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Employee Engagement Within the E-Commerce Industry

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Kwami Dzahini

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Walden University
2025

Abstract

Employee Engagement Within the E-Commerce Industry

by

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MS, University of Lome, 2014

BS, University of Lome, 2008

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

May 2025

Abstract

Employee engagement poses a significant challenge for human resources (HR) managers in the e-commerce industry. Employees experiencing engagement issues may demonstrate lower commitment and heightened workplace incivility, ultimately affecting business profitability. Grounded in the employee engagement theory, the purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement initiatives within U.S. e-commerce companies. The study involved 72 HR managers and full-time employees from the Eastern U.S. region, who participated in an online survey. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results were statistically significant, $F(2, 69) = 12.475, p < .001, R^2 = .266$, indicating that the model accounted for 26.6% of the variance in employee engagement. Professional growth emerged as a significant predictor of employee engagement, $t = 2.62, p = .011, \beta = 0.36$. A key recommendation for e-commerce HR managers is to monitor engagement levels through surveys, feedback sessions, and performance indicators. Analyzing trends in employee retention, absenteeism, and productivity can allow leadership to make data-driven decisions and adjust strategies as needed. The implications for positive social change include the potential for HR leaders to enhance the value and satisfaction of employees, improve retention, and foster a more productive workforce that contributes positively to the overall health of the e-commerce industry and broader economy.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my family, friends, mentors, and all those who have supported me throughout this academic journey. To my father and mother, your unwavering encouragement, sacrifices, and belief in my abilities have fueled my determination to reach this milestone. Your love and support have been my foundation; I am eternally grateful. To Kafui and Marc Dzahini for their prayers and love. To my mentors and colleagues, your guidance and insights have inspired me to push beyond my limits and embrace the challenges of this research. Your wisdom and encouragement have played an instrumental role in shaping my academic and professional growth.

Finally, I dedicate this work to all employees and leaders striving to create meaningful workplace engagement. May this study provide insight and inspiration for fostering a work environment that values collaboration, innovation, and employee well-being.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	1
Problem Statement	2
Purpose Statement.....	3
Population and Sampling	3
Nature of the Study	4
Research Question	5
Hypotheses	5
Theoretical Framework.....	6
Operational Definitions.....	7
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations.....	8
Assumptions.....	8
Limitations	9
Delimitations.....	9
Significance of the Study	10
Contribution to Business Practice.....	10
Implications for Social Change.....	12
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	12
Strategies for Searching the Literature	13

Objectives and Scope	14
Theoretical Framework: Employee Engagement Theory	15
Use of Khan’s Theory Among Researchers.....	19
Alternative Theories.....	20
Work- Life Balance.....	24
Professional Growth.....	30
Employee Engagement	35
Organizational Culture.....	39
Transition	40
Section 2: The Project.....	42
Purpose Statement.....	42
Role of the Researcher	43
Participants.....	44
Research Method and Design	45
Research Method	45
Research Design.....	46
Population and Sampling	47
Ethical Research.....	49
Data Collection Instruments	51
MSCTCI Questionnaire	51
HCI	51
UWES-3	52

Data Collection Technique	53
Data Analysis	54
Data Cleaning and Screening.....	55
Assumptions of Regression Testing.....	56
Interpretation of Inferential Results	57
Study Validity	57
External Validity.....	57
Internal Validity	58
Statistical Conclusion Validity	58
Transition and Summary.....	59
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change	60
Introduction.....	60
Presentation of the Findings.....	60
Creation of Composite Variables.....	61
Descriptive Statistics.....	62
Assumption Testing	63
Correlation Analysis	67
Multiple Regression Analysis.....	69
Hypothesis Testing.....	72
Applications to Professional Practice	73
Implications for Social Change.....	73
Recommendations for Action	74

Recommendations for Further Research.....	75
Reflections	77
Conclusion	77
References.....	79
Appendix A: Participation Invitation Letter	98
Appendix B: Human Capital Investment Index.....	99
Appendix C: Multimodal Social Capital Transfer in Creative Industries	
Questionnaire	100
Appendix D: Work and Well-Being Survey (UWES).....	101

List of Tables

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Resources Within the Literature Review	14
Table 2. Composite Variable Calculation Methods.....	61
Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables.....	62
Table 4. Variance Inflation Factors for Predictor Variables.....	66
Table 5. Pearson Correlation Matrix.....	68
Table 6. Regression Model Summary.....	69
Table 7. ANOVA Results	70
Table 8. Regression Coefficients	71
Table 9. Results Confirm Alternative Hypothesis and Reject Null Hypothesis	72

List of Figures

Figure 1. G*Power output for A Priori Power Analysis in Multiple Regression	49
Figure 2. P-P Scatterplot for Normality of the Residuals for the Regression Model.....	64
Figure 3. Residuals Scatterplot Testing Homoscedasticity.....	65

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The interplay between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement has attracted considerable interest in recent organizational research due to its impact on both individual well-being and organizational performance. Work-life balance, which refers to the harmony between personal life and professional duties, is vital for employees' mental and physical health (Bhat et al., 2023). At the same time, professional growth, involving career development and skill enhancement, plays a crucial role in sustaining high levels of job satisfaction and engagement (Hassanein & Özgüt, 2022). Employee engagement can help meet organizational objectives and cultivate a productive work environment. Hayden and Miura (2022) emphasized the interrelated nature of these factors, proposing that a work environment supportive of work-life balance and professional growth can greatly boost employee engagement. This research aimed to explore the complex relationships between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement, providing insights into how organizations, including those in the e-commerce sector, can foster conditions that enhance employee well-being and productivity. Understanding these relationships is key to developing strategies that improve employee satisfaction and retention while driving organizational success.

Background of the Problem

Work-life balance and professional growth significantly impact employee engagement. Hassanein and Özgüt (2022) noted that a supportive work environment promoting work-life balance and offering professional growth opportunities can greatly enhance employee engagement. On the other hand, neglecting these areas can result in

disengagement, reduced productivity, and higher turnover rates (Hassanein & Özgit, 2022). Understanding these relationships is essential for organizations striving to create a positive work environment. It requires a holistic approach that addresses the factors influencing work-life balance, supports ongoing professional development, and fosters a culture of engagement. Human resources (HR) management is crucial in promoting employee voice and creating platforms for individuals to share their ideas with leadership (Azmy, 2024). The interconnected issues of work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement have recently become central to organizational research and practice (Kelly et al., 2020). These elements are critical for understanding employee well-being, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance.

