



## THE INFLUENCE OF CAREER GROWTH ON WORK ENGAGEMENT: EMPLOYEES OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN KLANG VALLEY, SELANGOR

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### Abstract:

Throughout the years the manufacturing sector emerged as one of the main industrial forces for driving the expansion of the economy. Work engagement became a significant topic for many organizations as they realised that employee retention was critical to any company's success. The labour that employees performed for the organization and the satisfaction they received from work was explicitly tied to work engagement.. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of career growth on work engagement among Klang Valley, Selangor employees in the manufacturing sector. A total of 269 employees were involved as respondents for this study. To collect the necessary data, questionnaire forms were utilised as a method of data collecting. Descriptive tests and inferential analysis, such as the Pearson correlation test and simple linear regression analysis, were utilised as quantitative approaches in this research. Version 23.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Science was applied for analysing the collected data. Sampling technique used in this study was snowball sampling. The finding showed that Career Growth have impact on Work Engagement. Professional Ability Development found as the most contributing factor in employees' work engagement. It highlights the necessity of organisations to assist their employees in developing diverse skills in order to raise their productivity at work. In conclusion, employees will be more drawn to and develop a strong sense of belonging to the company if they believe they may accomplish higher career growth there.

### Keywords:

## Introduction

In the age of rapidly advancing information technology and economic development is speeding, it is becoming increasingly clear that manufacturing organizations are moving towards flat organisational structures. The corporation needs employees in order to conduct business. This implies that staff members participate in overseeing business operations (Makwal & Salahudin, 2024). An important factor in changing a country's economy is the manufacturing sector, which is responsible for three-quarters of GDP in Malaysia (Tsetim et al., 2020). An abundance of international research has underscored the importance of human capital as a tool for assisting companies in realizing their goals and aspirations. It has been discovered that poor or disengaged employee engagement costs businesses a lot of money (Zondo, 2020). The company is progressively starting to recognize that employee retention is critical to any business's success and considers work engagement seriously. In some cases, retention is influenced by both work and employee engagement. One of the most crucial indicators of a country's performance in a sound economy is its rate of economic growth. Over many decades, Malaysia has seen the rapid expansion of industrial businesses both locally and internationally.

Even though services contribute to about half of Malaysia's GDP (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024), manufacturing is still very important to the country's economy, with high-value manufacturing hubs located in Penang, Kulim, Klang Valley, and Johor. Over the years, Malaysia has acknowledged the significance of its manufacturing sector, and as such, this industry has grown to be seen as an economic barometer for the nation. Malaysia's labour productivity grew by 10.15 percent year over year in September 2022, up from 5.5 percent growth in the previous quarter, but fell by 0.46% in December 2023, according to Malaysia Labour Productivity Growth. In relation to the rest of the globe, Malaysia's manufacturing sector ranks 44th overall in terms of total labour productivity, a position that has remained constant since 2009 (National Policy on Industry 4.0, 2018). Nonetheless, Malaysia ranks third globally and second in Asia Pacific for manufacturing locations (Subramaniam et.al 2019). The Department of Statistics Malaysia (2022) lists Pulau Pinang as the top state with 47.3%, followed by Selangor (31.4%), Terengganu (37.0%), Perak (20.1%), and Kedah (30.5%) as the five states that have made considerable GDP contributions in the manufacturing sector.

Work engagement is more specifically related to the labour that employees are doing for the organization and the satisfaction they have because of their work. According to Aon Hewitt's data from 2017, Malaysia's employee engagement levels have sharply decreased by 3% to 59% for the first time in four years. Due to this, Malaysian workers are the least engaged among major Asian economies. However, compared to its global counterparts, Malaysia has a higher rate of employee engagement, according to a recent Qualtrics report. According to Mokhtar et al. (2021), Malaysia has an average employee engagement score that is 54% higher than the global average of 53%.

The results given above indicate that there is a great deal of opportunity for improvement in Malaysian employee engagement. An organization's ability to better engage its workforce will enable its workers to comprehend their roles within it and motivate them to collaborate with one another to meet its objectives (Mansor et al., 2018). Weer et al. (2020) state that career progression benefits workers by assisting them in reaching their professional objectives through activities or duties that challenge their knowledge and expertise, formal training, and mentoring. If employees believed that using their existing organisational abilities and expertise to complete tasks at work would help them achieve their career goals, their intrinsic motivation

(also known as work engagement) would increase. In addition to offering workers the ability to steer their own professional growth, the scholar claims that career discussion facilitation will help managers address the critical elements that affect employee engagement. This shows how businesses may encourage high levels of employee engagement by giving workers the chance to advance in their careers and learn new skills.

