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## PERCEIVED CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT IN WORKPLACE CAREER PROGRAMME

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study aims to quantify the relationship between the workplace career programme, perceived career development support, and job satisfaction. The survey method was employed to gather self-reported questionnaires from employees who work at a defence-based higher learning institution in Malaysia. The outcomes of SmartPLS path model analysis showed two important findings: first, the relationship between career planning and career management was positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Second, the relationship between perceived career development*

*support was positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction. This finding confirms that perceived career development support does act as an important mediating variable in the relationship between workplace career programme and job satisfaction in the organizational sample. This study includes a discussion, implications, and a conclusion.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Workplace career programme, career management, perceived career development support, job satisfaction*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION:** M5, M53

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Career development programmes provide stimulation and fulfilment at numerous phases of employee development, detecting capacity in advance and granting prospects for learning. In the workplace the career programme is often seen as a vital human resource development and management function. Career development programmes enable HR managers, managers, and their stakeholders to work together to plan, organize, formalize, lead, and monitor career programmes to develop not only employees' jobs but the whole stage, process, attitude, behaviour and state of affairs relating to employees' work life (Chang, Chou & Cheng, 2007; Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2000; Ismail, Daud & Madrah, 2011; Puaah & Ananthram, 2006). From this perspective, management often designs and administers various kinds of career programmes that enable employees who work in different job groups to match their interests and capabilities with current and future organizational opportunities and changes. This effort can motivate employees to maintain and support organizational strategy and goals in an era of global competition (Baruch, 2004; Greenhaus et al., 2000; Ismail et al., 2011; Martin, Romero, Valle & Dolan 2001). It also enables the organization to achieve a balance between the individual's career needs and the organization's workforce requirement (Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007).

A review of recent human capital development literature shows that workplace career programmes consist of two influential features: career planning and career management (Conger, 2002; Ismail et al., 2011; Nachbagauer & Riedl, 2002). Career planning is often viewed as management identifying career options and preferences, setting up development objectives, and establishing action plans to help employees match their interests and capabilities with organizational opportunities. For example, information gathered from the various types of assessment tools, such as vocational counselling, workbooks, and/or career resource centres, is often used by management to design career plans that suit its employees' needs and expectations in organizations (Appelbaum & Shapiro, 2002; Ismail et al., 2011; Mondy et al., 2002; Puaah & Ananthram, 2006). Career management is usually seen as talent management, in which management monitors the implementation of career programmes in order to ease employees' adaptation to rapid organizational changes such as a turbulent working environment, job instability and insecurity, flexible work practice, and multiskilling (Ready & Conger, 2007). The ability of employees to adapt to these organizational changes can enhance the progression of their career ladders in organizations (Adekola, 2011; Greenhaus, et al., 2000; Ismail et al., 2011; Martin et al., 2001).

Extant studies on workplace career programmes highlight the fact that the ability of management to properly plan and manage career programmes for employees who work in different job categories may have a significant impact on employee outcomes, especially job satisfaction (Yu, 2011). From an organizational behaviour perspective, job satisfaction is often understood as an attitude towards work-related conditions, namely extrinsic and intrinsic job facets. If employees have experienced high satisfaction with their jobs, this may create a pleasurable or emotional state and a positive reaction in organizations (Linz, 2003; Wiener, 1982), the positive emotional state of individuals, and pleasurable feelings and/or attitudes towards their work resulting from their appraisal of their jobs (Appelbaum & Shapiro, 2002; Linz, 2003; McShane & Glinow, 2005)

Unexpectedly, a thorough analysis of the workplace career programme reveals that the effect of career planning and management on job satisfaction is indirectly influenced by perceived career development support (Yu, 2011). Many scholars like Greenhaus, et al. (2000), Herr (2001), Mondy, Noe and Premeaux (2002), Chen, Chang and Yeh (2004), Puaah and Ananthram (2006), and Yu (2011) have broadly interpreted perceived career development support as how far employees feel appreciated with the different kinds of career development activities implemented by management to manage their talents and enhance their career paths' progression. Some important career development activities often implemented by management are training programmes, succession plans, counselling sessions, and job rotations. If employees view such career development activities as useful in enhancing their necessary knowledge, up-to-date skills, latest abilities, and positive attitudes this can motivate them to improve job performance, adding value to current and future jobs, and induce feelings of fulfillment and life span well-being