Problem Statement

A holistic approach addresses the interrelationships between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement, enhancing employee well-being and organizational performance (Maharani, 2024). For instance, flexible work arrangements and robust professional development programs have improved work-life balance and employee engagement (Gangan & Sankar, 2020). The general business problem that prompted a literature search is that HRs managers need to address the financial loss related to employees not being engaged in the e-commerce industry in the United States of America. The specific business problem is that some HR managers within the e-commerce industry in the Eastern U.S. region do not know the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. The independent variables are work-life balance and professional growth, while the dependent variable is employee engagement. The target population consisted of HR managers of e-commerce companies in the Eastern United States. This population was appropriate for the study because more than 50% of people living in the Eastern U.S. region engage in online shopping (see Bravo et al., 2022). The findings can be valuable for HR professionals, organizational leaders, and policymakers in designing interventions that enhance work-life balance and professional growth, thereby improving employee engagement and organizational outcomes. Watson (2022) highlighted the critical nature of these factors in shaping employee experiences and organizational success. Building on these findings, this study aimed to fill gaps in the current understanding and provide practical recommendations for fostering a positive and productive work environment.

Population and Sampling

This study's sampling was a target population of HR managers of e-commerce companies in the Eastern U.S. region. I used G*Power 3.1.9.7 to determine the sample size of 68 to 107. The G*Power analysis included identifying the sample size, which is a set of individuals (HR managers). Sixty-eight participants were required, including HR managers in the e-commerce industry. The power (1- β) of the study was set at 0.80, indicating an 80% chance of detecting an actual effect if it exists. The study can help to determine how work-life balance and professional growth impact employee engagement.

Nature of the Study

Researchers can select from three primary approaches to educational research: (a) quantitative research, (b) qualitative research, and (c) mixed methods research (R. B. Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Qualitative research and mixed methods research were not suitable for this study. The research identified relationships and correlations between variables, such as work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. This requires numerical data to establish patterns, trends, and statistical relationships. Qualitative research exploring subjective experiences and meanings would not provide the numerical data necessary to quantify these relationships. Also, qualitative research typically focuses on deep, contextual understanding rather than broad generalizability. While incorporating quantitative elements, mixed methods also include qualitative components that may not align with the research goal of establishing general patterns across a population. For this study, a quantitative research method was employed to address the research questions. This approach was suitable because the quantitative methodology aligns with the postpositivist worldview, which utilizes scientific methods and quantitative descriptions to understand phenomena. Using quantitative research, robust statistical methods can explore variable interactions, identify key predictors of employee engagement, and provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing work-life balance and professional growth. The justification for the quantitative method stems from the necessity to test the efficacy of work-life balance and professional growth in enhancing engagement levels.

A correlational design is particularly useful when manipulating variables is impractical or unethical or when the objective is to understand the nature and strength of associations rather than establish causality (Saunders et al., 2019). This study focused on identifying correlations rather than causations. For example, a significant correlation between work-life balance and employee engagement does not necessarily imply that changes in work-life balance cause changes in engagement levels. In examining relationships between two or more variables, researchers use a correlational design and deductive approach (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020). This approach allows for rapid data collection and the generalization of findings to real-life situations (Zhang et al., 2020). Correlational studies are valuable for generating hypotheses and guiding future research. Researchers can hypothesize about potential relationships or mechanisms underlying observed associations by identifying significant correlations, which can be tested in subsequent experimental or longitudinal studies (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020). This design was appropriate for this research as I sought to identify relationships between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement, focusing on assessing noncausal relationships and associations among naturally occurring variables.

Research Question

What is the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement in the e-commerce industry?

Hypotheses

H_0 : There is no statistically significant relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement in the e-commerce industry.

*H*₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement in the e-commerce industry.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework selected for this study was the employee engagement theory developed by Kahn (1990), who introduced the concept of employee engagement by identifying three dimensions: physical, cognitive, and emotional. This study aimed to understand the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement within e-commerce companies in the Eastern U.S. region, using Kahn's (1990) theory as a foundation.

According to Kahn (1990), physical engagement refers to the amount of physical energy employees invest in their work. A good work-life balance is crucial here, as overworked employees may lack the physical energy to engage fully in their tasks (Bakker et al., 2020). Conversely, employees with a good work-life balance can maintain their physical health and energy levels, leading to better performance and professional growth (Schneider et al., 2020). Cognitive engagement involves the attention and thought an employee dedicates to their work (Otoo, 2022). Poor work-life balance and lack of professional growth can lead to stress and distraction, reducing cognitive engagement. However, a good work-life balance can enhance focus, problem-solving skills, and creativity. Emotional engagement pertains to employees' passion and positive emotions about their work (Otoo, 2022). Lack of work-life balance and professional growth can diminish emotional engagement, while a good work-life balance can improve emotional well-being and job satisfaction.

The logical connection between this framework and the nature of the study lies in examining the relationships between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. The independent variables were work-life balance and professional growth, while the dependent variable was employee engagement. The target population consisted of business leaders in e-commerce companies in the Eastern United States, a relevant demographic given that over 50% of people in this region buy online (see Bravo et al., 2022). Applying the employee engagement theory to this study, it was expected that the independent variables (work-life balance and professional growth), measured by the Multifaceted Employee Engagement Questionnaire, predicted the dependent variable (employee engagement). This theoretical framework helped explain or predict phenomena related to work engagement by identifying the physical, cognitive, and emotional dimensions of employee engagement.

The research question guiding this study was as follows: What is the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement? Work-life balance and professional growth served as the independent variables, and employee engagement was the dependent variable. Physical and emotional engagement are associated with work-life balance, while cognitive engagement is linked to professional growth. The research collected and measured data reflecting these constructs of employee engagement.

Operational Definitions

Job satisfaction: The level of contentment employees feel with their job roles, which can influence their performance and overall well-being (Mampuru et al., 2024).

Mentorship and coaching: Involve experienced individuals providing guidance, support, and advice to less experienced colleagues (Lyons & Bandura, 2020).

Recognition: Concerns acknowledging and rewarding employees for their contributions and achievements (Nabhan & Munajat, 2023).

Skill development: Refers to the process of identifying skill gaps and developing abilities through training and professional development programs (Nienaber & Martins, 2020).

Stress management: Relates to techniques and therapies aimed at controlling a person's level of stress, especially chronic stress (Oliveira & Na jnudel, 2023).

Support systems: Include formal and informal structures that provide assistance and resources to employees (Sheing-Wei et al., 2021).

Work meaningfulness: Means the significance employees perceive in their job roles (Nichols et al., 2022).

Workload: Concerns the amount of work assigned to or expected from a worker in a specified period (Twen & Jolly, 2021).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are beliefs that scholars accept as true or certain to occur without proof or factual support (Knief & Forstmeier, 2021). In this study, several key assumptions were made. The first assumption was that employees who experience a better work-life balance and have opportunities for professional growth exhibit higher levels of engagement. The second assumption was that individual differences, such as

personality traits, job roles, and life stages, influence employees' perceptions of work-life balance and professional growth. For example, younger employees may prioritize career advancement, whereas older employees might place greater importance on work-life balance. The third assumption was that Kahn's (1990) employee engagement model applies across various industries and organizational contexts.

