

# The Role of Work Community, Career Growth, and Employee Well-Being on Employee Engagement in Malaysian SMEs

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## **Abstract**

This study explores the factors influencing employee engagement within Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Klang Valley, Malaysia. It focuses on three key

dimensions: work community, career growth opportunities, and employee well-being, analyzing their relationships with employee engagement levels. Surveys were conducted among SME employees, and correlation analyses were used to examine these associations. The study targeted 200 employees from four service SMEs in the Klang Valley. Based on Krejcie & Morgan's table, a sample size of 132 was needed, but to address potential response issues, 145 questionnaires were distributed. The findings reveal significant positive correlations between the work community, career growth opportunities, and employee well-being with employee engagement. These results underscore the critical importance of fostering supportive work environments that encourage collaboration, provide clear pathways for career advancement, and prioritizing employee well-being through comprehensive wellness programs. The study's implications suggest practical strategies for SMEs to enhance organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction. By focusing on these factors, SMEs can create environments that promote higher levels of engagement, ultimately contributing to organizational success. Future research could explore additional variables impacting employee engagement across different sectors and regions, further enriching the understanding of effective engagement strategies in diverse organizational contexts. This study offers valuable insights for SME leaders and HR professionals aiming to improve employee engagement and organizational performance.

**Keywords:** work community, career growth, employee well-being, employee engagement, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Malaysia

## 1. Introduction

For an organization to thrive, it is essential that employees are both engaged and performing at their best. Employee engagement, which gained prominence in the 1990s, is now widely recognized as having a positive impact on job performance. It is defined as the level of commitment and active involvement displayed by an employee towards their organization and its core values. Engaged employees understand the business environment and collaborate effectively with colleagues to enhance job performance, contributing to organizational success (Purushothaman & Kaviya, 2020). This optimistic perspective is characterized by favorable attitudes toward the organization and its principles.

Employers value engaged employees because they enhance business performance and promote the organization's brand, thereby mitigating risks related to service levels or product quality (Motyka, 2018). A strong employer brand also aids in attracting and retaining talented employees. Various factors influence employee engagement, including personal feelings, workplace atmosphere, communication, leadership, and dedication (Moletsane, Tefera, & Migiro, 2019). Career progression significantly boosts employees' identification with the organization and their engagement in work (Bai & Liu, 2018). Employee well-being is associated with increased engagement, satisfaction, and positive perceptions of personal welfare (Wieneke et al., 2019).

In small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Klang Valley, Malaysia, achieving high levels of employee engagement remains challenging. Despite its importance for company success, SMEs often struggle with engagement, impacting both performance and Malaysia's goal of becoming a high-income nation (Rashid & Harif, 2015). Limited research has explored the factors influencing employee engagement, particularly within the contexts of work community, career growth, and employee well-being in Malaysian SMEs.

A positive work environment within the work community enables employees to access individual-level resources more readily than in unfavorable settings. Poor work environments can lead to fatigue and detachment (Shuck & Reio, 2013). However, strong workplace communities may also result in close connections among employees who do not share the employer's values, potentially hindering engagement with shared organizational goals (Edmunds, 2020).

Career growth issues negatively affect employee engagement, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced commitment. While career growth significantly impacts work performance, organizational commitment, and resignation intentions, the specific relationship between career growth and employee engagement remains underexplored (Bai & Liu, 2018).

Regarding employee well-being, organizations often struggle to boost engagement by addressing factors affecting mental health. The lack of comprehensive plans to tackle these issues hinders the creation of healthier work environments, posing challenges to sustaining engagement and well-being (Prasad & Mangipudi, 2021).

Employees in SMEs with unfavorable work communities, limited career growth, and poor well-being struggle to access resources, leading to detachment and reduced engagement. This hampers both individual development and organizational effectiveness. Addressing these issues is crucial for SMEs to establish supportive work environments, promote career development, and enhance employee engagement.

Given these gaps, this study aims to analyze the relationships between the work community, career growth, and employee well-being with employee engagement in Klang Valley SMEs, providing findings and recommendations based on respondents' inputs.