Within the workplace career model, many scholars view that career planning, career management, perceived career development support, and job satisfaction are distinct but highly interrelated concepts. For example, the readiness of management to properly plan and adequately manage career programmes will assist employees in developing their career paths and as a consequence may lead to enhanced job satisfaction in organizations (Chen et al., 2004; Puaah & Ananthram, 2006). Although the nature of this relationship is interesting, the role of perceived career development support as an effective mediating variable in workplace career models is not much discussed (Ismail, Madrah, Aminudin & Ismail, 2013; Puaah & Ananthram, 2006). Many scholars argue that perceived career development support has been given less emphasis due to several factors: first, the characteristics of workplace career programmes have been over-

emphasized. Second, a simple correlation analysis has frequently been employed to describe general respondent attitudes toward the types of workplace career programme, and to determine the degree of association between workplace career programme and career outcome. Third, less emphasis has been given to the discussion of the significant role of human needs and expectations in influencing the effect of workplace career programmes on career effectiveness. As a result, these findings have not adequately provided recommendations to be used as guidelines by practitioners in understanding the complexity of workplace career programmes and in designing career programmes that suit their organizational strategies and goals (Chen et al., 2004; Ismail et al., 2013; Puaah & Ananthram, 2006). This situation is the reason we want to further explore the nature of this relationship.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study has four major objectives: first, to measure the relationship between career planning and job satisfaction; second, to measure the relationship between career management and job satisfaction; third, to measure the relationship between career planning, perceived career development support, and job satisfaction; and fourth, to measure the relationship between career management, perceived career development support, and job satisfaction.

## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In previous surveys most assessments linking workplace career programmes to job satisfaction have been conducted based on direct correlation analysis methods in the various organizational settings, such as the perceptions of 445 participants from a 10-year longitudinal study of educational and occupational socialization in Portugal (Ferreira, Santos, Fonseca & Haase, 2007), perceptions of 330 Swiss eighth graders (Hirschi, 2009), perceptions of 620 students from the Portuguese school system (Janeiro, 2010), and perceptions of 140 employees of the Sabah Local Authority in Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2013). The outcomes of these surveys reported that the capability of management to appropriately plan and manage career programmes for employees serving in different job hierarchies and categories had been an important predictor of job satisfaction in the organizations (Ferreira et al., 2007; Hirschi, 2009; Janeiro, 2010; Ismail et al., 2013). Hence, it was hypothesized that:

H1: Career planning positively correlated with job satisfaction

H2: Career management positively correlated with job satisfaction

Further, several studies were conducted using an indirect effects model to investigate career programmes based on different samples, such as perceptions of 367 R&D personnel from Hsinchu Science-Based Industrial Park in north Taiwan (Chen et al., 2004), perceptions of 505 employees of a leading international Singaporean hotel in Singapore (Puah & Ananthram, 2006), and perceptions of 140 employees of Sabah Local Authority in Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2013). The outcomes of these surveys indicated that the readiness of management to appropriately plan and manage career programmes had adequately assisted employees to develop their career paths. As a result, it could lead to enhanced job satisfaction in these organizations (Chen et al., 2004; Ismail et al., 2013; Puah & Ananthram, 2006).