Limitations

Limitations are constraints on research that could influence the study (Castilla & Chocano, 2022). The first limitation of my study was the sample size, which is too small to represent the broader population adequately, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Given that there are over 280,000 e-commerce companies in the Eastern U.S. region, a sample size of 84 to 123 participants, determined using the G*Power analysis $(1-\beta) = 0.80$ equation, was appropriate to achieve confidence levels between 80% and 95%. The second limitation was the potential for a low survey response rate, which could introduce nonresponse bias. This bias occurs when the respondents' views differ from those who did not respond, affecting the representativeness of the sample and the reliability of the conclusions drawn from the data.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries and intentions developed to limit the scope of a study (Knief & Forstmeier, 2021). There are three delimitations for this quantitative correlational study. The first delimitation was the geographical boundary, which confined the study to organizations in the United States, specifically focusing on the Eastern region. The second delimitation was that only HR managers at any company were

surveyed. The third delimitation was the industry focus, specifically examining HR managers working in e-commerce companies.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Organizations are faced with engaging employees. HR managers seek to engage employees to achieve goals. This study is significant to business practice because it may provide a practical model for better understanding the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. A significant practical model can aid and support businesses in organizations that are faced with engaging employees (Maharani, 2024). In e-commerce's fast-paced and competitive environment, employees often face high workloads, tight deadlines, and the pressure to innovate continuously. As a result, maintaining a healthy work-life balance becomes essential for employee well-being and engagement. Organizations prioritizing work-life balance initiatives, such as flexible work arrangements, remote work options, and wellness programs, will likely see higher employee satisfaction, commitment, and productivity levels (Braddock et al., 2023). Additionally, supporting employees' personal and family needs helps to reduce burnout, turnover, and absenteeism, leading to a more engaged and motivated workforce.

Providing professional growth and development opportunities is another critical driver of employee engagement in the e-commerce industry. Employees seek opportunities to enhance their skills, knowledge, and career prospects, especially in a dynamic and evolving industry like e-commerce. Companies that invest in employee training, mentorship programs, career advancement opportunities, and continuous

feedback mechanisms are more likely to attract and retain top talent (Ngwenya & Pelsler, 2020). By empowering employees to grow and succeed professionally, organizations foster a culture of learning and innovation and demonstrate their commitment to employee development, which positively impacts engagement and organizational performance (Watson, 2022). On the other hand, the findings can inform policymakers and regulatory bodies about the importance of e-commerce's work-life balance and professional growth. This can lead to developing supportive policies and regulations that incentivize companies to adopt practices that promote employee well-being and engagement. For example, policymakers may consider tax incentives or grants for companies that offer flexible work arrangements or invest in employee training and development (Dhir & Shukla, 2019). Additionally, the findings can provide evidence-based insights into the effectiveness of work-life balance initiatives and professional development programs in e-commerce companies. By understanding which practices positively impact employee engagement, organizations can implement targeted strategies to enhance employee well-being and satisfaction, improving work-life balance and career advancement opportunities for employees. Further, the study showed how work-life balance and professional growth initiatives impact employees from diverse backgrounds within the e-commerce industry. By recognizing and addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by employees of different genders, ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds, organizations can foster a more inclusive and equitable work environment, promoting social change by advancing diversity and inclusion initiatives (Gode et al., 2020).

Implications for Social Change

Providing strong evidence for the interconnectedness of work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement has the potential to contribute to a significant social change. Engaged employees are more likely to be satisfied and stay with their employers, reducing costly turnover and fostering a more stable work environment (Lyons & Bandura, 2020). This research can empower employees by highlighting their right to a healthy work-life balance and professional growth opportunities. This awareness can equip them to advocate for their own needs and well-being in the workplace. On the other hand, this research can challenge the notion that long hours equal high productivity. By highlighting the connection between work-life balance and employee engagement, companies can encourage a shift towards (Gangan & Sankar, 2020). Findings can nudge organizations to view employees as whole individuals with needs beyond just their work performance. The results can lead to a more positive and supportive work environment that benefits both the employees and the organization.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

A literature review is essential for situating new research within the existing body of knowledge, identifying gaps, informing methodology, and justifying the research. It enhances the scholar's understanding and provides a foundation for developing a robust and credible research project. It provides an overview of the historical development of the research area, showing how concepts and theories have evolved over time. Conducting a literature review deepens the scholar's understanding of the subject matter, ensuring a well-informed approach to the research. The employee engagement theory is the main

theoretical framework for this study. This study aimed to examine research relevant to this theory, Demerouti et al.'s (2001) job demands-resources (JD-R) theory, and Burns's (1978) transformational leadership theory, explaining how work and personal life influence each other and how job resources and demands impact engagement levels.

Additionally, the study includes an examination of relevant research on the three variables outlined in this study: (a) the independent variable of work-life balance, (b) the independent variable of professional growth, and (c) the dependent variable of employee engagement. The work-life balance variable includes (a) time management, (b) workload, (c) flexibility, (d) stress management, and (e) support systems. The professional growth independent variable includes (a) skill development, (b) career advancement, (c) mentorship and coaching, (d) performance feedback, and (e) learning opportunities. The employee engagement variable includes the topics of (a) job satisfaction, (b) motivation, (c) recognition, (d) communication, and (e) work meaningfulness. Understanding these components and their interrelationships is crucial for analyzing work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement dynamics. This holistic approach provided a comprehensive framework for my research and helped identify effective strategies to enhance employee well-being and performance in organizations.

Strategies for Searching the Literature

This literature review was based on an extensive search conducted through various academic databases available via the Walden University Library, including ABI/INFORM, Academic Search Complete, Emerald Management Journals, ProQuest, Sage Premier, and ScholarWorks. Additionally, I utilized Google Scholar and the Walden

University Portal to locate peer-reviewed articles, books, and governmental websites. The search strategy involved using keywords such as *employee engagement, work-life balance, professional growth, time management, workload, stress management, skill development, career advancement, learning opportunities, job satisfaction, motivation, communication, and work meaningfulness*. The review primarily focused on sources published within 5 years of the expected completion date of this doctoral study (refer to Table 1).

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Resources Within the Literature Review

Resources	Within 5 years	Older than 5 years	Total	percentage
Peer reviewed articles	108	12	120	97%
Other resources	1	3	4	3%
Total	109	15	124	100%

Objectives and Scope

The objective of this literature review was to examine current research on the connections between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. This review seeks to identify significant themes, theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence, and gaps within the literature. The literature addressed various factors affecting these concepts, their impacts, and how they relate. The study specifically focused on employee engagement within the e-commerce industry.

Theoretical Framework: Employee Engagement Theory

This literature review aimed to investigate Kahn's (1990) employee engagement theory as a foundational framework for understanding work engagement. The review compared the strengths and limitations of Kahn's theory with alternative frameworks, including Demerouti et al.'s (2001) JD-R theory and Burns's (1978) transformational leadership theory. Employee engagement has emerged as a critical goal for organizations striving to cultivate a motivated and productive workforce. Kahn's seminal 1990 paper, "*Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work*," provides a comprehensive basis for understanding this intricate phenomenon. This study examined Kahn's theory in detail, focusing on its core concepts and their practical implications for enhancing employee engagement.

