, performance management, and employee compensation and benefits (Noe 2008). According to Jones and Wright (1992), as cited in Huselid (1995), human resource management programs encompass a comprehensive employee recruitment and selection procedure, an inactive compensation and performance management system, and extensive employee involvement and training. Additionally, he argued that HRMPs can help firms improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of current and prospective employees, as well as their motivation, reduce shirking, and increase retention of quality employees, while encouraging non-performers to leave the company. HRMP can be defined as a systematic, planned approach to managing people effectively in order to improve performance. It aims to establish a more adaptable and caring management style in order to motivate, satisfy, and develop employees. Effective HRMP play a critical role in assisting departments in achieving their goals and increasing productivity. According to Boxall and Purecell (2003), HRMP is defined as the policies, practices, and systems that influence how employees behave, their attitude toward work, and their performance.

The strength of an organization's workforce is directly related to the effectiveness of its HRMP. According to Storey (1998), two major human resource management firms exist: Hard and Soft HRM. The hard HRM approach focuses exclusively on the resource side of human resources and firmly places management in control. Their role is to effectively manage numbers while maintaining a work environment that is physically and behaviorally compatible with the requirements. Soft HRM, is concerned with human factors such as communication and employee motivation. Soft HRM enables a cordial link to exist in HRMP and positive employee attitudes. Training and skill development benefit the employee by equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for independent (autonomous) and responsible behavior (Guest, 2012). Gerhart (1996) concluded that human resource management is a strategic asset of an organization, and human resource policies and practices are critical to the success and competitive advantages of an organization in a dynamic and ambiguous economy. Stewart and Brown (2011) asserted that effective HRM identifies and recruits high-quality employees, motivates them to perform at their best, and

assists them in meeting their psychological and social needs. This ultimately results in long-term links with talented and satisfied employees.

### **Training**

Training, a critical component of HRMP, can be described as a planned process that assists in providing on-the-job experience and modifying employees' habits, skills, and expertise to ensure satisfactory results when performing their everyday tasks or activities (Goldsmith et.al, 1997). Chiang et al. (2005) discovered that high-quality training has a beneficial association with work satisfaction, increasing an employee's decision to stick with the company. According to Chang and Chang (2008), training employees helps them improve their performance and technical skills. When workers are well educated, they have a clear understanding of their roles and exhibit less position tension, which results in increased work stability and satisfaction. Thus, organizations should train their workers to maximize their ability to stay (Chang & Chang, 2008).

### **Compensation System**

Compensation is a component of HRMP that serves as a mechanism for attracting, retaining, maintaining, and motivating an appropriate labor force with the necessary skills to accomplish the organization's goals. According to NamasIvayam et al. (2007), compensation may be classified as direct or indirect. Direct compensation includes wage and remuneration packages such as promotions and benefit sharing. Indirect compensation includes services such as dental care provided to workers. Appropriate compensation system architecture may aid in motivating workers' efficiency and recruiting and keeping employees (Wah, 2000). Gross and Friednard (2004) asserted that workers who have accrued compensation are more likely to stick with the company. According to the results, the delay period (the length of time staff must wait before being eligible for benefits) had a substantial effect on retention. A shorter waiting period resulted in higher retention. As a result, an attractive incentive program was critical to retaining eligible workers.

### **Employee Career Satisfaction and Its Measures**

According to Davis and Newstorm (1985), one of the most reliable indicators of an organization's declining circumstances is poor career satisfaction. When employees are dissatisfied, protests, work slowdowns, absenteeism, and turnover occur. Additionally, it results in low performance, substandard product quality, employee theft, and other issues. It is well known that the human being has historically been viewed as an economic man. This is a common assumption among classical economic schools of thought, which see satisfaction exclusively in terms of economic values, such as monetary inducement, as the only gain to which workers can react. According to Thompson and Phua (2012), there are two types of career satisfaction. The first is affective career satisfaction, and the second is cognitive career satisfaction. Affective job satisfaction is a subjective term that reflects an individual's emotional reaction to their job. Thus, affective career satisfaction represents an individual's level of enjoyment or happiness as a result of their work in general. Cognitive career satisfaction assesses the different aspects of a work objectively and logically. Cognitive career satisfaction may be unidimensional if it evaluates either one aspect of a task, such as salary or the ability to take leave, or multidimensional if it evaluates two or more aspects of a job concurrently. Cognitive career satisfaction would not measure the degree of enjoyment or happiness associated with particular employment facets, but rather the extent to which such job facets are deemed acceptable in comparison to the job holder's own collection of goals.