This study is crucial for aiding SMEs in Klang Valley to enhance employee engagement and achieve a positive return on investment through equitable processes (Altehbah, Yusr, & Salimon, 2019). By understanding factors like work community, career growth, and employee well-being, businesses can improve their environments and employee engagement. The findings also offer valuable insights for government entities, such as the Ministry of Human Resources, for broader policy considerations. This research provides practical guidance for SMEs and contributes significantly to the academic literature on employee engagement, influencing future research and discussions in this field. This study focuses on SMEs in Klang Valley, examining employee engagement among 200 non-managerial employees. It aims to identify key determinants such as work community, career growth

opportunities, and employee well-being. By providing insights specific to Klang Valley, the research seeks to enhance supportive work environments within these businesses.

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the relationship between work community and employee engagement within SMEs in Klang Valley.
- To examine the relationship between career growth and employee engagement within SMEs in Klang Valley.
- To examine the relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement within SMEs in Klang Valley.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 delves into the literature review and conceptual framework, exploring existing research on employee engagement and the theoretical underpinnings guiding this study. In Section 3, the methodology is outlined, detailing the research design, data collection techniques, and analytical tools employed to investigate the proposed hypotheses. Section 4 presents the data analysis and findings, showcasing the statistical results and their implications for the study's hypotheses. The discussion in Section 5 interprets these findings, linking them to broader literature and highlighting the practical implications for SMEs. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper, summarizing the key insights, acknowledging limitations, and offering recommendations for future research.

## **2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

### *2.1 Relationship Between Work Community and Employee Engagement*

Vauhkonen et al. (2023) conducted a study on how elements associated with the work community affect both occupational well-being and job ability, as well as the relationship between the two. There was a survey conducted among 167 employees who were working on 2 shifts. 3 factors have been analyzed under the work community which were social support, influence on work shifts and information and work organization which had 3, 4 and 2 questions accordingly. Information and work organization were the only significant work community characteristics that had a direct impact on occupational well-being. These elements also acted as a mediator in the indirect relationships between occupational well-being and other work community components. All aspects of the work community had an indirect impact on workability, but the only component that directly affected workability was occupational well-being (Vauhkonen et al., 2023). According to these findings, employers should prioritize information and efficient work organization, which calls for social support, a productive workplace, and possibilities for employees to participate and influence decisions.

Yee (2015) studied eight factors that influence job satisfaction among lecturers at the University Utara Malaysia. The relationship of each factor towards job satisfaction was

studied carefully. One of the factors analyzed was how the working community affects the lecturer's job satisfaction at the University of Utara Malaysia. 12 sets of questions were asked regarding the work community factor to about 226 survey responders who vary in terms of demographic profile such as gender, age, department as well and years of service. As a result of analyzing this factor, it is discovered that there is a favorable correlation between the degree of job satisfaction and working conditions. Employees who have comfortable working surroundings are more likely to be emotionally and physically well-off, and their desire for such situations is strong.

The study emphasizes the significance of the workplace environment and how it affects workers' intentions to remain with the company. It also finds relationships between these factors and high levels of job satisfaction, career progression, and working hours. As they feel they are fulfilling the university's mission and vision to advance UUM, professors at UUM will find their working environment to be satisfying. Stated differently, an employee's level of satisfaction has a significant impact on their job performance and the likelihood of sticking with the company.

Othman et al. (2022), seek to study Malaysia's banking sector employees the objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between work environment factors and employee retention. After analyzing various factors such as co-worker support, relationships with superiors, work hours flexibility, and job security, they collected responses from 384 bank employees across different demographics. The results of their regression analysis highlight the significant impact of communication, people support and relationships, and job security on employee retention. The findings indicate that employees who experience effective communication, supportive relationships, and job security are more likely to stay with the organization. Therefore, it is recommended that banking institutions focus on establishing a positive work environment by addressing these key factors, ensuring employees happiness and nurturing long-term commitment to the organization.

Elaho & Odion (2022) investigated to examine the influence of the work environment on employee productivity. The research utilized questionnaires with a 5-point Likert scale, administered to a sample of 147 business centers registered on the University of Benin Ugbowo campus. The survey focused on aspects such as a safe work environment, employee workload, and superior support.

Based on the study's objectives and findings, it can be concluded that the workplace significantly influences employee productivity. Specifically, the study suggests that the work environment, workload, and support from supervisors are closely related to the productivity of employees in business centers at the University of Benin Ugbowo campus in Benin City. This underscores the importance of considering the work environment, workload, and supervisor support as key factors for enhancing employee productivity in businesses.