Kahn's theory posits that employee engagement hinges on three vital psychological conditions: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Meaningfulness refers to the sense that one's work contributes to something valuable and aligns with personal values (Gode et al., 2020). For instance, a teacher who ignites a love of learning in students, or an engineer who designs innovative products, experiences a sense of meaningfulness. Safety encompasses the psychological security felt when expressing oneself and taking risks without fear of negative consequences (Maze et al., 2023). This fosters creativity and a willingness to learn from mistakes. Availability refers to the psychological and physical resources required for optimal job performance (Rabiul et al., 2023). Employees feel available and engaged when they have the energy, skills, and knowledge to tackle their tasks.

Furthermore, engaged employees feel that their efforts make a difference. Kahn further proposes that engagement manifests in three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. The cognitive dimension reflects the mental focus and concentration employees bring to their work (Ariadna & Calvo, 2023). Employees who find their work meaningful are more likely to approach tasks with focused attention and a desire to learn and understand. The emotional dimension encompasses employees' feelings towards work (Otoo, 2022). Employees who feel safe and see meaning in their work are likelier to experience positive emotions like enthusiasm and pride. Finally, the behavioral dimension refers to individuals' observable actions and efforts in their work roles (Rabiul et al., 2023). When engaged, employees go beyond the minimum requirements and are willing to exert extra effort. Kahn's framework is suitable for organizational success.

Kahn's framework provides valuable insights for organizations seeking to cultivate employee engagement. Organizations have used the framework to design interventions that foster meaningfulness, safety, and availability among employees (Otoo, 2022). Creating a meaningful work environment involves ensuring employees understand how their work contributes to the bigger picture and aligning tasks with individual values (Sheing-Wei et al., 2021). Promoting psychological safety requires fostering a culture of trust, open communication, and appreciation for risk-taking (Rožman et al., 2023). Finally, ensuring employee availability involves providing adequate training, resources, and opportunities for skill development (Kelly et al., 2020). For instance, companies have restructured job roles to ensure tasks align with employees' skills and interests, making work more meaningful. Organizations involve employees in decision-making processes,

which enhances their sense of contribution and purpose (Alam et al., 2023). To create a safe environment, organizations have implemented policies that promote inclusivity and protect against harassment and discrimination. Providing supportive leadership and fostering a culture of trust is crucial in ensuring employees feel safe (Balwant et al., 2020). Organizations have focused on work-life balance initiatives, such as flexible working hours and mental health support, to ensure employees have the necessary resources to remain engaged.

Kahn's (1990) employee engagement theory has inspired numerous empirical studies that validate and expand upon his original concepts. Albrecht et al. (2021) explored the relationship between job resources, meaningful work, and employee engagement within the JD-R model. The author validated the role of meaningful work as a critical psychological state that mediates the effect of job resources on employee engagement. The findings showed that job variety, development opportunities, and autonomy positively influenced meaningful work, which in turn enhanced employee engagement. In 2023, a study conducted by Achievers Workforce Institute examined the impact of recognition programs on employee engagement. The study found that organizations implementing structured employee recognition programs saw significant improvements in engagement levels. Recognizing employees for their contributions and achievements fostered a culture of appreciation, which, in turn, enhanced overall employee satisfaction and motivation (Achievers Workforce Institute, 2023). These studies underscore the practical implications of Kahn's theory in organizational settings, demonstrating how providing the right job resources can enhance meaningful work

experiences and subsequently improve employee engagement. By validating these theoretical constructs, researchers offer robust recommendations for organizations seeking to improve their engagement strategies.

One of the most significant applications of Kahn's theory lies in its potential to transform negative job cultures. Kahn's theory has profound implications for transforming negative job cultures into positive environments (Rožman et al., 2023). By focusing on the three psychological conditions, organizations can foster a culture of engagement and well-being. Imagine a workplace where employees feel their work lacks meaning, ideas are stifled due to fear of repercussions, and resources are inadequate for optimal performance. Such an environment breeds disengagement and undermines productivity. Kahn's framework provides a roadmap for improvement (Sheing-Wei et al., 2021). By fostering a sense of meaningfulness through connecting individual work to organizational goals, creating a safe space for open communication, and ensuring employee availability through training and resources, organizations can gradually shift the needle from disengagement to engagement. In organizations plagued by low morale and disengagement, applying Kahn's principles can initiate cultural change (Ariadna & Calvo, 2023). Leaders who prioritize psychological safety, meaningfulness, and resource availability create a ripple effect that enhances overall engagement. Empowering employees by involving them in decision-making, recognizing their contributions, and providing opportunities for growth can transform a negative job culture into a positive one. As organizations continue to navigate the complexities of the modern workplace,

Kahn's employee engagement theory remains a vital tool for fostering a motivated and committed workforce.

Use of Kahn's Theory Among Researchers

Kahn's theory has investigated the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement in various organizational contexts. Tuyl et al. (2024) empirically tested Kahn's model and found that meaningfulness, safety, and availability significantly predict engagement levels. Their study demonstrated that jobs providing psychological safety and meaningful work lead to higher engagement, supporting Kahn's original findings. Intervention studies have leveraged Kahn's theory to design and evaluate programs to enhance employee engagement. For instance, Bakker and Demerouti (2008) applied the JD-R model, incorporating elements of Kahn's theory, to explore how job resources like autonomy and feedback can boost engagement. Their research indicates that providing resources that foster meaningfulness, safety, and availability can significantly enhance engagement.

Kahn's theory has also been instrumental in transforming organizational cultures. Engaged employees are more likely to exhibit discretionary effort, innovation, and commitment, contributing to a positive work environment. Kelly et al. (2020) demonstrated that higher levels of employee engagement correlate with better business outcomes, such as increased productivity, customer satisfaction, and profitability. Organizations that have implemented Kahn's principles report improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover rates. Saks (2006) expanded on Kahn's initial work by exploring additional factors that influence engagement. For instance, the author introduced the

concept of social exchange theory to explain how perceived organizational support and job characteristics affect engagement. This extension of Kahn's theory provides a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics that drive employee engagement. Furthermore, Albrecht et al. (2021) examined employee engagement literature, confirming the relevance of Kahn's psychological conditions in contemporary workplaces. Their findings highlight the importance of creating meaningful work experiences, ensuring psychological safety, and providing the necessary resources to maintain high engagement levels.