## Empirical Review

Numerous studies have investigated the linkinHRMP and a variety of job outcomes. Nurun, Abu, and Sahedur (2017) conducted research on HRMP with a focus on work satisfaction. The study was conducted in Bangladesh. The population consists of directors, middle level managers, and managers at ICB Investment Bank, and a sample size of 40 respondents was used to collect the results. Pearson Product Moment associations were used in the analysis. The developed data were analyzed using the Coefficient statistical tool and the statistical program SPSS version 16.0. HRMP have an impact on work satisfaction, according to the findings.

Yasir Waqas and Muhammad (2016) conducted research to determine the impact of HRMP on employee efficiency in Rawalpindi's private telecommunications sector organizations. A total of 100 telecom workers replied to a self-administered questionnaire that assessed three HRMP and employee efficiency. The study's target population was Rawalpindi's telecom sector workers (private organizations). We gathered a random sample of 100 respondents and analyzed the results using SPSS version 17.0. The findings indicate that while employee success is clearly contingent on HRMP, compensation is more important for workers in the private telecom sector in the twin cities. As a result, compensation has the greatest impact on employee success. Additionally, proper execution of HRMP would undoubtedly improve employee morale, which in turn will improve corporate efficiency.

Mercy (2011) conducted a report examining the impact of HRMP on employee success. The thesis examined Catholic Institutions of Higher Learning in Kenya as a case study. The target demographic consisted of the institution's entire support personnel. We used a descriptive sample design and a stratified random sampling methodology to recruit 88 support personnel. According to the results, incentive-based compensation had the biggest effect on raising workers' performance levels. Training and employee empowerment have also been shown to increase workers' success levels. Job architecture and protection both have a negligible effect on performance.

Uvais (2012) conducted a report in Hyderabad on HRMP with a focus on work satisfaction. The thesis took place in India. The descriptive analysis technique was used in this report, and the study's target demographic was the organization's employees. The thesis used a 395-person survey frame. Almost every employee reported being comfortable with their jobs under the given Human Resource Practices. The research once again demonstrated that HRMP play a significant role in an organization's ability to achieve its goals and objectives. Until the company makes a concerted effort, each and every one of us should expect disaster.

Henrietta (2012) conducted a report on the impact of performance assessment on employee attitude: a case study of first allied savings and loans limited in Kumasi. The demographic for this research consisted of FASL's management, senior staff, and junior staff. This thesis employed a survey research design; the researcher did not sample; instead, a population of 130 individuals was used for the study. The SPSS and Excel is used to break down the data from the questionnaire into a readable format. The questionnaire data were displayed in the form of a frequency distribution chart. The data was then analyzed using statistical methods such as a bar chart and a pie chart. It was discovered that performance assessment has an effect on employee performance; therefore, when appraisal is performed correctly, employees are generally satisfied, which reflects in their job output; however, when appraisal is not done

fairly, but is done badly, employees become bitter, which has an adverse effect on their performance. A realistic and effective performance assessment process would have boosted workers' productivity.

### 3.0 Methodology

The cross-sectional survey, a type of the quasi-experimental design was used, because the work is aimed at generating new facts without intentional manipulation of variables. The design will help show the linkinHRMP and employee career satisfaction. The population of this study comprises the three (3) public Universities in Rivers state. Thirty (30) lecturers were randomly selected from each of the University which gave a total of 90 respondents. Copies of questionnaires were administered to respondents and the simple random sampling technique was used. The predictor variable (HRMP) was operationalized in training and compensation system as identified by Shipton et.al, (2005). 5 items were used in measuring training (e.g. the contents of the training programs organized by my organization are always relevant to the changing needs of our jobs and our business). 5 items were used in measuring compensation system (e.g. in my organization, we are being paid adequately for the work we do). Employee career satisfaction was measured using affective career satisfaction and cognitive career satisfaction as identified in Thompson and Phua (2012). Affective career satisfaction was measured using a set of 4 items (e.g. I find real enjoyment in my job) and cognitive career satisfaction was measured using 5 items (e.g. I feel fairly well satisfied with my job). The items we were given on a 4-point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). The spearman's rank order correlation coefficient statistical analysis was used in analyzing the stated hypotheses through the use of statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 21.

### 4.0 Data Analysis

From the total 90 copies of questionnaires administered to respondents, only 83 copies which represented a total of 92% of total questionnaires were retrieved and used in the analysis. Decision rule; if,  $P < 0.05$ , (reject the null hypothesis)  $P > 0.05$  (accept the null hypothesis)

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant linkin training and affective career satisfaction.

