

## **HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES OF SELECTED PHARMACEUTICAL FIRMS IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Appraising the nexus between the practices of HRM and employees work engagement among employees reflects the crucial nature of all HR functions and their potentiality towards stimulating employees' passion in being engaged and demonstrate affective commitments to work. It was on this note that this study investigated human resource management practices as determinant of employees work engagement in selected pharmaceutical firms in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study was anchored on the resource-based view theoretical paradigm. The study was descriptive in nature with a sample size of two hundred and thirty-two employees. The instrument of research used to gather information from respondents was a questionnaire. Findings from the hypotheses tested reflected that there was a significant relationship between HRM practices and employees' work engagement in selected Pharmaceutical Firms in Oyo State, Nigeria. Findings also heralded that recruitment and selection enhanced employees' degree of engagement. Additionally, it was revealed that training and development strongly influences work engagement. Finally, executing a fair and equitable compensation package, can enhance employees' engagement to work. Conclusively, HRM practices if well directed has the potentiality to foster higher employee work engagement. Therefore, the study recommended that competent HR personnel should be consulted in the process of addressing concerns hinged on employees' engagement by reviewing policies and programs as a medium of intrinsically motivating employees.

**Keywords:** Absorption, Dedication, Employees' Work Engagement, HRM Practices, Vigour.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Employee engagement in this modern age have become an inevitable force to improving performance of organizations (Aboramadan *et al.*, 2020). It has become a powerful tool management of corporate organisations use to get employees dedicated, absorbed and exercise vigor to attain competitive edge and improve performance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Ade-Adeniji, Adeniji & Imhonopi, 2021). It has become very important because it attracted many stakeholders' attention in the labour industry across the globe on how to maximize it and improve organizational practices (Bayode & Duarte, 2022). As a result of the above,

investors all over the world seek to maximize the expertise of competent managers capable of getting employees actively engaged to execute daily tasks efficiently and contribute positively to systemic performance of organizations. For this reason, scholars and practitioners in Nigeria's pharmaceutical industry have become interested in ameliorating issues responsible for employee disengagement in the industry. The rationale for this is to make sure organisations in Nigeria's pharmaceutical industry become productive by getting employees engaged. They have also decided to invest hugely in ongoing research on the subject matter to make sure human resource management practices fosters job engagement of workers in the industry (Darban, Karatepe & Rezapouraghdam, 2022).

For this reason, Collins (2021) observed that human resource performance practices specifically performance appraisal, reward system/compensation, staffing, promotion and job assignment strongly fosters employee engagement both at the micro and macro level. In line with Shuck and Wollard (2019), employees in a selected pharmaceutical company in Nigeria understudied in this paper can get engaged (absorbed, dedicated and be made to exercise vigor while doing their job) if quality human resource management functions are exercised by competent personnel the way it should. As observed by Gadi and Kee (2020), employee engagement as a greater link between employees and their jobs, employers, or coworkers. It is a commitment to ensuring that the organization fulfills its mission and vision statements by ensuring its workforce are driven to execute daily tasks in a dedicated, absorbed and actively manner, as well as exercise vigor (George, Okon, & Akaighe, 2023). Based on the foregoing arguments, this paper examined work engagement from the dimension of HRM practices using the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry as a reference point.

Issues that range from adoption of traditional human resource practices, poor leadership style (absence of charismatic and democratic principles), lack of motivation, among others. For example, the federal government of Nigeria have been worried about the pharmaceutical industry's expansion and development in Nigeria, particularly in terms of ensuring degree of quality services delivered to the public (Isimoya, Bakare & Olaniyan, 2022). As a result, the industry has faced expropriation and destruction of subpar services throughout the country. Therefore, this have made management of organizations in Nigeria's pharmaceutical industry in Isolo, Lagos State confronted with the challenge of improving employee work engagement through HRM practices (Nwachukwu, Vu, Chládková & Agboga, 2022).

In addition, there is paucity of literatures on the subject matter with reference to Nigeria's pharmaceutical industry. The majority of studies are conducted in industrialized countries, with only a few studies conducted in Nigeria. As a result, in order to contribute to knowledge and close this research gap, this study focuses on the relationship between human resource management practices and employee work engagement among employees in organisations in Nigeria's pharmaceutical industry. Hence, the goal of this study is to look into the relationship between HRM and employee engagement in selected pharmaceutical companies (Neros pharmaceuticals and Drugfield Pharmaceuticals) in Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The overarching objectives of the study was to investigate the nexus between HRM practices and employees work engagement). Other specific objectives are to;

- i. examine the effect of recruitment and selection on vigour;
- ii. assess the influence of training and development on dedication; and
- iii. find out the effect of compensation and reward on absorption.