Thus, the goal of this research is to thoroughly examine how career growth affects work engagement in the manufacturing industry in the Klang Valley, Selangor.

## **Literature Review**

### **Career Growth And Work Engagement.**

#### *Definition of Career Growth*

Career growth refers to the chance which individuals receive inside an organisation to progress their careers through challenging work and more responsibility (Bai & Liu, 2018). Jia-Jun & Hua-Ming (2022) define career growth as the advancement of an employee's career at a specific point in time, encompassing not only the organization's current internal growth but also the career growth of individuals participating in interorganizational mobility, particularly the rate of individual growth within the enterprise. Furthermore, career growth can also be defined as an individual's belief that their current employers provide a work environment in which they can achieve their professional needs and reinforce their accomplishments through professional development, compensation, and promotions (Asamaowei et al., 2023). Three dimensions have been identified by Weng et al., (2017) to describe career growth: career goal progress, professional ability development, and organizational remuneration growth.

#### *Definition of Career Goal Progress (Dimension of Career Growth)*

Career goal progress, according to Ohunakin et al. (2018), is the degree to which an individual's current employer assists them in achieving their career objectives. Nkechi et al., (2017), defined career goal progress as "career ladder" as a rise in status for employees who make an effort to acquire relevant skills and improve their performance. The extent to which a person's current position within the company offers opportunities for them to achieve their professional objectives is known as career goal progress (Amelia & Muda, 2023).

#### *Definition of Professional Ability Development (Dimension of Career Growth)*

For the concept of professional ability development, Asamaowei et al., (2023) described it as the ability to oversee one's work and opportunities for learning in order to fulfil specific professional goals. Professional ability development, as described by Adeniji et al. (2019), is the ability of one's current work to support the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Moreover, Amelia & Muda (2023) the deliberate efforts made by employers to assist employees in acquiring the information, skills, and abilities required to do their daily jobs are referred to as professional ability development. Professional development is critical to every company's performance because it provides human resources with the information and abilities they need to adapt to changing globalisation trends (Yaquub et al., 2020).

#### *Definition of Organizational Remuneration Growth (Dimension of Career Growth)*

According to Asamaowei et al. (2023), the following factors contribute to an organization's remuneration growth: (i) the chance and frequency of advancement; (ii) the likelihood of receiving a reward; (iii) the frequency and amount of the reward; (iv) the reward's sufficiency; and (v) the possibility of an increase in reward. In addition, employees receive organisational remuneration growth in the form of rewards or gifts because of their efforts (Dessler, 2017). The purpose of organizational remuneration growth is to boost employee welfare and loyalty, which has an impact on how to increase job engagement among employees (Fauchil, 2020). Employees will be satisfied and feel a sense of loyalty to their jobs if remuneration is based on contribution.

### ***Definition of Work Engagement***

An individual's continuous, integrated, and engaged circumstance at work is referred to as work engagement (Bai & Liu, 2018). It can be specifically stated whether employees are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their work, as well as whether they are emotionally healthy. Additionally, Khusanova et al. (2021) described work engagement as a vigorous, dedicated, and absorbed state of mind relating to one's work that is good and satisfying. They also suggested using vigor, dedication, and absorption as three-dimensional characterisation components. Academics have universally accepted and adopted this three-factor approach.

### ***Definition of Vigor (Dimension of Work Engagement)***

Maisyuri & Ariyanto (2021) stated that vigor is represented by an intense work ethic, mental toughness, a readiness to put in effort, and even tenacity in overcoming obstacles. As stated a certain way, an individual's enthusiasm for their work can be determined by their high level of energy and stamina when working, readiness to put in significant effort, and resilience and endurance when dealing with issues at work. Meanwhile, Reig-Botella et al., (2024), the term vigor describes enhanced motivation, mental toughness, and a desire to put time and effort into one's task.

### ***Definition of Dedication (Dimension of Work Engagement)***

A worker's enthusiasm for their work, sense of pride in the task they completed and the company they represented, as well as their inspiration and challenges, are all considered aspects of dedication (Maisyuri & Ariyanto, 2021). Reig-Botella et al., (2024) defined dedication as to have pride, enthusiasm, and a sense that one's effort is worthwhile. Dedication is defined as achieve emotionally meaningful outcomes which is meeting professional demands and identifying oneself (Jaya & Ariyanto, 2021).