H1: There is a positive relationship between the work community and employee engagement.

## *2.2 Relationship between Career Growth and Employee Engagement*

According to the Theory of Need for Achievement, it offers employees a clear path for career advancement and ample opportunities to fulfil their growth aspirations and successes significantly enhance their enthusiasm and dedication to work. This, in turn, motivates them to channel increased commitment towards their professional duties. Tatar, Ali. (2020) conducted a study to identify the factors and barriers influencing employee engagement among employees of the Libyan Telecom Company. A questionnaire comprising three main parts, including questions related to factors influencing employee engagement, was administered. The questionnaire was completed by 105 male and 95 female participants. The study's findings indicate a significant correlation between career advancement and employee engagement. Therefore, opportunities for growth, progress, and career advancement play a crucial role in employees' commitment to their organization.

The study by Dziuba et al. (2020) utilized a questionnaire administered to 47 employees within a selected metallurgical enterprise. The research focused on the metallurgical industry, characterized by its heavy industrial nature. This sector predominantly employs men, with women primarily occupying roles in offices and organizational tasks. It is crucial to recognize the distinct dynamics within this industry, where male employees exhibit unique survey response patterns, form different interpersonal connections, and leading diverse atmospheres in both employee-employer and employee-supervisor relationships compared to their female counterparts. These distinctions extend to preferences for working conditions, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of the workforce dynamics in heavy industries like metallurgy. On average, employees provided ratings for statements related to their job satisfaction, reflecting a moderate level of overall satisfaction with their work. Notably, the employees identified certain key factors that significantly influenced their job satisfaction, such as the quality of company-provided training. The sentiment towards statements like "the training offered by the company is well done" was particularly noteworthy. This aspect holds considerable importance, especially for individuals newly entering the workforce within the enterprise. Based on the study it is seen by the employees that training is one of the important components for career growth.

Bai & Liu (2018) conducted a study focusing on the correlation between career advancement and employee engagement. They utilized hierarchical regression analysis on data collected from 207 employees across various industries in South China's Pearl River Delta region, including finance, Internet, real estate, and management consulting. Companies such as Gemdale, Tencent, Yuexiu Group, KPMG, CGB, and TP-LINK were among those surveyed.

Targeting new-generation employees with up to 6 years of work experience, 250 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 207 were deemed valid, resulting in an effective rate of 82.8%. The sample comprised a balanced gender distribution with 45.9% males and 54.1% females. In terms of education, 63.8% held undergraduate degrees while 29.5% possessed master's degrees or higher.



The research revealed a noteworthy positive association between career progression among new-generation employees and their organizational identification and work engagement. This implies that when employees perceive prospects for career growth within the organization, they are inclined to develop a stronger sense of connection and dedication to it. Consequently, they invest increased enthusiasm and effort into their tasks, thereby boosting organizational performance while advancing their own professional skills and achievements toward their career goals.

Yee (2015) conducted a study on the relationship between promotion and job satisfaction of UUM lecturers, which also influence engagement. The questionnaires were administered to lecturers who have been serving at the University Utara Malaysia for a minimum duration of one year. This time requirement is crucial for the study, as it ensures that respondents possess adequate experience to provide meaningful insights into their job satisfaction. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Respondents used this scale to indicate their level of agreement with statements, allowing for a nuanced assessment of their perspectives on job satisfaction. The analysis reveals that there is a moderate relationship between career promotion and job satisfaction of lecturers. It suggests that the satisfaction of lecturers with their jobs is influenced by the alignment of promotions with their expectations. When promotions are perceived as fair and just by the employees, they are more likely to experience satisfaction in their roles and be better engaged at work. This finding underscores the significance of a connection between promotions and job satisfaction, indicating that the nature of promotions can indeed impact the job satisfaction and employee engagement of academicians at University Utara Malaysia.