### **Hypotheses Formulation**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Recruitment and selection do not have an effect on vigour.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant influence of training and development on dedication.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant effect of compensation and reward on absorption.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

This section of the review presents the conceptual study, which includes a review of the study's key concepts, as listed below:

#### **HRM Practices**

Human resource management is concerned with all aspects of how people are employed and managed in organizations (Oladipupo & Olubusayo, 2020). It covers activities such as: recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and reward, safety, etc.

#### **Recruitment and Selection**

One common mistake made by organization human resource (HR) and department managers is to view recruiting and employee engagement methods as two separate tasks (Heslina & Syahrini, 2021). Once they understand more about employee engagement, they will see that these two aspects of organization are closely related (Kerdpitak & Jermstittiparsert, 2020). In fact, the first and most important step of employee engagement happens during the recruiting process. This is seen by selecting the right candidates during the recruiting process, organization are building a team that will work together well on projects and assignments. During the recruiting process, recruitment is related to job engagement because it helps to focus on the attitude and personality of each employee that the organization are interviewing (Pham, 2021). This makes organisations look at the ways the employee with fit in with the rest of the team.

#### **Training and Development**

Every organization needs to have well trained and experienced people to perform the activities that have to be done. This is very important because it will help to raise the skill level and increase employees' versatility and adoptability (Navajas-Romero *et al.*, 2022). A situation where employees are not given appropriate training, job performance would decline (Nwachukwu, Vu, Chládková & Agboga, 2022). The implication could be that job would become more complex, customers will leave the company, labour turnover will set in, the company's image would be negatively affected among others. In a rapidly changing society, employee training and development should not be seen as only as activity that is desirable but should be seen and taken serious as activities that must be committed to maintain a viable, knowledgeable and engaged workforce (Oladipupo & Olubusayo, 2020).

Training and development can help get engaged in two ways (Oluwatunmise *et al.*, 2020). First, establish or adopt a short-term process that involves use of a systematic and organized procedure for non-managerial personnel to learn technical knowledge and skills for a definite purpose. Second, established a long-term educational process that involves the use of a systematic and organized procedure for managerial personnel to learn conceptual and theoretical knowledge for general purpose would help to get employees engaged. A case where the above actions are taken rightly, employees get engaged (Ogueyungbo *et al.*, 2022).

#### **Compensation and Reward**

Reward for individual employees remains one of the most controversial areas (Raji *et al.*, 2021), which is a part of compensation package used to motivate, retain as well as attract

employees to stay. Recognition is important because it serves as a form of feedback where it helps to in-form employees on how well they are performing. However, Schultz (2021) asserted that in order to create ongoing motivation and commitment through employee recognition, reward must be communicated to all employees. Employee reward programs is a method of motivating employees to change work habits and key behavior for the benefit of the organization.

### **Employees' Work Engagement**

Work engagement is a concept void of a universal or generally agreed meaning among scholars and definition across the globe. It is a "good, rewarding, work-related state of mind marked by vitality, devotion, and immersion (Schultz, 2021)." Even when confronted with challenges, vigor refers to a high degree of energy and mental resilience at work (Singh, 2022). Work-related commitment, passion, inspiration, challenge, and pride are all examples of dedication. Absorption refers to a person's concentration and the fact that he or she is happily absorbed in their work. Song *et al.* (2023) perceives work engagement as a stronger bond between employees and their jobs, their employers, or the individuals they work with.

### **Resource-Based View Theory**

The resource-based view theory was propounded by Penrose 1959. Within strategic management research, the resource-based perspective has practically become the accepted paradigm. Barney (1991) was the one who linked and promoted the theory. To a great extent, Yandi and Havidz (2022) agreed that the resource-based view underpins the philosophy and approaches to human resource practices. He went on to say that a resource-based perspective is made up of a variety of resources in an organization, including human resources that give it its distinct personality and competitive edge. According to Yandi and Havidz (2022), human resource advantage is achieved through a combination of "human capital advantage," which comes from employing people with competitively valuable knowledge and skills, and "human process advantage," which comes from establishing difficult to imitate highly evolved processes within the firm, such as cross-departmental cooperation and executive development.