### ***Definition of Absorption (Dimension of Work Engagement)***

Jaya & Ariyanto (2021), refers absorption to a prevalent and durable mental state in an individual. In other words, the degree to which a person becomes immersed in his task to block out the outside world as they are very focused and does not realize how much time they are spending on a task. Another scholar defined absorption by being completely focused on and absorbed in one's task to the point where time flies (Reig-Botella et al., 2024). Moreover, Maisyuri & Ariyanto (2021) describes absorption as an employee attachment, which is demonstrated by workers' attentive work habits. The condition of employees who are

completely invested and concentrated on their work because they lose track of time when performing their jobs and believe that time is going by too rapidly, they find it difficult to leave work.

### ***Career Growth and Work Engagement***

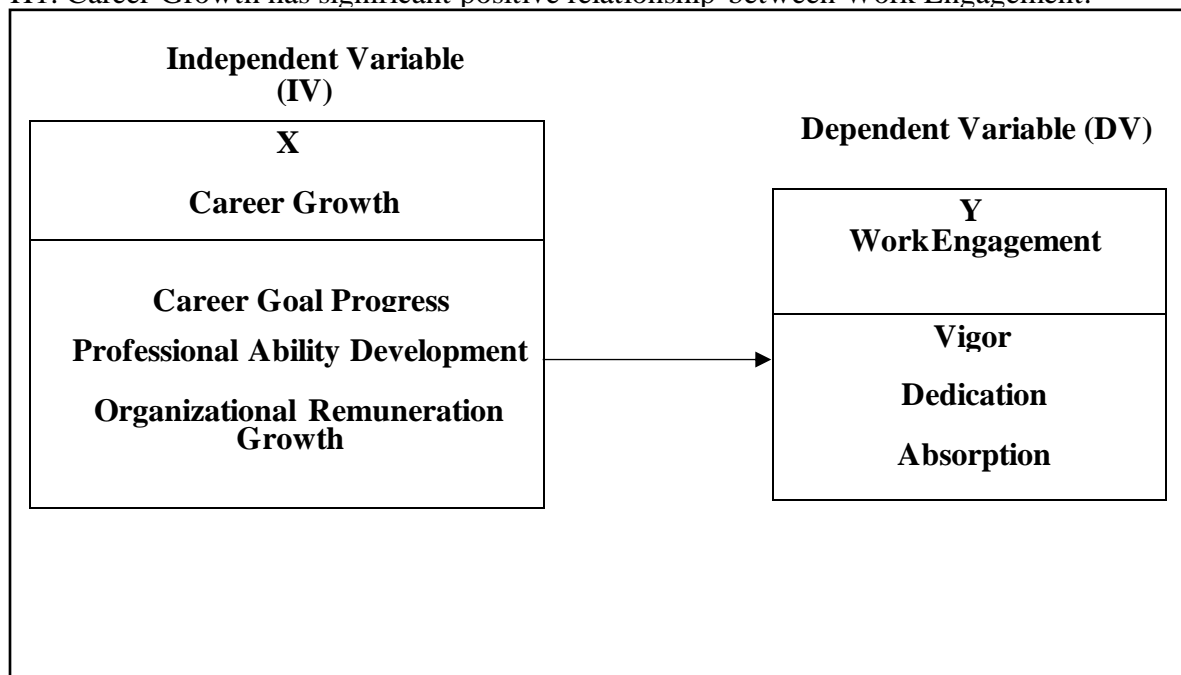
Employee career growth has a major positive impact on work engagement and organisational identification, according to a study by Bai & Liu (2018). According to their research, when employees feel they can advance their careers in the company, they will be more engaged and achieve a strong sense of duty and belonging. They'll work harder and with more excitement on their task. To raise the effectiveness of their organisation, they are constantly acquiring new job skills, developing their accomplishments and abilities in the workplace, and pursuing their career objectives.

In a similar study, Liu et al. (2017)'s findings demonstrate that career growth significantly improves work engagement. To improve and maintain high levels of employee engagement at work, managers in organisations need to pay attention to the demands of employees' career growth, including their financial, physical, and emotional needs.

### **Hypothesis Development**

Our discussion of the literature review has led us to the conclusion that the independent and dependent variables have links, as shown in Figure 1. Determining the relationship between the variables being evaluated and providing support for the current study are the goals of the investigation.

H1: Career Growth has significant positive relationship between Work Engagement.



**Figure 1: Research Framework**

## Methodology

The quantitative design of this study involved gathering both primary and secondary data. The technique of directly getting information from respondents through the use of questionnaires is known as primary data collection. Research questions or circumstances that are present in data that have already been gathered from other sources and combined into a single collection of data are referred to as secondary sources.