Jia-Jun & Hua-Ming (2022) conducted a questionnaire survey to investigate the impact of career growth, professional skill development, organizational rewards, and progress towards career goals on employee engagement. The survey was administered both online and offline. Offline surveys involved visits to technology-intensive enterprises in Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang provinces, where paper questionnaires were distributed to businesses with a significant number of knowledge-based employees, particularly in aerospace, computer, and biotechnology industries. For the online survey, knowledge workers were reached through network channels, mainly in Beijing, Shanghai, Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang provinces, spanning various sectors including state-owned enterprises, foreign companies, private enterprises, and joint ventures. Out of 467 distributed questionnaires, 396 were received, resulting in a response rate of 84.80%. After removing incomplete and illogical responses, 353 valid questionnaires were obtained, with male knowledge workers accounting for 53.54% and females for 46.46%. The study found that career advancement significantly enhances knowledge of workers' engagement within an organization. Progress towards career goals and the development of career-related skills were identified as contributing factors to job engagement. Although the beneficial impact of organizational rewards development on work engagement was not confirmed, it was established that career growth positively

influences affective commitment, which in turn plays a constructive role in building employee engagement.

H2: There is a positive relationship between career growth and employee engagement.

### *2.3 Relationship between Employee Well-Being and Employee Engagement*

A study conducted by Vauhkonen et al. (2023) on how employee well-being factor is related to workability. In early 2019, a survey was examined in a multidisciplinary study and tested by 11 workers. The survey was sent to all workers working in two shifts in 2019. A total of 167 of them responded to the survey. 3 factors have been analyzed under occupational well-being and one of them was social support which had 3 questions. According to these findings, employers should prioritize information and efficient work organization, which calls for social support and possibilities for employees to participate and influence decisions.

According to Prakash & Kashyap (2021), the primary aim was to evaluate workplace happiness and its influence on employees' job involvement. The study sought to examine the prevalence of mental well-being among staff and to comprehend how workplace well-being affects job engagement. All employees in the organization participated in the study. To assess workplace well-being, researchers used validated surveys from the Black Dog Institute and the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale, comprising 20 questions. Additionally, surveys on job engagement were created to gauge employees' level of involvement in their work. The research aimed to establish a link between workplace happiness and employee engagement. The study found that different aspects of workplace well-being, such as job satisfaction, organizational respect, employer support, work-life balance, autonomy, relatedness, and competence needs, were all connected with job engagement. In summary, the study suggests that promoting workplace well-being is vital for improving employee engagement. By concentrating on factors like job satisfaction, organizational backing, and fulfilling psychological needs, companies can significantly boost overall employee involvement and contentment (Prakash & Kashyap, 2021).

A study by Jena et al. (2018) delved into the connections among psychological well-being, organizational leadership, employee engagement, and organizational trust. The research aimed to explore how psychological well-being and transformational leadership indirectly affect both employee engagement and organizational trust. The study specifically targeted executives in multinational service industries, particularly in banking and insurance. Survey participants were prospective executives who had over two years of work experience and at least one year of experience under their current reporting manager. The survey questions were crafted around three main factors: employee engagement, psychological well-being, and organizational trust. The findings of the study revealed that engagement creates a strong link between employees and organizational performance, providing a deeper insight into organizational objectives (Jena et al., 2018).

A study conducted by Ashraf & Siddiqui (2020) investigated how employee engagement



impacts employee retention and the mediating effects of psychological capital, control at work, general well-being, and job satisfaction. The research aimed to empirically test the influence of employee engagement on employee retention and understand how various variables, such as psychological capital, control at work, general well-being, and job satisfaction, mediate this relationship. Using a survey questionnaire, data was collected from 200 employees across different companies. The findings indicated a positive and significant relationship between employee engagement and employee retention. Moreover, psychological capital, control at work, and job satisfaction were identified as significant mediators in this relationship. The study suggests that organizations should focus on nurturing psychological capital and providing resources to improve employee well-being and job satisfaction. It also highlights the importance of integrating employee engagement and retention strategies into HR key performance indicators and matrices for organizational success (Ashraf & Siddiqui, 2020).

H3: There is a positive relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement.

#### *2.4 Conceptual Framework*

This research focused on less-studied aspects of employee engagement from the Zinger model, such as team relationships, employee well-being, and career development (Saks, 2006; Harter et al., 2002). We deliberately left out more commonly studied factors like job clarity, recognition, and leadership support (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Rich et al., 2010) to explore these lesser-known areas.

Our findings offer new insights into these areas. For example, many employees feel supported by their colleagues and enjoy working with skilled professionals. However, there are concerns about issues like workplace lighting and safety that need addressing.