These studies are consistent with the notion of motivation theory. For example, Herzberg's (1959, 1966) motivator-hygiene theory states that recognition, achievement, possibility of growth, advancement, responsibility, and work itself are important factors that enhance individuals' satisfaction. Furthermore, Alderfer's (1972) existence, relatedness, and growth theory posits that basic material existence requirements of human achievement are important elements driving individuals' actions. Recently, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) has been used in organizational studies to illustrate the motivational basis behind employee attitudes and behaviours in workplaces (Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002). Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that the exchange relationship between two parties often goes beyond pure economic exchange and entails social exchange. Correspondingly, researchers contend that employer and employee exchange not only measures means such as money, services, and information, but also socioemotional factors such as appreciation, respect, and assistance (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). In addition, McClelland's (1962) learned needs theory addresses the fact that need for achievement may reinforce individuals' behaviour. Thus, Hall and Associates's (1986) working model of organizational career development reveals that career plan and management are important catalysts for developing individuals' career satisfaction and may induce positive career outcomes. Application of these theories in a career programme model shows that the capability of managers to consider human needs (e.g., work motivation characteristics, personal growth, personal achievement, and career satisfaction) in planning and managing career programmes will sufficiently support employees to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills and subsequently craft better career paths. This may lead

to greater job satisfaction in organizations (Chen et al., 2004; Ismail et al., 2013; Puah & Ananthram, 2006).

Based on the literature, it can be hypothesized as below:

- H3: Perceived career development support positively mediates the relationship between career planning and job satisfaction.
- H4: Perceived career development support positively mediates the relationship between career management and job satisfaction.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. Research Design**

This study utilized a cross-sectional research design, which allowed the researchers to integrate the workplace career literature, the semi-structured interview, the pilot study, and the actual survey as the main procedure to gather data. As suggested by prominent scholars, the use of this research procedure can decrease the weaknesses of a single research method and gather accurate data, less biased data, and high quality data (Cresswell, 1998; Sekaran, 2000). This study was conducted at a defence-based higher learning institution in Malaysia. At the initial stage of this study a semi-structured interview was conducted involving two experienced HR managers and two experienced support staff in the human resource management department of the studied organization. Information gained from this interview method was used to understand the nature and features of the workplace career programme, perceived career development support, and employees' career development, as well as the relationship between such variables in the context of this study. Next a survey questionnaire was drafted based on the workplace career programme literature. Then a pilot study was conducted by discussing the survey questionnaire with the interviewed participants in order to verify the content and format of the questionnaire for an actual study. Finally, a back translation technique was employed to translate the survey questionnaires into Malay and English versions in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings (Cresswell, 1998; Wright, 1996).

### **4.2. Measures**

The survey questionnaire has three sections. First, career planning had four items and career management had three items that were adapted from career

programme literature (Baruch, 2004; Granrose & Portwood, 1987; Greenhaus et al., 2000; Ismail et al., 2013; Martin et al., 2001; Whymark & Ellis, 1999). The dimensions used to measure career planning are design, goal and interest, while the dimensions used to measure career management are assistance, opportunity, and review. Second, perceived career development support had three items adapted from career development support literature (Chen et al., 2004; Herr, 2001; Ismail et al., 2013; Jepsen & Dickson, 2003; Puaah & Ananthran, 2006). The dimensions used to measure perceived career development support are personal needs and job needs. Third, job satisfaction had eight items adapted from career programme literature (Chen et al., 2004; Ismail et al., 2013; Knoop, 1993; Linz, 2003; Nachbagauer & Riedl, 2002). The dimensions used to measure job satisfaction are internal and external job conditions. These items were measured using a seven-item scale ranging from “strongly disagree/dissatisfied” (1) to “strongly agree/satisfied” (7). Demographic variables were used as controlling variables because this study focused on employee attitudes.

### **4.3. Sample**

A convenient sampling technique was employed to distribute 200 survey questionnaires to employees working in all departments in the studied organization through the contact persons (e.g., secretaries of department heads, assistant managers, and/or the human resource manager). This sampling technique was employed in this study because the HR manager could not give the list of registered employees to the researchers for confidential reasons and this situation did not allow the researchers to choose participants randomly from the population. Of the total, 92 usable questionnaires were returned to the researchers, yielding a 46% response rate. The survey questions were answered by participants based on their consent and on a voluntary basis. The number of this sample exceeds the minimum sample of 30 participants as required by probability sampling technique, showing that it may be analyzed using inferential statistics (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Sekaran, 2000).