Alternative Theories

JD-R Theory

The JD-R theory by Demerouti et al. (2001) has significantly advanced the understanding of how job characteristics affect employee well-being, engagement, and performance. Its dual process model, flexibility, and applicability across different job settings and cultural contexts make it a valuable framework for research and practice. The modern workplace presents a complex web of demands and resources that shape employee well-being and performance (Nichols et al., 2022). The JD-R theory proposes that job characteristics can be broadly categorized into two distinct groups: job demands and job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job demands encompass a job's physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects that require sustained effort and are associated with potential health costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Examples include heavy workloads, emotional labor, and role conflict. Conversely, job resources refer to the aspects of a job that help employees achieve work goals, reduce job demands and

associated costs, and stimulate personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., 2001). These include social support from colleagues, autonomy in decision-making, and opportunities for skill development. The JD-R theory posits a reciprocal relationship between job demands and resources, influencing employee well-being and motivation through two distinct processes. High job demands activate the health impairment process, leading to burnout and decreased work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Burnout, characterized by exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficacy (Braddock et al., 2023), signifies a state of emotional and physical depletion. Low job resources exacerbate this process, leaving employees less equipped to handle demanding tasks. Conversely, the presence of job resources activates the motivational process, fostering work engagement. Work engagement, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Bhat et al., 2023), reflects employees' dedication and enthusiasm towards their work. When resources are plentiful, employees feel more energized and motivated, leading to increased engagement and better performance.

The JD-R model has transcended theoretical boundaries and has been applied in various research endeavors. Xanthopoulou et al. (2020) investigated the impact of telework on employee well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. Utilizing the JD-R framework, they found that while telework offered autonomy (a resource), it also increased workload demands (a demand). This highlights the nuanced nature of work characteristics and the importance of considering both sides of the JD-R equation. Another study by Schaufeli et al. (2019) employed the JD-R model to explore the influence of leadership style on employee engagement and well-being. Their findings

suggested that leadership behaviors that promote autonomy and provide emotional support (resources) act as buffers against the negative effects of high job demands, ultimately fostering engagement. Oliveira and Na jnuvel (2023) explored the role of job crafting within the JD-R framework. Job crafting involves employees proactively modifying their job demands and resources to fit their needs and capabilities better. Their study demonstrated that job crafting significantly improved job satisfaction and performance, highlighting the dynamic and proactive nature of the JD-R model. Recent research has utilized the model to understand the intricate relationship between work characteristics and employee outcomes.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Burns's transformational leadership theory has profoundly impacted organizational behavior, offering a framework for understanding how leaders can inspire and motivate their followers to achieve exceptional outcomes. As conceptualized by Burns in 1978, transformational leadership is a theory that focuses on the dynamic relationship between leaders and followers (as cited in Alam et al., 2023). Burns introduced this concept in his seminal work "Leadership," where he distinguished between transactional and transformational leadership. The theory's emphasis on idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration provides a comprehensive approach to leadership applicable across various organizational contexts (Sheing-Wei et al., 2021). Leadership styles could be transactional or transformational.

Burns (1978) differentiated between two fundamental leadership styles: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership focuses on a social exchange where leaders and followers bargain for mutual benefit (Nabhan & Munajat, 2023). Leaders reward desired behaviors, and followers comply with them to achieve their goals. While transactional leadership can maintain stability, it does not necessarily inspire or cultivate growth (Nabhan & Munajat, 2023). In contrast, transformational leadership is a more dynamic and inspiring process (Balwant et al., 2020). Transformational leaders elevate the motivation and morale of their followers, fostering a shared vision and inspiring them to pursue goals that go beyond individual self-interest (Burns, 1978). These leaders act as role models, challenging followers to think critically and reach their full potential. Leaders act as role models, gaining the trust and respect of their followers (Watson, 2022). They demonstrate high ethical standards and are admired for their integrity and commitment to their values. These leaders challenge the status quo, encourage creativity, and promote critical thinking within their teams. They treat each follower as an individual, acknowledging their unique needs and aspirations and fostering a sense of personal growth and development. Transformational leaders communicate a clear vision and purpose, instilling enthusiasm and a strong desire within followers to achieve shared goals (Alam et al., 2023). Transformational leadership has been applied in various organizational settings, leading to improved performance, increased job satisfaction, and enhanced organizational commitment.

Leaders who adopt transformational behaviors are seen as change agents who drive organizational growth and innovation. Balwant et al. (2020) examined the

relationship between transformational leadership and performance. Their findings confirmed that transformational leadership positively impacts both individual and organizational performance. They also found that cultural and organizational contexts moderate the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Watson (2022) explored the impact of transformational leadership on team innovation. The study found that transformational leaders enhance team innovation by fostering a supportive and collaborative environment. This underscores the role of transformational leadership in promoting creativity and innovation within teams. Sheing-Wei et al. (2021) examined the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement. Their study revealed that transformational leaders positively influence employee engagement by providing meaningful work, fostering autonomy, and supporting professional development. The authors posited the core principles of transformational leadership, emphasizing the importance of individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. This study explored the core principles of Burns's transformational leadership theory, its implications for organizational behavior, and recent studies that have employed this theoretical framework.

Work- Life Balance

Work-life balance has emerged as a critical issue in the contemporary workforce, particularly in the United States. For instance, demanding job expectations often conflict with personal life (Lyons & Bandura, 2020). Achieving a balance between work responsibilities and personal life is essential for employee well-being, productivity, and overall life satisfaction. Work-life balance also refers to the equilibrium between

professional responsibilities and personal life, where individuals manage their work duties and personal activities to promote well-being and minimize stress (Lyons & Bandura., 2020). This balance is crucial for maintaining mental and physical health, fostering job satisfaction, and enhancing overall quality of life. The importance of work-life balance cannot be overstated. Employees with a healthy work-life balance experience lower stress levels, higher job satisfaction, and increased productivity (Hassanein & Özgit, 2022). This balance also contributes to a positive organizational culture and enhances employee engagement.

Organizations prioritizing work-life balance are more likely to retain employees and reduce turnover rates. Kelly et al. (2020) examined the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-life balance and employee well-being. The findings revealed that employees with access to flexible work schedules reported higher job satisfaction, lower stress levels, and better overall well-being. Also, Madsen et al. (2021) investigated the effects of work-life balance on mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings showed that employees who were able to maintain a balance between work and personal life reported lower levels of anxiety and depression. Additionally, Hubstaff (2020) found that 60% of U.S. workers reported difficulty establishing boundaries between work and personal life, with constant email checking and work calls disrupting their downtime. This lack of separation can blur the lines between work and personal life, leading to feelings of burnout and reduced well-being. Despite its importance, achieving work-life balance is challenging for many employees in the United States. Several factors contribute to this struggle.