The survey was given out to employees from manufacturing industry located in Klang Valley, Selangor. To collect the necessary data, questionnaire forms are utilised as a method of data collecting. The snowball sampling technique is being employed in this study to minimise sample biases and preserve individual confidentiality. The population size was involving 900 employees. According to the Krejcie & Morgan table, 269 samples had to be obtained for the study as the total population was 900.

All of the scales used for the variables that were adapted from past research. The Likert 5-point scales were utilised in the present study. The questionnaires set for this study is contains of 42 questions. The scales are as follows:

The measurement for Career Growth was adapted from Bai & Liu (2018), consist of 11 items in total. For instance, the measurements for Career Goal Progress “My present job promotes my work goals”, and the measurements for Professional Ability Development “My present job helps me develop new professional skills”, and for Organizational Remuneration Growth “My income increases more quickly in my existing work unit”. Based on the data from examined samples used in the current study, the Career Growth scale's Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.972

Work Engagement: the items were adapted from Bai & Liu (2018) which has three dimensions of vigor, dedication and absorption, including 25 items such as “My work gives me energy”, and “I am passionate about my work”, and “ I get carried away when I am working”. Both vigor and dedication dimensions have 8 items respectively and 9 items in the absorption dimension. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for work engagement was 0.980.

## Results

### Research Results

#### *Demographic Profile of the Respondents Analysis*

#### **Descriptive Analysis**

In the present study, questionnaires were used to gather data. As shown in Table 1, 147 people were males (54.6%) and 122 people were females (45.4%). In the context of race, 52.0% (N=140) of the research participants were Malay, followed by Indian at 28.6% (N=77) , Chinese at 16.4% (N=44) and others 3.0% (N=8). The age range of respondents who completed the questionnaire was mostly between 36 - 45 years old, with a minority of respondents being between 46-55 years old. Data analysis shows that respondents between the ages of 20 - 25 made up 19.3 % (N = 52 ) of the sample, while respondents between the ages of 26 -35 made up 31.6 % (N = 85). The respondents aged 36 to 45 made up 45.7 % (N = 123), followed by those aged 46 - 55 , 3.3 % (N = 9 ), and there is none for those aged above 55.

Moreover, the highest education level were Bachelor at 50.2% (N=135), followed by Certificate at 32.3% (N=87), Master at 11.5% (N=31) and others were 5.9% (N=16).

Percentage of respondents with 1-5 years of service was 30.6 % (N = 83), 6-10 years was 40.9 % (N = 110); 11-15 years was 24.9 % (N = 67 ); and 16 years or more was 3.3 % (N = 9). Table 4.1 above also demonstrates that employees who have worked for between 6-10 years have the highest frequency of respondents, while those who have worked for 16 above have the lowest frequency of respondents.

**Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Profile**

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	147	54.6
Female	122	45.4
<b>Race:</b>		
Malay	140	52.0
Indian	77	28.6
Chinese	44	16.4
Others	8	3.0
<b>Group Age:</b>		
20-25 years old	52	19.3
26-35 years old	85	31.6
36-45 years old	123	45.7
46-55 years old	9	3.3
<b>Education level:</b>		
Certificate	87	32.3
Bachelor	135	50.2
Masters	31	11.5
Others	16	5.9
<b>Duration of Service:</b>		
1-5 years	83	30.6
6-10 years	110	40.9
11-15 years	67	24.9
Above 16 years	9	3.3

### **Instrument Reliability**

The degree of consistency or dependability in a construct's measure is known as reliability (Edwin, 2019). To guarantee the stability and consistency of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha values were employed to assess the instrument's dependability. A reliable and consistent measure of the particular component is one with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.6 or above. Results are displayed for each variable in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Result of Reliability**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha Value</b>
Career Goal Progress	5	0.975
Professional Ability Development	4	0.971
Organizational Remuneration Growth	3	0.969

Work Engagement	25	0.980
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### Pearson Correlation

William (2020) states that the purpose of Pearson correlation analysis is for determining the degree of a linear relationship between two variables. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were utilised to examine (r) the association between Career Growth (X) and Work Engagement (Y). In this research, Career Growth variable is explained by three separate dimensions (i.e., career goal progress, professional ability development and organizational remuneration growth) as well as for work engagement demonstrated by three separate dimensions (i.e., vigor, dedication and absorption). The weighted average approach is used to produce similar mean scores on both variables for each three dimensions.

Based on the Table 3, the correlation coefficient for Career Growth with Work Engagement is (r = 0.932). Result shows that there is a significance relationship between career growth and work engagement.