### **Empirical Review**

Employees that are dedicated to their jobs are more engaged at work, have better health, and perform better (Ade-Adeniji, Adeniji & Imhonopi, 2021). Dedicated employees have higher job satisfaction, higher organizational loyalty, and less readiness to leave the organization than non-dedicated employees (Bayode & Duarte, 2022). Employees who are dedicated have a positive attitude (Gadi& Kee, 2020). Overall, loyal employees engage in more active organizational activities and are willing to pay a higher salary. This was proven in a study of Dutch employees, which found that engaged employees work more overtime than disengaged ones (Collins, 2021). Darban, Karatepe and Rezapouraghdam (2022) looked into the link between organizational resources, employee engagement, and performance. According to a poll of 342 employees from 114 hotels, organizational resources can have a beneficial impact on employee engagement, which in turn can have a positive impact on employee performance.

George, Okon and Akaighe (2023) stated that employee engagement had a beneficial impact on corporate citizenship behavior based on study involving 102 employees from various firms through lunch of employee recognition, learning or training programme. Employee engagement has a favorable effect on employees' out-of-role performance, according to Heslina and Syahrani (2021) theoretical model. According to Isimoya, Bakare and Olaniyan

(2020), there is a -0.30 link between employee engagement and employee turnover, a 0.33 correlation with customer satisfaction, and a 0.17 correlation with employee profit. The effect of the above data shows that employee turnover could be addressed through the feasible work engagement programs such as training, recognition exercise, competition exercise of a HR manager.

### **Recruitment, Selection, and Vigour**

One common mistake made by organization human resource (HR) and department managers is to view recruiting and employee engagement methods as two separate tasks. Once they understand more about vigour, they will see that these two aspects of organization are closely related (Kerdpitak & Jermstittiparsert, 2020). In fact, the first and most important step of vigour happens during the recruiting process. By selecting the right candidates during the recruiting process, organization are building a team that will work together well on projects and assignments (Oladipupo & Olubusayo, 2020). The manager in charge of human resource management would be able to identify and select qualified job applicant who get highly energetic and equipped with high resilience while executing their job. Such an employee would be able to motivate and his colleagues in the organisation to invest their physical and mental effort persistently to ensure that the set objectives of an organization are accomplished. As argued by Nwachukwu *et al.* (2022), recruitment and selection would help employees exert strength that is more physical, effort, and enthusiasm on the job. Eventually, performance would rise.

According to Navajas-Romero (2022), successful recruitment and selection practices is closely linked to vigour (He argued that during the recruiting process, consideration is given to the attitude and personality of each job applicant in an organization through interviewing. Thus, this could help human resource identify and select qualified personnel who could exercise vigour on the job, get others motivated, and improve company's performance via systematic approach. He therefore, emphasized that organisation should look at the ways the employee with fit in with the rest of the team. Also, consider the attitude of each job applicant, and try to find applicants who are self-starters and willing to step forward to accomplish goals as a team. Organisation look for candidates who are particularly passionate about advancing the goals and mission of your community. Besides, Collins (2021) argued that civic-minded candidates often make the best employees as they are driven to better their community and the lives of their friends and neighbors. Organization should follow an open-door policy.

There should be both upward and downward communication with the use of appropriate communication channels in the organization (Oluwatumise, 2020). If the employee is given a say in the decision-making and has the right to be heard by his boss, then the degree of vigour or physical strength they would exert in the job would rise. This would also result to high level of dedication and absorption on the job for benefits of both internal and external stakeholders of a company. Good recruiting will help an employee to understand their role and hence contribute to the organization's success (Ogueyungbo *at al.*, 2022). It is very clear that vigour begins with employees' clear understanding of what is happening in the organization (Raji *et al.*, 2021). Employees should be kept well in-formed about the changes that affect them.

### **Training, Development, and Dedication**

According to Schultz (2021), dedication refers to a state where employees of an organisation are strongly and passionately absorbed to the organization and in a consistent manner are recognized, valued, seen as a significant asset of the organization and get inspired,



enthusiastic and challenge with high task. In line with this, every organization needs to have well trained and experienced people to perform the activities that have to be done (Song *et al.*, 2023). The importance of this cannot be overemphasized. In consonance with Yandi and Havidz (2022), quality training and development program at the enterprise level becomes necessary to raise the skill levels, increase the versatility and adoptability of employees, as well the level of dedication. It was found out that a significant relationship exists between training and employee level of dedication through on the job effective programs in a cost-effective manner. This could significantly increase or enhance employees' level of dedication to an organisation. For instance, Aboramadan *et al.* (2020) argued that inadequate job performance or decline in productivity or changes resulting out of job redesigning or a technological breakthrough requires some type of training and development efforts. As the job become more complex, the importance of employee development also increases to enhance employees' level of dedication.