Long Working Hours

Long working hours can significantly affect both physical and mental health. In today's fast-paced and highly competitive work environment, long working hours have become increasingly common in the United States (Lyon & Bandura, 2022). This trend has profound implications for employees' work-life balance. A healthy work-life balance is essential for well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity. Extended work periods often lead to chronic stress, fatigue, and burnout. Mampuru et al. (2024) found that employees working more than 48 hours per week reported higher stress levels and lower well-being than those working fewer hours. The physical toll of long hours can manifest in various health issues, including cardiovascular diseases, sleep disorders, and musculoskeletal problems (Virtanen et al., 2020). The intrusion of work into personal life due to long working hours can strain family relationships and social connections. Wang and Haggerty (2020) highlighted that long working hours negatively impact marital satisfaction and family cohesion, leading to increased conflicts and reduced quality time with loved ones. Employees who spend excessive time at work often find it challenging to engage in family activities, maintain social relationships, and fulfill domestic responsibilities. This imbalance can create a cycle of stress and dissatisfaction, further exacerbating the negative effects on personal and professional fronts.

When employees are overworked, they are more likely to experience fatigue and decreased motivation. Long working hours lead to lower productivity and a higher likelihood of errors (Mampuru et al., 2024). According to Haar et al. (2019), employees who worked extended hours reported lower job satisfaction and engagement levels than

those with more balanced work schedules. This disengagement can lead to higher turnover rates and decreased organizational commitment, ultimately affecting overall performance. Work-life conflict arises when work and personal life demands are incompatible, making it challenging for employees to fulfill their responsibilities in both domains.

Organizations that fail to address the issues associated with long working hours risk lower productivity and a negative workplace culture. Zhang et al. (2020) found that employees with longer working hours experienced higher levels of work-life conflict, leading to decreased life satisfaction and increased stress. This conflict can also result in reduced performance at work and hinder career progression, creating a cycle of dissatisfaction and underachievement. From an organizational perspective, long working hours can lead to increased absenteeism, higher healthcare costs, and reduced employee morale. Beham et al. (2020) suggested that organizations with policies promoting work-life balance, such as flexible working hours and remote work options, had more engaged and satisfied employees. These organizations also reported better overall performance and lower turnover rates, highlighting the importance of supporting employees' work-life balance. Long working hours profoundly impact work-life balance, affecting physical and mental health, family and social life, job satisfaction, and employee engagement (Zhang et al., 2020). The resulting work-life conflict can lead to a cycle of stress and dissatisfaction, adversely impacting both employees and organizations.

Lack of Organizational Support

Organizational support enables employees to balance their professional and personal lives effectively. Support has emerged as a critical concern in the modern workplace, influencing employee well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity (Balwant et al., 2020). One of the most immediate consequences of a lack of organizational support is increased stress and burnout among employees. The lack of support can harm work-life balance, leading to increased stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction (Braddock et al., 2023). Without support systems, such as flexible working hours, remote work options, and mental health resources, employees are more likely to experience high stress levels. Zhang et al. (2020) found that employees in organizations with low perceived support reported significantly higher stress levels and a greater incidence of burnout than those in supportive environments. The absence of organizational support exacerbates the pressures of balancing work and personal responsibilities, leading to emotional exhaustion and decreased overall well-being. Job satisfaction is closely linked to the degree of support employees receive from their organizations. When employees feel unsupported, job satisfaction declines (Balwant et al., 2020). According to D. J. Lee and Sirgy (2019), employees who perceived low organizational support were less satisfied with their jobs and more likely to consider leaving their positions. This dissatisfaction stems from the inability to manage work demands effectively without the necessary support, leading to frustration and a lack of motivation. The study highlights the importance of organizational support in fostering a positive work environment and enhancing job satisfaction.

The absence of organizational support can lead to poor work-life integration. Without support, employees struggle to effectively manage their work and personal lives (Alshaabani & Rudnák, 2023). Flexible working arrangements and supportive policies are essential for helping employees achieve a healthy balance between their professional and personal responsibilities. Mauno et al. (2020) found that employees in organizations lacking support for work-life balance reported more significant difficulties in managing their work and personal lives. This poor integration can lead to conflicts between work and family roles, exacerbating stress and negatively impacting overall well-being. The lack of organizational support can also have severe implications for employees' mental health. Without access to supportive resources and policies, employees may experience heightened anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Hammer et al. (2019) emphasized that employees who felt unsupported by their organizations were more likely to report mental health problems. The study suggested that the absence of organizational support systems, such as employee assistance programs and mental health resources, can leave employees feeling isolated and unable to cope with work-related stressors.

When employees lack the necessary support, their ability to perform effectively is compromised. Organizational support is essential for maintaining high levels of productivity and performance (Azmy, 2024). According to Bakker et al. (2020), employees who perceived low organizational support reported lower productivity levels and decreased work engagement. The study indicated that the absence of support reduces motivation and energy, impacting employees' ability to perform their tasks efficiently. This reduction in productivity can have significant implications for organizational

success and employee morale. The lack of organizational support profoundly affects work-life balance, leading to increased stress and burnout, decreased job satisfaction, poor work-life integration, negative impacts on mental health, and reduced productivity. Organizations must implement supportive policies and resources to foster a positive work environment and enhance work-life balance (Mampuru et al., 2024). Doing so can improve employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational performance.

Professional Growth

Professional growth is a vital aspect of the modern workplace in the United States, benefiting both employees and organizations. Through mechanisms such as formal education, training programs, mentorship, and on-the-job learning, employees can develop new skills, enhance their careers, and contribute to organizational success (Oliveira & Najudiel, 2023). As the business landscape evolves, the focus on professional growth will remain crucial for sustaining a motivated and capable workforce. Professional growth also refers to the continuous process of acquiring new skills, knowledge, and experiences that enhance an individual's capabilities and career trajectory (Ngwenya & Pelsler, 2020). In a rapidly changing business environment, organizations must continuously adapt and innovate. In the United States, professional growth is critical for both employees and employers, driving personal fulfillment and organizational success (Ngwenya & Pelsler, 2020). Employees who engage in professional development can bring new ideas, skills, and competencies to their organizations, driving innovation and competitiveness. De Grip and Sauermann (2020) emphasized the role of continuous learning and skill acquisition in enhancing

organizational performance. The researchers found that firms that invest in employee development tend to outperform their competitors. In the same study, the authors also examined the effects of continuous learning on organizational performance. The study highlighted that organizations prioritizing employee development through ongoing training and skill acquisition are more innovative and competitive. Park et al. (2020) investigated on-the-job learning and its role in professional growth. The study found that employees who engage in on-the-job learning are better equipped to handle job challenges and adapt to changes, leading to enhanced professional growth and job performance. Several factors contribute to enhancing professional growth.

Formal Education and Training Programs

In the contemporary workplace, professional growth is not only a desirable trait but a necessity for both employees and organizations aiming to thrive in a competitive environment. Formal education and training programs facilitate growth by equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and competencies required to advance their careers (Rožman et al., 2023). As the demands of the modern workplace continue to evolve, the importance of formal education and ongoing training cannot be overstated. Employers and employees must recognize the value of continuous learning and invest in education and training programs to ensure sustained professional growth and organizational success (Lyon & Bandura, 2022). Formal education, including undergraduate and graduate degrees, certifications, and specialized courses, provides a structured and comprehensive foundation for professional development (Watson, 2022). These educational programs are designed to impart theoretical knowledge and practical

skills pertinent to specific fields or industries. Li et al. (2020) highlighted the significance of formal education in enhancing career prospects. The researchers found that employees with higher education levels were more likely to experience career advancement, higher salaries, and job stability. The structured curriculum of formal education programs ensures that individuals gain a deep understanding of their chosen fields, making them more competent and confident in their professional roles. Moreover, formal education fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills, which are essential for tackling complex tasks and challenges in the workplace. For instance, Ng and Feldman (2021) demonstrated that employees who pursued higher education exhibited improved decision-making abilities and were better equipped to handle managerial and leadership responsibilities.