## **5. FINDINGS**

### **5.1. Respondent Characteristics**

Table 1 shows that majority of respondents were male (52.2%), aged between 28 to 32 years old (47.8%), diploma holders (39.1%), employees who served from 1 to 5 years (88%), and employees who had monthly salaries of between RM1001 to RM2000 (41.3%).

**Table 1:** Participant Characteristics (N=92)

Participant Characteristics	Sub-Profile	Percentage
Gender	Male	52.2
	Female	47.8
Age	< 27 years old	25.0
	28 to 32 years old	47.8
	33 to 37 years old	19.6
	38 to 42 years old	3.3
	> 43 years old	4.3
Education	Degree	30.4
	Diploma	39.1
	STPM	12.0
	SPM	18.5
Length of Service	1 to 5 years	88.0
	6 to 10 years	8.7
	11 to 15 years	1.1
	16 to 20 years	2.2
Monthly Salary	< RM800	4.3
	RM801 to 1000	8.7
	RM1001 to 2000	41.3
	RM2001 to 3000	29.3
	RM3001 to 4000	9.8
	RM4001 to 5000	5.4
	> RM5000	1.1

SPM/MCE	: Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia/ Malaysia Certificate of Education
STPM/HSC	: Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia/Higher School Certificate
RM	: Malaysian Ringgit

Source: Author's calculation

**5.2. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

Table 2 shows the results of convergent and discriminant validity analyses. All constructs had values of AVE larger than 0.5, indicating that they met the acceptable standard of convergent validity (Barclay et al., 1995; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler, Christian, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009). Furthermore, all constructs had values of  $\sqrt{AVE}$  in the diagonal greater than the squared correlation with other constructs in the off diagonal, showing that all constructs met the acceptable standard of discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2009; Yang, 2009).

**Table 2:** The Results of Convergent and Discriminant Validity Analyses

Variable	AVE	Career Planning	Career Management	Career Development Support	Job Satisfaction
Career Planning	0.6367	<b>0.7979</b>			
Career Management	0.7535	0.4552	<b>0.8680</b>		
Perceived Career Development Support	0.8030	0.4876	0.6448	<b>0.8961</b>	
Job Satisfaction	0.7450	0.2629	0.7250	0.6137	<b>0.8631</b>

Source: Author’s calculation

Table 3 shows the factor loadings and cross loadings for different constructs. The correlation between items and factors had higher loadings than other items in the different constructs, and the loadings of variables greater than 0.7 in their own constructs in the model are considered adequate (Henseler et al., 2009). In sum, the validity of measurement model met the criteria.

**Table 3:** The Results of Factor Loadings and Cross Loadings for Different Constructs

Construct/ Item	Career planning	Career Management	Perceive Career Development Support	Job Satisfaction
<u>Career Planning</u>				
CP1	<b>0.704618</b>	0.270847	0.188639	0.272294
CP2	<b>0.810961</b>	0.236012	0.305583	0.206185
CP3	<b>0.903602</b>	0.431055	0.511822	0.240068
CP4	<b>0.759155</b>	0.441041	0.418539	0.162417
<u>Career Management</u>				
CM1	0.299873	<b>0.911612</b>	0.636937	0.736941
CM2	0.310699	<b>0.876679</b>	0.480487	0.646148
CM3	0.583663	<b>0.812893</b>	0.541670	0.490686
<u>Perceive Career Development Support</u>				
CD1	0.435480	0.524370	<b>0.868126</b>	0.503267
CD2	0.432821	0.512980	<b>0.912458</b>	0.490240
CD3	0.442064	0.673440	<b>0.907102</b>	0.636018
<u>Job Satisfaction</u>				
JS1	0.204900	0.595782	0.444366	<b>0.760188</b>

JS2	0.368668	0.610447	0.522805	<b>0.830722</b>
JS3	0.295436	0.707352	0.499974	<b>0.832287</b>
JS4	0.113034	0.569453	0.491097	<b>0.904805</b>
JS5	0.239158	0.676895	0.651341	<b>0.905777</b>
JS6	0.154183	0.654294	0.523013	<b>0.909364</b>
JS7	0.287762	0.586880	0.509120	<b>0.855264</b>
JS8	0.152656	0.600432	0.557180	<b>0.895290</b>

Source: Author’s calculation

Table 4 shows the results of reliability analysis for the instrument. The values of composite reliability and Cronbach’s Alpha were greater than 0.8, indicating that the instrument used in this study had high internal consistency (Henseler et al., 2009; Nunally & Bernstein, 1994).