Regarding career growth, employees are generally satisfied with their career development opportunities and promotional procedures, but opinions vary on the effectiveness of performance reviews and training programs. This suggests that clearer strategies and better training are needed.

In terms of employee well-being, employees feel motivated and satisfied with their jobs, but there are issues with workplace harassment and handling setbacks that need attention.

For employee engagement, most employees appreciate clear communication and competitive benefits but feel there is room for improvement in ensuring equal treatment and increasing job satisfaction.

Overall, these findings help us understand how focusing on team relationships, career growth, and well-being can improve employee engagement and job satisfaction.

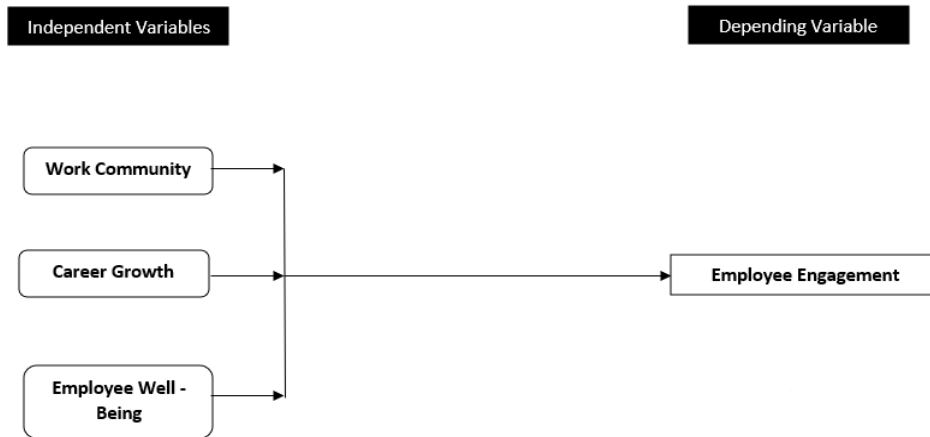


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

### 3. Methodology

The investigation was designed to establish research objectives, define variables, and select appropriate methodologies, as emphasized by Akhtar (2016). Quantitative research was chosen for its capacity to measure specific behaviors and relationships between variables through numerical data, facilitating the analysis of patterns and behaviors in social settings (Rahman, 2016). This approach allowed for the effective quantification and control of variables to understand employee engagement within organizational contexts.

Data was collected using questionnaires that were built using Microsoft Forms and distributed via email. The development of the questionnaire incorporated and adapted concepts from various sources, including Vauhkonen et al. (2023), Othman et al. (2022), Tatar Ali (2020), and Prakash & Kashyap (2021). The questionnaires were organized into three sections. Section A aimed to gather demographic information from participants, including gender, age, job level, working tenure, and highest educational level. Section B assessed factors related to work community, career growth, and employee well-being based on the Zinger Employee Engagement model, using twenty-three statements. Section C comprised eight statements designed to gauge employee engagement. Both Sections B and C used closed-ended questions with a 5-point Likert Scale, allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The study targeted a population of 200 employees from four selected SMEs in the service industry located in the Klang Valley region. These SMEs were selected for their substantial workforce and significant market presence, ensuring a diverse and relevant response pool. The focus was on non-managerial employees, including those at entry-level, non-executive, and executive positions. According to Krejcie & Morgan (1970), a sample size of 132 was recommended. To address potential issues with extreme or incomplete responses, the sample size was increased by 10%, resulting in the distribution of 145 questionnaires.

Data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 28. The analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to characterize the sample features and measure data, including an analysis of the demographic profile of participants through frequency and percentage, which were presented in tabular form. Inferential statistics addressed research questions, objectives, and hypotheses. Correlation statistics were employed to explore the relationships between work community, career growth, employee well-being, and employee engagement. Prior to selecting between Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation, a normality test was performed.