**Table 1:** Training and Affective Career Satisfaction.

		<b>Correlations</b>	
		Training	Affective Career Satisfaction
Training	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.654
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	83	83
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	.654	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	83	83

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



Training and Affective Career Satisfaction. The result of the data analysis in table 1 shows a significant linkin Training and Affective Career Satisfaction with  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) and the rho value of 0.654, the findings reveal a positive significant linkin the variables. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant linkin training and cognitive career satisfaction.

**Table 2:** Training and Cognitive Career Satisfactions.

			Training	Cognitive Career Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Training	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.248
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	83	83
Spearman's rho	Cognitive Career Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.248	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	83	83

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Training and Cognitive Career Satisfactions. From table 2, the outcome of the analysis revealed a significant linkin training and cognitive career satisfaction with  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) and the rho value of 0.248, the findings reveal a positive significant but weak linkin the variables. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant linkin compensation system and affective career satisfaction.

**Table 3:** Compensation System and Affective Career Satisfaction.

			Compensation System	Affective Career Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Compensation System	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.732
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	83	83
Spearman's rho	Affective Career Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.732	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	83	83

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Compensation System and Affective Career Satisfaction: based on the bivariate analysis, the result in table 3 shows a significant linkin Compensation System and Affective Career

Satisfaction with  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.001 < 0.05$ ) and the rho value of 0.732, the findings reveal a positive significant link in the variables. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

Ho<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant link in compensation system and cognition career satisfaction.

**Table 4:** Compensation System and Cognition Career Satisfaction.

			<b>Correlations</b>	
			Compensation System	Cognition Career Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Compensation System	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.541
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	83	83
Spearman's rho	Cognition Career Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.541	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	83	83

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Compensation System and Cognition Career Satisfaction: the findings in table 4 shows a significant link in Compensation System and Cognition Career Satisfaction with  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) and the rho value of 0.541, the findings reveal a positive significant and moderate link in the variables. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

### 5.0 Discussion of Findings

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between HRMP and employee career satisfaction at public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The results indicated a strong association between training and affective career satisfaction, with a P-value of 0.000 indicating that the measure is significantly related. The rho value of 0.654 indicates that there is an important and optimistic association between training and affective career satisfaction. This means that improved training benefits workers' affective career satisfaction. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) of 0.43 indicates that a single unit shift in training will explain up to 43% of the difference in workers' affective career satisfaction. Again, the correlation coefficient of 0.248 indicates a favorable and important association between training and cognitive career satisfaction. Thus, training in companies does contribute to workers' career satisfaction. These results corroborate those of Nurun, Abu, and Sahedur (2017), who discovered a substantial relationship between the aspects of HRMP and work satisfaction.

Additionally, with a P-value of 0.001 and a rho value of 0.732, compensation system has a strong positive association with affective career satisfaction. This demonstrates that compensation has a clear correlation with affective career satisfaction; thus, the higher the compensation, the greater the affective career satisfaction. The correlation coefficient ( $r^2$ ) was 0.536. This indicates that a unit shift in compensation system could account for

approximately 54% of the difference in affective career satisfaction. Again, table 4 result showed a strong and optimistic association between compensation system and cognitive career satisfaction, with a P-value of 0.000, a confidence level of less than 0.05, and a rho value of 0.541. This demonstrates a strong positive correlation between the variables. Additionally, the coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) of 0.29 indicates that a unit shift in compensation system accounts for 29% of overall difference in cognitive career satisfaction. These findings corroborate Uvais's (2012) observation that HRMP in terms of compensation do have a direct relationship with work satisfaction. Additionally, Sarwar and Abugree (2013) asserted that increased benefits in the workplace contribute significantly to employee career satisfaction.

## 6.0 Conclusion and recommendations

This research was prompted by the need to investigate the association between HRMP and employee career satisfaction. The results indicate that there is a strong correlation between the indicator and criterion variables. Hence, we therefore concluded that improving HRMP as perceived by professional groups and employees in the public universities will enhance the career satisfaction of employees. The following recommendations are made in accordance with the results and conclusion.

- (1) Public universities can foster an environment in which workers can receive comprehensive training in areas relevant to their employment, thus increasing career satisfaction.
- (2) Public universities should ensure their employees receive fair recognition and compensation as and when due.
- (3) The government should put an end to the practice of paying employees half their wages, as this contributes to employee discontent.
- (4) Human resource departments at public universities can foster an environment in which staff are free to select the department in which they can work efficiently and receive training to enhance their productivity and satisfaction.

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