**Table 4:** Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha

Construct	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
Career Planning	0.874248	0.817777
Career Management	0.901462	0.835871
Perceived Career Development Support	0.924379	0.877953
Job Satisfaction	0.958836	0.950568

Source: Author’s calculation

### 5.3. Analysis of the Constructs

Table 5 shows the results of Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics. The mean values for the variables are between 5.1 and 5.8, signifying the levels of career planning, career management, perceived career development support, and job satisfaction ranging from high (4) to the highest level (7). The correlation coefficients for the relationship between the independent variable (i.e., career planning and career management) and the mediating variable (i.e., perceived career development support), and the relationship between the mediating variable (i.e., perceived career development support) and the dependent variable (i.e., job satisfaction) and were less than 0.90, indicating that the data were not affected by serious collinearity problems (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998). These statistical results further confirmed that the constructs satisfactorily met the standards of validity and reliability analyses as shown in Table 3.

**Table 5.** Pearson Correlation Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Pearson Correlation Analysis (r)			
			1	2	3	4
1. Career Planning	5.8	.73	1			
2. Career Management	5.5	.90	.81**	1		
3. Perceived Career Development Support	5.1	1.3	.45**	.45**	1	
4. Job Satisfaction	5.1	1.2	.27**	.11	.60**	1

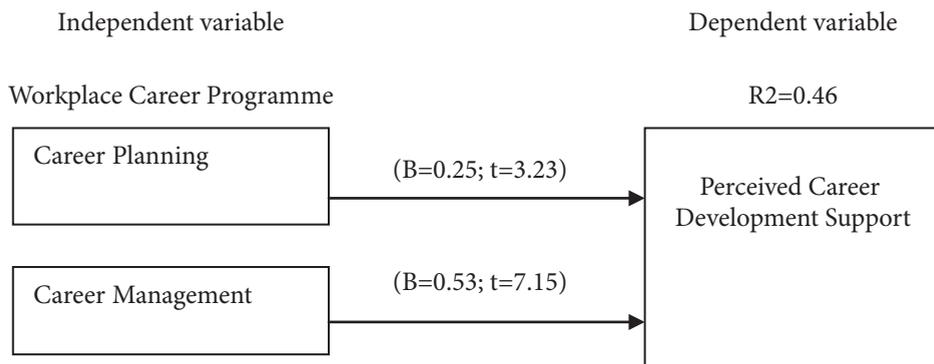
Significant at**p<0.01	Reliability Estimation is shown in a diagonal
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Source: Author’s calculation

**5.4. Outcomes of Testing Hypotheses 1 and 2**

Figure 1 shows that the quality of model predictions in the analysis was demonstrated by the score of R squared. The inclusion of career planning and career management in the analysis explained 46% in the variance of perceived career development support. Specifically, the outcomes of testing the hypothesis using SmartPLS showed that the workplace career programme (i.e., career planning and career management) was significantly correlated with perceived career development support ( $\beta=0.25$ ;  $t=3.23$ ;  $\beta=0.53$ ;  $t=7.15$ ); therefore H1 and H2 were supported. This result demonstrates that career planning and career management act as important predictors of job satisfaction in the studied organization.