Whether provided by employers or external institutions, training programs are tailored to address specific skills and competencies required for job performance. Training programs are particularly effective in keeping employees updated with industry trends and technologies (L. Huang et al., 2023). These programs can range from technical skills training to soft skills development, such as communication and teamwork. According to Noe et al. (2021), ongoing training programs significantly contribute to professional growth by enhancing employees' technical skills and knowledge. The study emphasized that employees who participated in regular training sessions were more adept at adopting new technologies and methodologies, improving their productivity and job performance. In addition to technical skills, training programs also focus on developing soft skills, which are crucial for career advancement. Robles (2022) found that soft skills

training, such as leadership development, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution, positively impacted employees' professional growth. The study revealed that employees who underwent soft skills training were likelier to take on leadership roles and effectively manage team dynamics, leading to improved job satisfaction and career progression.

While formal education provides a solid foundation, training programs offer continuous learning opportunities that complement and enhance the knowledge acquired through formal education. The combination of both formal education and training creates a synergistic effect that accelerates professional growth (Noe et al., 2021). A longitudinal study by L. Huang et al. (2023) examined the combined impact of formal education and training programs on career development. The researchers found that employees who engaged in formal education and regular training experienced significantly higher promotion and career advancement rates than those who only pursued one form of professional development. The study concluded that integrating theoretical knowledge from formal education with practical skills from training programs creates a well-rounded and highly competent workforce.

On-the-Job Learning

On-the-job learning provides employees with practical, hands-on experience that complements theoretical knowledge. Learning is a critical component of professional development (Chiwawa, 2022). This form of learning occurs within the work environment, allowing individuals to acquire new skills and knowledge while performing their job responsibilities. However, to maximize its benefits, organizations must ensure that learning experiences are structured, supported, and aligned with their goals (Wang &

Haggerty, 2020). On-the-job learning involves various mechanisms such as mentorship, job rotation, shadowing, and hands-on practice. These methods allow employees to learn directly from their colleagues, gain exposure to different roles, and apply new skills in real-time work scenarios. Chung et al. (2021) found that mentorship programs significantly enhance professional growth by providing personalized guidance and support. The authors discovered that employees who participated in mentorship programs exhibited higher levels of job satisfaction, improved performance, and accelerated career progression. Job rotation is another effective mechanism for on-the-job learning. According to Wang and Haggerty (2020), job rotation programs contribute to professional growth by broadening employees' skill sets and knowledge bases, thus preparing them for higher-level positions and leadership roles. Organizations can foster a more versatile and skilled workforce by allowing employees to work in different roles and departments. Fostering a culture of continuous learning and providing the necessary resources can create an environment where employees can thrive and achieve their full potential.

One of the primary advantages of on-the-job learning is the immediate application of newly acquired skills and knowledge. Liu et al. (2022) highlighted the positive impact of on-the-job learning on skill development and job performance. The study revealed that employees who engaged in on-the-job learning activities reported higher skill proficiency levels and were more adept at solving complex problems. This, in turn, translated into better job performance and increased opportunities for career advancement. This practical approach ensures that employees can effectively integrate what they learn into their daily

tasks, improving job performance. Furthermore, on-the-job learning fosters a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability (Liu et al., 2022). Quickly learning and adapting to new tools, technologies, and processes is crucial in a rapidly changing work environment. Kim and Park (2021) found that organizations that emphasize on-the-job learning are more likely to have a workforce that is agile, innovative, and resilient to change. This adaptability enhances individual professional growth and contributes to the organization's overall success. While on-the-job learning offers numerous benefits, it also presents certain challenges that must be addressed.

The primary challenge is ensuring that the learning experiences are structured and aligned with organizational goals. A. Johnson and Nguyen (2023) emphasized the importance of structured on-the-job learning programs. Without a clear framework, on-the-job learning can become haphazard and less effective. The authors found that organizations with well-defined learning frameworks and clear objectives were more successful in promoting professional growth. These frameworks should include regular feedback, performance evaluations, and opportunities for reflection to maximize the effectiveness of on-the-job learning.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a critical component of organizational success and individual job satisfaction. Engagement refers to employees' commitment, passion, and loyalty toward their workplace (Robles, 2022). Organizations can enhance employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and improve overall performance by focusing on these areas. In the United States, employee engagement has become a focal point for

businesses aiming to enhance productivity and retain top talent (Chiwawa, 2022). As businesses continue to navigate the challenges of the modern workplace, prioritizing employee engagement will remain essential for achieving long-term success. Employee engagement is often described as an employee's emotional and intellectual commitment to their organization (Khwaja & Yang, 2022). Engaged employees are enthusiastic about their work, feel strongly connected to their company, and are motivated to contribute to its success. Employee engagement is vital for several reasons. Engaged employees tend to perform better, exhibit higher levels of creativity, and contribute to a positive work environment. They are also less likely to leave their jobs, reducing turnover rates and the associated recruitment and training costs. Moreover, organizations with high employee engagement often experience increased profitability, customer satisfaction, and overall business success (Islam et al., 2023). Luthans and Youssef-Morgan (2021) examined the role of psychological capital in employee engagement. They found that high levels of psychological capital comprising hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism were positively correlated with increased employee engagement and job performance. Several factors influence employee engagement in the United States, including leadership and organizational culture.

Leadership

Leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering this engagement. Employee engagement encompasses employees' emotional and cognitive investment in their work and organization (Islam et al., 2023). Effective leaders inspire, motivate, and support their teams, thereby enhancing engagement levels (Hayden & Miura, 2022).

Organizations aiming to improve engagement should invest in developing these leadership qualities, as engaged employees are more productive, satisfied, and committed to their work. Leadership is the process of influencing and guiding individuals or groups towards achieving common goals (Alshaabani & Rudnák, 2023). Effective leaders create a vision, establish trust, and encourage employees to align their personal goals with organizational objectives. Several leadership styles, including transformational, transactional, and servant leadership, have been studied in relation to employee engagement.

Transformational leadership is characterized by the ability to inspire and motivate employees to exceed their own interests for the sake of the organization. H. Lee et al. (2020) found that transformational leadership significantly enhances employee engagement by promoting intrinsic motivation and providing meaningful work experiences. The study highlighted that transformational leaders who demonstrate genuine concern for their employees' development and well-being tend to have more engaged teams. Additionally, transformational leadership was linked to higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, further contributing to engagement. Transformational leaders focus on developing their followers' potential and fostering an environment of trust and respect.