Besides, Ade-Adeniji, Adeniji and Imhonopi (2021) argued that in today's complex and highly dynamic world of business, training and development programs are not only an activity that is desirable but also an activity that an organization must commit resources to if it is to maintain a viable and knowledgeable work force, improve its level of staff commitment, satisfaction and performance. In addition, Bayode and Duarte (2022) argued that effective training and development programs at the micro level would significantly reduce level of employee turnover in a systematic organisation. Importance of training and development cannot be overemphasized. It helps to enhance employee's level of dedication, absorption on the job, and performance (Collins, 2021). As argued that Darban, Karatepe and Rezapouraghdam (2022), that a viable and knowledgeable work force of a company enhances workers level of dedication and commitment. Thus, it points out that training through a systematic process of learning a sequence of programmed behavior get employees to become more dedicated on their job.

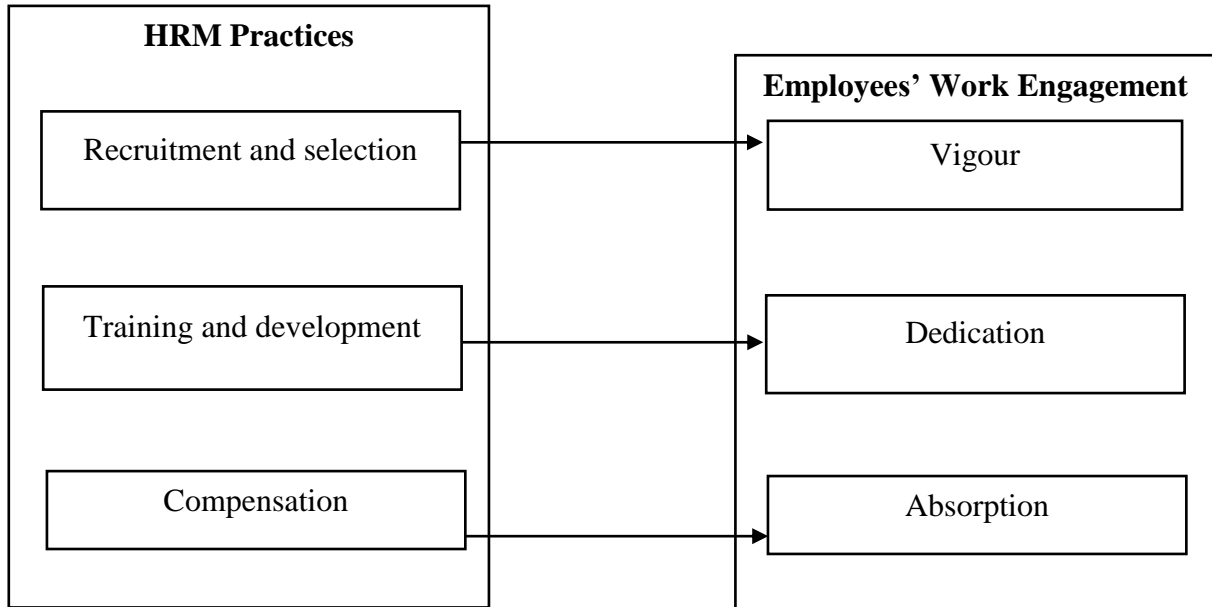
In all training, there is some education and, in all education, there is some training. The training and education cannot be separated from development. Training is application of knowledge (Gadi & Kee, 2020). It attempts to improve employee's performance on the current job or prepare them for an intended job. Training is the corner stone of sound management, for it makes employees more effective and productive. It is an integral part of the whole management programmed. Development is a related process. It covers not only those activities, which improve job performance, but also those, which bring about growth of the personality, help individuals in the progress towards maturity and actualization of their potential capacities so that they become not only good employees but also better men and hold greater responsibility (George, Okon & Akaighe, 2023).