**Figure 1:** The Outcomes of SmartPLS Path Model Showing the Relationship between Workplace Career Programme and Job Satisfaction



Note: Significant at \*t >1.96

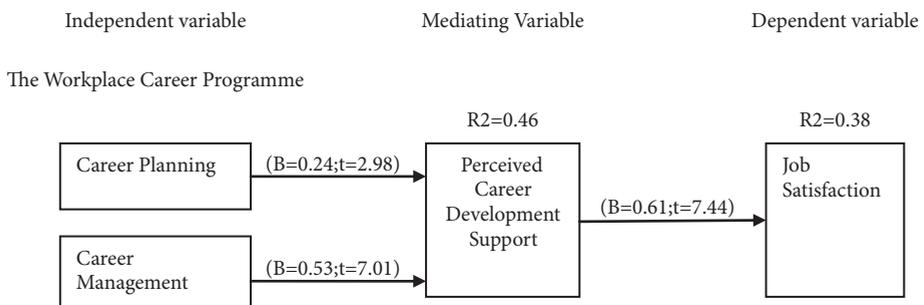
Source: Author’s calculation

In order to determine a global fit PLS path model, we carried out a global fit measure (GoF) based on Wetzels et al.'s (2009) guideline as follows:  $GoF = \sqrt{\{MEAN(Community of Endogenous) \times MEAN(R^2)\}} = 0.58$ , indicating that it exceeds the cut-off value of 0.36 for large effect sizes of  $R^2$ . This result confirms that the PLS path model has better explaining power in comparison with the baseline values (GoF small=0.1, GoF medium=0.25, GoF large=0.36). It strongly supports the validation of the PLS model globally (Wetzels et al., 2009).

**5.5. Outcomes of Testing Hypotheses 3 and 4**

Figure 2 shows that the quality of model predictions in the analysis was demonstrated by the score of R squared. The inclusion of career planning, career management, and perceived career development support in the analysis explained 38% in the variance of job satisfaction. Specifically, the outcomes of testing the hypothesis using SmartPLS showed that the relationship between the workplace career programme (i.e., career planning and career management) and perceived career development support was significantly correlated with job satisfaction ( $\beta=0.61$ ;  $t=7.44$ ); therefore H3 and H4 were supported. This result confirms that perceived career development support does act as an important mediating variable in the relationship between workplace career programme and job satisfaction in the studied organization.

**Figure 2:** The Outcomes of SmartPLS Path Model Showing the Relationship between Workplace Career Programme, Perceived Career Development Support, and Job Satisfaction



**Note:** Significant at \* $t > 1.96$

**Source:** Author's calculation

In order to determine a global fit PLS path model, we carried out a global fit measure (GoF) based on Wetzels et al.'s (2009) guideline as follows:  $GoF = \sqrt{\{MEAN$

$(\text{Communality of Endogenous}) \times \text{MEAN}(R^2) = 0.53$ , indicating that it exceeds the cut-off value of 0.36 for large effect sizes of  $R^2$ . This result confirms that the PLS path model has better explaining power in comparison with the baseline values (GoF small=0.1, GoF medium=0.25, GoF large=0.36). It strongly supports the validation of the PLS model globally (Wetzels et al., 2009).

## 6. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study show that perceived career development support does act as an important mediating variable in the relationship between workplace career programme and job satisfaction in the studied organization. In the context of this study, managers have designed and administered career programmes for employees who work in different job classifications based on their stakeholders' strategy and goals. The majority of respondents perceive that the levels of career planning, career management, perceived career development support, and job satisfaction are high. The readiness of management to appropriately plan and manage career programmes adequately assists employees to develop career paths and, as a result, may lead to higher job satisfaction in the organization.

This study has three major implications: the theoretical contribution, the robustness of the research methodology, and the contribution to practitioners. In terms of theoretical contribution, this study confirms that linking workplace career programmes to perceived career development support has been an important predictor of job satisfaction. This result also has supported and extended the published workplace career programme research literature carried out in different organizational settings (Chen et al., 2004; Ismail et al., 2013; Puaah & Ananthram, 2006). With respect to the robustness of research methodology, the survey questionnaires used in this study met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses. This may lead to the production of accurate and reliable research findings.