#### **4. Data Analysis and Findings**

##### *4.1 Analysis of Measures*

Of the 200 sets of questionnaires distributed to the intended respondents, 167 fully answered questionnaires were received. This indicates a response rate of 83.5 percent, which aligns with the satisfactory threshold set by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) in 2015. An analysis of the demographic information for the 167 respondents was conducted using the data from Section A of the questionnaires. A summary of this demographic data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents: n=167

Variables		n=167	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	93	56%
	Male	74	44%
Age Group	18 -24 years	11	7%
	25 - 34 years	81	49%
	35 - 44 years	53	32%
	45 - 54 years	22	13%
	Entry Level	26	16%
Job Level	Executive	84	50%
	Non- Executive	57	34%
	SPM	19	11%
Education Level	Diploma/Foundation/Certificate	46	28%
	Undergraduate	62	37%
	Postgraduate	40	24%
	Less than 6 months	15	9%
Working Tenure	6 months – 1 year	32	19%
	1 – 2 years	21	13%
	2 - 5 years	33	33%
	5 – 10 years	30	18%
	More than 10 years	36	22%

Table 2 below measures the central tendency of the average response for different aspects of the Work Community, Career Growth, Employee Well-being, and Employee Engagement.

Table 2. Measures of Central Tendency

Variables	SA	A	N	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Work Community	56	55	33	12	11	167	3.796	3.46237259	15.78
Career Growth	43	52	37	16	19	167	3.503	3.226016991	13.91
Employee Well-being	58	40	35	17	17	167	3.629	3.358785067	14.91
Employee Engagement	48	50	37	14	18	167	3.575	3.292160894	14.41

#### 4.2 Reliability Test for Actual Data Collection

A reliability analysis was carried out to evaluate the consistency of the results for both the independent and dependent variables, as depicted in Table 3. This assessment aimed to ensure that the obtained findings are reliable and devoid of random errors.

 Table 3. Interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for Reliability Analysis

Value of $\alpha$	Reliability of Coefficient
$\alpha \geq 0.90$	Excellent
$0.80 \leq \alpha < 0.90$	Very Good
$0.70 \leq \alpha < 0.80$	Good
$0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.70$	Moderate
$0.50 \leq \alpha < 0.60$	Acceptable
$\alpha < 0.50$	Poor

Source: (Hair et al., 2017)

The Cronbach's alpha for work community was 0.86, career growth was 0.87, employee well-being was 0.84 and employee engagement was 0.86. The Cronbach alpha for the variables of work community, career growth, employee well-being and employee engagement ranges from 0.84 to 0.87. Table 4 shows the summary of Cronbach's alpha for all the variables in the study.

Table 4. Coefficient of Work Community, Career Growth, Employee Well – Being and Employee Engagement for Actual Data Collection

Variables	Case Processing Summary	N	%	Cronbach Alpha	No of Statements
<b>Independent Variables</b>					
Work Community	Valid	167	100.0	0.86	8
	Excluded	0	.0		
	Total	167	100.0		
Career Growth	Valid	167	100.0	0.87	8
	Excluded	0	.0		
	Total	167	100.0		
Employee Well-Being	Valid	167	100.0	0.84	7
	Excluded	0	.0		
	Total	167	100.0		
<b>Dependent Variable</b>					
Employee Engagement	Valid	167	100.0	0.86	8
	Excluded	0	.0		
	Total	167	100.0		

### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis evaluates the degree of association between independent variables, including work community, career growth, and employee well-being, and the dependent variable, employee engagement. The correlation coefficient, ranging from -1 to +1, elucidates the strength and direction of this relationship. Table 5 below shows the interpretation of the correlation and Table 6 shows the correlation analysis.

Table 5. Interpretation of r in Pearson Correlation

Absolutely Value of r	Strength of Relationship
$r < -0.20$	Weak negative correlation
$-0.30 < r < -0.50$	Moderate negative correlation
$-0.60 < r < -0.80$	Strong negative correlation
$-0.90 < r < -1.00$	Very strong negative correlation
0	No association
$r < 0.2$	Weak positive correlation
$0.30 < r < 0.50$	Moderate positive correlation
$0.60 < r < 0.80$	Strong positive correlation
$0.90 < r < 1.00$	Very strong positive correlation



Table 6. Correlation Analysis of Work Community, Career Growth, Employee Well-being and Employee Engagement