**Table 3. Correlation Coefficient Matrix**

	Career Growth	Work Engagement
Career Growth	1	0.932**
Work Engagement	0.932**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).

### Simple Linear Regression

A predictor / factor simple linear regression model was proposed to explain the variation of work engagement (Y). The factor variable proposed was Work Engagement. Therefore, the equation of the proposed simple linear regression model is as follow:  $Y (\text{Work Engagement}) = h_0 + h_1 (X_1) + e$ .

Work Engagement (Y)	B (Unstandardized Coefficient)	Std.Error	Beta (Standardized Coefficient)	t	p-value
Constant	.472	.078		6.014	.000
Career Growth	.853	.020	.932	42.155	.000

**Notes:**  $R = 0.932$ ,  $R^2 = 0.869$ ,  $Adj. R^2 = 0.869$ ,  $F(1, 267) = 1777.044$ ,  $P = 0.000$

To ascertain how well the suggested model explains the variation in satisfaction with work engagement, the enter regression method was utilised (Y). The factor model were highly significant in explaining variation in work engagement (Y)  $F(1, 267) = 1777.044$ ,  $p = .000$ , according to the results of the entry approach.

The factor variable (X1) Career Growth ( $t = 42.155$ ,  $p = .000$ ), which is shown in coefficients Table 4, was significant in explaining the variation of Y (Work Engagement). It is obvious that the obtained coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) 0.869 is regarded as significant when comparing it to the Hair et al., (2014) criterion which (0.75 = substantial, 0.50 = moderate, and 0.25 = weak). The F-statistics [ $F(1, 267) = 1777.044$ ] and associated p-value were highly significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). This shows that there is a positive relationship between Career Growth and Work Engagement.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Reliability level scales for the analysis performed in this study have been met. The results of the study show a relationship between independent and dependent variables, supporting the manufacturing industry's objectives for employee engagement in Klang Valley, Selangor. Based on the study's findings, work engagement is significantly positive relationship with career growth.

Furthermore, based on this research, the organization can improved themselves towards the recognition on the element that drive the work engagement of the employees in manufacturing industry. This study aids employers in the manufacturing sector in learning more about their workforce. This is important because these components could motivate employees to put in extra effort to meet the organization's objectives.

The findings of this research have the potential to improve employee engagement at work, which will benefit Klang Valley, Selangor, management in a number of ways. The data test revealed that employees' career growth had a considerable favourable impact on their level of work engagement. The impact of career growth on work engagement is identified and evaluated in this study, which adds to the body of knowledge on employee work engagement, especially in the manufacturing sector. This research offers insightful analysis and recommendations to improve employment and engagement that are aligned with The Madani Career Initiatives for 2023, which include training programmes and financial rewards for companies with the goal of strengthening employment opportunities.

Moreover, with the introduction of the National Human Resources Policy unveiled by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Malaysia has made a huge advancement in a time when globalisation and technology advancements are changing the nature of work. The framework, which presents the government's goals for the years 2024–2030, is organised around 48 initiatives, 11 strategies, three main areas, two policy catalysts, five change drivers, and 48 strategies. It aims to direct the establishment of an effective national human resources policy that will be in lined with the 13th Malaysia Plan and establish new benchmarks for the nation's human resource

management. Wage compensation, skills training and employment equity are the several key issues that the framework aim to solve. These three issues are among the nine other critical point in National Human Resource Policy introduced by Ministry of Human Resource, Malaysia. Based on the conclusion above, it is crucial for the employers to provide appropriate training or knowledge exchange so that employees will be able to comprehend one another's roles inside the organisation. In order all employees to learn, the training must become more comprehensive, effective, and efficient, particularly for those occupations that call for specialised knowledge or abilities.

The organisation must fully understand and facilitate their employee needs to advance in career. It is imperative for organizations to possess a comprehensive understanding of the career goals of their employees and support them in formulating rational career paths. Businesses' management should provide a range of demanding employment opportunities and professional ability trainings in order to effectively utilize and advance a varied range of people. Additionally, a solid career path for professional advancement and fair pay increases are essential since it validates individuals' sense of worth and accomplishment. One of the fundamental pillars of the nation's economy is the manufacturing sector. Therefore, the performance of the country was significantly impacted by worker productivity. This study is intended to educate organizations regarding the change in worker preferences. Employers need to invest in more trained individuals and improve existing rules and procedures to meet the needs and preferences of their workforce.

Lastly, there are some limitations in this present study, where it only focus solely on workers in the manufacturing sector, making it inapplicable to other organisations and unable to produce thorough research findings. As a result, it is advised that the study be conducted in the future in a variety of organisations or industry sectors.

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