Regarding the practical contribution, the findings of this study can be used as guidelines by management to improve the progression of employees' career paths in organizations. In order to achieve this objective, management needs to focus more on the following issues: firstly, servant leadership style should be practiced by the HR Manager as a means of comprehending the needs of employees. This approach will help employers to enhance their capability as well as improve the quality of interaction between employers and employees, and will stimulate employees to upgrade their competencies in handling challenging

and unstructured jobs. Secondly, high-commitment management practices should be promoted in order to motivate employees working in teams, and this practice may help them to decrease work conflicts and accomplish job targets effectively. Thirdly, the type, level, and/or amount of pay based on merit should be adjusted in order to attract, retain, and motivate competent employees to support organizational strategy and culture. Fourthly, training programmes that include theoretical and practical perspectives should be prioritised because they may help employees to transfer what they have learned when entering into the real workplace. Fifthly, applying career counselling in the workplace, either as an internal or external service, provides an opening for employees to gauge their career needs. Finally, positive social support between employees (e.g., helping, respect, and guidance) should be encouraged because it may decrease employee tensions and increase employee motivation in performing daily tasks. If organizations pay more attention to these suggestions this can strongly motivate employees to appreciate and accept the workplace career strategy and goals.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

This study proposed a conceptual framework based on workplace career programme research literature. The confirmatory factor analysis confirmed that the instrument used in this study met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses. Further, the results of SmartPLS path model analysis showed that the relationship between workplace career programme (i.e., career planning and career management) and perceived career development support was positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction; therefore H3 and H4 are fully supported. This result confirms that perceived career development support does act as an important mediating variable in the relationship between workplace career programme and job satisfaction in the studied organization. Therefore current research and practice within the human capital development model needs to consider perceived career development support as a strategic dimension of the workplace career programme domain. This study further suggests that the ability of managers to appropriately plan and manage career programmes adequately will assist employees in developing career paths. Consequently, it may lead to subsequent positive attitudinal and behavioural outcomes (e.g., satisfaction, trust, good performance, fairness, and ethical behaviour). These positive outcomes may maintain and enhance organizational competitiveness in an era of knowledge-based economies.

The conclusion drawn from the results of this study should consider the following limitations. Firstly, the data was only taken once during the time frame of this study; therefore it did not capture developmental issues such as intra-individual change and restrictions of making inference to participants and/or causal connections between variables of interest. Secondly, this study only examines the relationship between latent variables and the conclusions drawn do not specify the relationship between specific indicators for the independent variable, mediating variable, and dependent variable. Thirdly, this study only focuses on particular elements of the workplace career and neglects other important elements (e.g., career path and management support). Fourthly, other career outcomes (e.g., performance, turnover, leadership, fairness, and ethics) that are significant for organizations and employees are not discussed in this study. Fifthly, although a substantial amount of variance in dependent measures explained by the significant predictors is identified, there are still a number of unexplainable factors that can be incorporated to identify the causal relationship between variables and their relative explanatory power (Tabachnick et al., 2001). Finally, the sample for this study was taken using a convenient sampling technique in a single government organization. These limitations may decrease the ability to generalize the results of this study to other organizational settings.

The conceptual and methodological limitations of this study need to be considered when designing future research. Firstly, the organizational and personal characteristics that act as a potential variable and can affect the effectiveness of workplace career should be further discovered. If organizational and personal characteristics are used in research, this may provide meaningful perspectives for understanding the individual differences and similarities that affect training outcomes. Secondly, the weaknesses of cross-sectional research design may be overcome if longitudinal studies are used to collect data and describe the patterns of change and the direction and magnitude of causal relationships between variables of interest. Thirdly, the findings of this study may produce different results if the study is carried out in more than one organization. Fourthly, as an extension of career development, other theoretical constructs of career development - such as individual talent, the readiness to acquire necessary knowledge, up-to-date skills, new abilities, and positive attitudes, and the motivation to transfer knowledge, skills, abilities, and positive attitudes in the workplace - are important components that should be considered, because they have been widely recognized as important links between career programme and personal outcomes. Fifthly, besides job satisfaction and perceived career development support, other personal outcome constructs that are found to be important in the workplace career research literature need to be examined, such

as career performance, job stress, trust, and ethics. The importance of these issues needs to be further discussed in future studies.

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