Variables		Work Community	Career Growth	Employee Well-being	Employee Engagement
<b>Work Community</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	0.785**	0.790**	0.808**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
	N	167	167	167	167
<b>Career Growth</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.785**	1	0.755**	0.814**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001		< 0.001	< 0.001
	N	167	167	167	167
<b>Employee Well-being</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.790**	0.755**	1	0.754**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001	< 0.001		< 0.001
	N	167	167	167	167
<b>Employee Engagement</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.808**	0.814**	0.754**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	
	N	167	167	167	167

For the relationship between work community and employee engagement, the analysis reveals a compelling finding regarding the relationship between work community and employee engagement within SMEs in Klang Valley. With a correlation coefficient of ( $r=0.808$ ) and a significant p-value of less than 0.001, it is evident that there exists a robust positive association between the work community and employee engagement. This suggests that a supportive and cohesive work environment contributes significantly to the level of engagement among employees within SMEs in the Klang Valley region. This finding supports H1, indicating that a supportive and cohesive work environment fosters higher levels of employee engagement. Therefore, H1 is accepted.

For the relationship between career growth and employee engagement, the investigation into the relationship between career growth and employee engagement within SMEs in Klang

Valley yields noteworthy insights. The correlation analysis indicates a strong positive correlation ( $r=0.814$ ) between career growth opportunities and employee engagement, with a statistically significant p-value of less than 0.001. This finding underscores the importance of providing avenues for professional advancement within SMEs, as it positively influences the level of engagement among employees. This result confirms H2, suggesting that providing avenues for professional advancement positively influences employee engagement levels. Therefore, H2 is accepted.

For the relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement, an examination of the relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement within SMEs in Klang Valley uncovers significant findings. The correlation coefficient of ( $r=0.754$ ) indicates a strong positive correlation between employee well-being and employee engagement, supported by a statistically significant p-value of less than 0.001. This highlights the crucial role that prioritizing employee well-being plays in fostering a more engaged workforce within SMEs in the Klang Valley region. This finding supports H3, indicating that prioritizing employee well-being contributes positively to enhancing employee engagement levels within SMEs in the Klang Valley. Therefore, H3 is accepted.

## **5. Discussion**

An examination of the survey data provides important new information about how different aspects of organizational dynamics (independent variables) and employee engagement (dependent variable) relate to one another. Through an analysis of the statements in each table and the replies that go along with them, we can clarify the complex relationships and possible contributing elements that influence employee engagement in the context of the organization.

### *5.1 Work Community and Employee Engagement*

Our analysis reveals a strong positive correlation ( $r=0.808$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) between work community and employee engagement within SMEs in the Klang Valley. This finding is consistent with prior research conducted by Vauhkonen et al. (2023) and Yee (2015). Vauhkonen et al. (2023) emphasized the significance of efficient work organization and social support in fostering occupational well-being, which, in turn, impacts employee engagement positively. Similarly, Yee (2015) highlighted the importance of a comfortable working environment in enhancing job satisfaction and emotional well-being, thereby promoting employee engagement. These findings underscore the critical role of a supportive work community in fostering employee engagement by providing conducive working conditions and social support mechanisms.

The social and organizational environment in which employees' function is referred to as the work community. It shows that most respondents agree or strongly agree that they receive support from their colleagues when needed, that time is used efficiently by the organization, that they are informed about changes to the organization, and that they feel fortunate to work with professionals who have the necessary skills. These favorable opinions point to a strong,

supportive workplace culture that encourages employee collaboration, respect, and togetherness.

These elements foster a sense of contentment, belonging, and trust at work, all of which have a major positive impact on employee engagement. Workers who experience peer support and value are more likely to be driven to deliver quality work and actively support organizational objectives. Additionally, the ability to choose how tasks are carried out and the implementation of safety procedures improve worker autonomy and wellbeing, which in turn raises engagement levels.

### *5.2 Career Growth and Employee Engagement*

Our analysis demonstrates a significant positive correlation ( $r=0.814$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) between career growth and employee engagement within SMEs in the Klang Valley. This aligns with the Theory of Need for Achievement, as highlighted by Tatar, Ali. (2020), where opportunities for career advancement are linked to increased employee commitment and enthusiasm towards work. Moreover, the studies by Dziuba et al. (2020), Bai & Liu (2018), and Jia-Jun & Hua-Ming (2022) emphasize the positive impact of career growth on organizational identification, work engagement, and employee productivity. These findings emphasize the importance of providing clear paths for career advancement and growth opportunities to enhance employee engagement and commitment.