### **Compensation, Reward, and Absorption**

Absorption is a state where an employee of a company concentrates fully and become happy with detaching himself or herself from work (Heslina & Syahrini, 2021). This point out that reward for individual employees remains one of the most controversial issues that should be taken serious and handle with caution in a company if management want to enhance employee level of dedication (Isimoya, Bakare & Olaniyan, 2020). Reward is a part of compensation package used to motivate, get employees dedicated, and remain with an organisation. However, Kerdpitak and Jermisittiparsert (2020) asserted that in order to create ongoing motivation and commitment through employee recognition, reward must be communicated to all employees. He argued further that effective administration of reward package to employees in a fair, reasonable and equitable manner would significantly enhance employees' level of dedication. Employee reward programs is a method of motivating

employees to change work habits, become committed and absorbed in their work, and exhibit productive key behaviors for the organisation.

**Conceptual Framework**



**Figure 1:** Nexus between HRM Practices and Employees Work Engagement

Source: Authors' Schematic Model

**METHODOLOGY**

This section appraised the scientific application of relevant research methods concerned about the phenomena under study. This study employed a descriptive research design. This choice was used because it facilitates a methodical exposition of the topic of the article and helps in addressing the who, what, when, where, and how of the research questions (Business Dictionary, 2020). The number of employees' or population size and distribution as at the time of investigation for the selected pharmaceutical firms, which were "Swiss pharmaceuticals and Emzor Pharmaceuticals", located in Ibadan, Oyo State. During the time the study was carried was five hundred and ninety-three (593) from the two selected pharmaceutical firms. The population of staff who work at Swiss pharmaceuticals was 362 while and Emzor Pharmaceuticals Two Hundred and thirty-one (231) employees. The data were retrieved from the human resource department of both pharmaceutical firms. The cluster sampling technique was employed in this study. This was because it aids the formation of samples that has similar features or geographical proximity that are related with the subject variables. To determine the require sample size, a simplified formula developed by Yamane in 1976 was used

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = required sample size, N = population, e = level of precision

N = 592 e = 0.10 or 0.05%

Therefore:  $n = \frac{592}{1+592(0.05)^2}$  n = 232

From the above formula, the study will adopt a sample size of 232.

Therefore, 232 questionnaires were shared to staff of the two selected pharmaceutical companies in Oyo State, Nigeria through stratified sampling techniques. That is employees were selected from the various existing department of both organisations. The structured questionnaire would be shared by the researcher on an individual level to respondents that suit the area of interest researched about and to get validated facts from research participants. The questionnaire was made up of open-ended questions.

For this study, primary data appears the best type of data to use because the research design is descriptive in nature. Questionnaire is the chosen source of data generation employed for the study. It aided the acquisition of required kind of data needed for this study from the respondents. For this study, Schaufeli and Arnold Bakker (2004) fourteen scale dimension of work engagement divided into three variables which are vigor, dedication and absorption was used was used to measure employee work engagement. The questionnaire will be administered by the researcher for the purpose of applying the research ethics of seeking participants informed consent and also ensure respect of participant’s privacy.

**RESULT**

The use of frequency count would be employed to analysis the participant’s demographic information while the inferential statistics of Pearson correlation and regression will be employed to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25.0 for Windows.

**Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants**

**Table 1: Bio-demographic data**

Demographic Features	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	151	65
	Female	81	35
Age	18-27 years	23	9.91
	28-38 years	93	40.08
	39-49 years	95	40.95
	50-60 years	20	8.63
	61 years and above	1	0.43
Marital Status	Single	78	33.62
	Married	150	64.66
	Divorced/Separated	4	1.72
Duration	1- 5 years	12	5.17
	6-10 years	62	26.72
	11-15 years	112	48.28
	16 years and above	46	19.83
Length of Service	Junior Staff	34	14.66
	Senior Staff	106	45.69
	Management Staff	74	31.90

Source: Field Survey, (2024)



A tabular summary of the fundamental data on the participants is shown in Table 1 above. It was deduced from the table that 155(65%) participants from Swiss pharmaceuticals and Emzor Pharmaceuticals in Oyo State were male, while 81(35%) were female. Concerning the age of respondents, 23(9.91%) were between the age of 18-27 years, 93(40.1%) were between the age of 28-38 years, 95(40.95%) were between the age of 39-49 years, 20(8.63%) were between the age of 50-60 years, while 1(0.43%) were between the age of 61 years and above.

Concerning participants' marital status, 78(33.62%) were single, 64.66% were married, while 4(1.72%) have divorced/separated. Concerning duration, 12 participants represented by 5.17% have been in the organization for 1-5 years, 62 participants represented by 26.72% have been in the organization between 6-10 years. 112 participants represented by 48.28% participants have been in the organization between 11-15 years, while 46 participants represented by 19.83% have been in the company for 16 years and above.