Opportunities for career advancement are crucial in determining employee engagement and job satisfaction. The responses list several comments about career advancement, such as methods for improving employee performance, systems for evaluating performance, procedures for promotions, training initiatives, and conversations about career development with superiors.

The information points to a divergent opinion inside the company about the value of career development programs. While some employees seem happy with career development conversations and training programs, others appear dissatisfied with performance evaluation techniques and promotion processes. This difference in perception emphasizes how crucial it is to match individual career expectations and aspirations with organizational practices.

Successful career progression initiatives show that an organization cares about the long-term success and well-being of its people in addition to facilitating professional development. Employee engagement, dedication, and motivation are more likely to be higher when they perceive clear professional growth pathways and receive sufficient assistance in accomplishing their goals.

### *5.3 Employee Well-Being and Employee Engagement*

Our analysis reveals a significant positive correlation ( $r=0.754$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) between employee well-being and employee engagement within SMEs in the Klang Valley. This is supported by previous studies such as Vauhkonen et al. (2023) and Prakash & Kashyap (2021), which

emphasize the relationship between workplace well-being, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. These studies underscore the importance of promoting workplace happiness, psychological well-being, and meeting employees' psychological needs to enhance engagement levels and overall organizational performance.

The physical, mental, and emotional elements of overall wellness and job satisfaction are all included in employee well-being. A comprehensive overview of workplace culture, focus, motivation, work-related meaning, resilience, and general job satisfaction is given through the responses.

According to the research, a sizable percentage of workers believe their workplaces have a positive culture that is defined by fairness, focus, meaningful work, and contentment. But the comments also highlight issues like workplace harassment, the difficulty of moving on after sad occurrences, and preserving a healthy work-life balance.

Higher levels of engagement and productivity are probably to be expected from companies that put an emphasis on employee well-being by creating an inclusive and supportive work environment, encouraging work-life balance, and offering resources for mental health help. Employees are prone to committing their time and energy to accomplishing company objectives if they feel emotionally supported, inspired, and appreciated.

Overall, there exists a complicated and multifaceted link between the dependent variable (employee engagement) and the independent variables (work community, career progression, and employee well-being). High levels of engagement and dedication among employees can only be fostered with a focus on employee well-being, career opportunities, and a supportive work environment. To foster a pleasant work environment that encourages employee engagement, organizations should give priority to methods that improve cooperation, offer meaningful career pathways, and prioritize employee well-being. Furthermore, sustaining a vibrant workplace culture that fosters engagement, contentment, and productivity requires ongoing assessment and modification of organizational procedures in response to employee input.

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence of the significant relationships between the work community, career growth opportunities, employee well-being, and employee engagement within SMEs in the Klang Valley. The robust positive correlations observed underscore the importance of these factors in fostering a motivated and committed workforce. Organizations can enhance employee engagement by cultivating supportive work communities that facilitate teamwork and mutual respect, offering clear paths for career progression, and ensuring employee well-being through holistic support systems.

Based on the analysis and findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance organizational practices and guide future research endeavors in employee

engagement. First, organizations should invest in building strong work communities through team-building activities and fostering a culture of collaboration. This approach not only enhances engagement but also cultivates a sense of belonging among employees, which can improve retention rates. Second, providing clear pathways for career growth is essential. Organizations can achieve this by implementing mentorship programs and transparent promotion processes. Such initiatives clarify opportunities for advancement, boosting motivation and job satisfaction among employees. Third, prioritizing employee well-being through policies promoting work-life balance and mental health support is crucial. These efforts contribute to a positive workplace environment, reducing absenteeism and enhancing productivity. Moreover, organizations should promote a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging feedback and innovation. This fosters employee engagement by empowering them to contribute ideas and innovation, ensuring organizational adaptability and competitiveness.

For future studies, expanding beyond the Klang Valley to include other Malaysian cities like Penang and Johor Bahru can enhance the generalizability of findings. Additionally, exploring further elements within the Zingers Employee Engagement Model can deepen understanding of engagement dynamics. These recommendations not only contribute to the existing literature on employee engagement but also offer practical insights for organizations and policymakers aiming to foster supportive workplaces and enhance organizational effectiveness.

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### **Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

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