**Test of Hypotheses**

Research hypotheses were tested to aid the realization of the above-mentioned research aim and objectives of this research project. This was feasible through the use of SPSS version twenty to analyze the acquired data gotten from the field. Regression statistics was the adopted statistical analysis used to test the research hypotheses of this research project to ascertain the level of discrepancy between the observed and the expected outcomes.

**Table 2: Correlation matrix showing relationship among the study variables**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
WE	1							
RC	.563**	1						
TD	.676**	.245**	1					
CMPSN	.635**	.438**	.468**	1				

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

RESEL – Recruitment and selection, WE – Work Engagement, COREW – Compensation and Reward, and TRADEV – Training and Development.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** This hypothesis states a significant level of relationship exists between HRM practices of recruitment, selection and vigour among employees of Swiss pharmaceuticals and Emzor Pharmaceuticals. This was tested with the Pearson Correlation Coefficient using SPSS version 26. The result shows significant positive relationship (r = 0.563; P < 0.05). This implies that as recruitment & selection of employees improves, there is a commensurate increase in level of physical strength and enthusiasm (vigour) exerted by employees in the above aforementioned companies. Therefore, employees of the aforementioned companies would exercise more vigor, become more dedicated and absorbed for the benefit of the companies.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** This hypothesis states risk taking has a significant relationship between HRM practice of training, development and dedication among employees of Swiss pharmaceuticals and Emzor Pharmaceuticals. This was tested with the Pearson Correlation Coefficient using SPSS version 25. The result shows significant positive relationship (r = 0.676; P < 0.05). This implies that as HRM practice of training and development practices of the above companies improves, there is a commensurate increase in employees' level of dedication. Hence, employees' level of performance would improve, labour turnover would decrease, etc.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** This hypothesis states that there will be a significant relationship between HRM practice of compensation, reward and absorption among employees of Swiss Pharmaceuticals and Emzor Pharmaceuticals. This was tested with the Pearson Correlation Coefficient using SPSS version 20. The result shows significant positive relationship ( $r = 0.635$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). This implies that as HRM practice of training and development improves, a commensurate increase in employees' level of absorption in the above-mentioned companies would be experience.

**Table 3: Regression results on the dependent and independent variables of the study**

Variables	B	B	T	Sig	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	F	P
Recruitment and selection	.002	.001	.018	.986	.523	.273	.250	11.584	P<.05
Compensation	.274	.144	1.302	.195					
Training and development	.465	.279	2.987	.003					

Dependent Variable: Employee Work Engagement

The aforementioned table shows the percentage of variation in the dependent variable that the regression model's three predictor variables recruitment and selection, reward and pay, and training and development. The model's R value is .523, and its R square value is .273; it accounts for recruitment, compensation and training. Recruitment, compensation and training all have an adjusted R square of 2.50. It implies that there are other variables that account for 95% of the variance in participant's work engagement that were not included and treated in the study because the independent variable and dependent variable together only explained around 5% of the variance. The outcome displayed in the table above demonstrates the combined impact of the independent variables (recruitment, compensation and training) on the dependent variable (work engagement). Multiple regression analysis of variance produced an F-ratio of 11.584 at 0.05 level of significance. The chart, on the other hand, demonstrates how each of the study's independent variables (recruitment, compensation and training) contributes in a different way to work engagement of employees in the Nigerian pharmaceuticals sector. Absorption made the largest unique contribution to the prediction of training and development ( $\beta = .465$ ;  $t = 2.987$ ;  $P > 0.05$ ), followed by compensation and pay ( $\beta = .274$ ;  $t = 1.302$ ;  $P > 0.05$ ), and finally recruitment and selection ( $\beta = .002$ ;  $t = 0.018$ ;  $P > 0.05$ ). None of the other variables, however, made a unique statistically significant contribution to the equation.

### CONCLUSION

Human resource management is the driving for the fosters organisational advancement and as such, it is expected that if the functions of human resource as explored in this study are well directed and fairly administered, it has the propensity if fostering a positive climate to aid employee's engagement in the pharmaceutical industry.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Management of Pharmaceutical firms should formulate and implement only specific HRM policies capable to get employees engaged. Theses polices should focus strictly on attracting and recruiting talent, improve their knowledge, skills and capabilities through training and put in place a fair, reasonable and equitable reward system.

- ii. Management of Pharmaceutical firms should establish forum for get together between employees as a strategy to improve work engagement and performance.
- iii. Management should create human resource care assistance program as it will help the employee and increase their level of engagement.

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