Leaders using a transactional style focus on clear structures and expectations, rewarding employees for meeting objectives and disciplining them for failures. Transactional leadership is based on rewards and punishments (Kirchner & Stull, 2022). Although transactional leadership can effectively maintain productivity and achieve

short-term goals, its impact on employee engagement is generally less positive than transformational leadership. Breevaart et al. (2019) indicated that while transactional leadership ensures task completion, it does not significantly contribute to long-term employee engagement. Employees under transactional leaders may feel their contributions are valued only in terms of outputs, which can limit their emotional and cognitive investment in their work.

Servant leadership prioritizes the team's needs, fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, and mutual respect. Eva et al. (2021) demonstrated that servant leadership positively affects employee engagement by creating an environment where employees feel valued and supported. The study found that servant leaders who invest in their employees' growth and well-being cultivate higher levels of engagement, leading to increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions. The servant leadership style emphasizes the leader's role as a caretaker and supporter of their employees. X. Huang et al. (2020) examined the effects of ethical leadership on employee engagement. The researchers found that ethical leaders who exhibit integrity and fairness significantly enhance employee engagement by fostering a trustworthy and morally sound work environment. Also, Kim and Kim (2020) focused on the impact of inclusive leadership on employee engagement. Inclusive leaders who actively seek input from diverse team members and value their contributions create a sense of belonging and inclusion, which boosts engagement levels. Furthermore, Li et al. (2019) explored the role of authentic leadership in promoting employee engagement. Authentic leaders who are self-aware, transparent, and genuine inspire trust and loyalty among employees, leading to higher

engagement. Leadership significantly influences employee engagement through various styles and behaviors.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a vital component that significantly influences employee engagement. Organizational culture is the framework within which employees operate, profoundly affecting their engagement levels (Rožman et al., 2023). It encompasses the values, beliefs, behaviors, and social dynamics that shape the work environment and impact how employees perceive their roles and responsibilities. A positive organizational culture can enhance employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment, leading to higher levels of engagement (Rožman et al., 2023). As the workplace continues to evolve, maintaining a strong and positive organizational culture remains essential for sustaining high levels of employee engagement. When employees' personal values align with those of the organization, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and purpose. Schneider et al. (2020) found that organizations with strong, positive cultures with shared values and beliefs have higher employee engagement levels. The study emphasized that employees who identify with their organization's mission and values are more motivated and committed. Leadership and management practices are crucial in shaping organizational culture and influencing employee engagement (Kelly et al., 2020). Effective leaders who communicate transparently, provide support, and recognize employee contributions foster a culture of trust and respect. According to A. Lee and Chen (2021), organizations that cultivate a culture of collaboration and inclusivity see

higher levels of employee engagement. Employees who feel part of a supportive community are more likely to be engaged and committed to their work.

Positive organizational cultures characterized by shared values, effective leadership, and supportive work environments lead to higher levels of engagement. Raina and Roebuck (2020) explored the influence of organizational culture on employee engagement in the healthcare sector. The findings indicated that a continuous learning and improvement culture positively affects employee engagement. Healthcare organizations that promote professional development and acknowledge employee achievements tend to have more engaged employees. Kundu and Lata (2020) also examined the relationship between organizational culture and employee engagement in IT companies. The results showed that a culture of innovation and agility positively influences engagement. Employees in IT firms that encourage creativity and flexibility are more likely to be engaged and motivated. Organizations prioritizing a positive culture are likelier to have engaged, motivated, and productive employees.

Transition

Section 1 began by discussing the trajectory of employee engagement in the workplace and its growing significance in corporate relationships globally. This section encompassed the problem's background, the problem statement, the purpose statement, the study's nature, and the research questions. It also included employee engagement as the theoretical framework and operational definitions of key terms and details the study's assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance. Moreover, this section reviewed professional and academic literature, which includes (a) a synthesis of the employee

engagement theory, (b) alternative theories, (c) independent and dependent variables, (d) employer-employee relationships, and (e) an analysis of work engagement in the digital economy.

Section 2 presents the study's purpose statement and detail my role as the researcher in this quantitative research. It explains the participants' eligibility criteria, research method, research design, population and sampling procedures, and ethical considerations. This section also describes the data collection instruments and techniques, data analysis procedures, and methods to ensure the study's reliability and validity.

Section 3 covers the results of this quantitative correlation study, discuss the application of business practices and implications for cultural change, and suggest directions for further research.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I outline the approach and methodology used in the study. This section begins with a restatement of the purpose, followed by a discussion of the researcher's role. It includes information about the participants, the research method and design, and the population and sampling procedures used. I describe the ethical research procedures and how they influenced the data collection instruments and techniques. The section concludes with an explanation of the data analysis process and details on ensuring the study's validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative correctional study was to examine the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. The independent variables were work-life balance and professional growth. The dependent variable was employee engagement. The target population was HR managers of e-commerce companies in the Eastern United States of America region. This population was appropriate for the study because of e-commerce traffic; more than 50% of people living in the eastern U.S. region buy online (Bravo et al., 2022). The findings can be valuable for HR professionals, organizational leaders, and policymakers in designing interventions that enhance work-life balance and professional growth, thereby improving employee engagement and organizational outcomes. Watson (2022) highlighted the critical nature of these factors in shaping employee experiences and organizational success. Building on these findings, this study aimed to fill gaps in the

current understanding and provide practical recommendations for fostering a positive and productive work environment.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher significantly influences the integrity of a study. Before developing a research study, the researcher must understand how to collect, analyze, and interpret data based on the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Researchers employing quantitative methods strive for objective observation and measurement (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Using a quantitative methodology, the researcher collects data to remain impartial to the participants' emotions or feelings.

The data collection process for this research involved distributing surveys through a web-based application to supervisors and employees. Researchers must adhere to specific practices and consider their research role (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020). Researchers need to consider their level of ownership of the problem, their relationship with participants, and their actions regarding the study results (Saunders et al., 2019). The Belmont Report established ethical guidelines to protect researchers and participants (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services [USDHHS], 1979). Ethical research practices ensure the integrity of data collection and guide the researcher. This data collection process aligned the survey with the measurements of an engaging workforce.

This quantitative correlational study examined human interactions among leaders and employees in relation to engagement. Researchers must adhere to specific ethical considerations when gathering data (Saunders et al., 2019; USDHHS, 1979). The Belmont Report, a foundational document, provides ethical guidelines for protecting

researchers and participants (USDHHS, 1979). Researchers should consider the sample size and refer to the Belmont Report for potential ethical concerns.

Researchers should also use appropriate statistical techniques to interpret the findings related to the research questions surveyed. Collins and Stockton (2022) provided a model to promote data analyses within the frameworks of questionable research practices and responsible conduct of research. Additionally, Mizanur Rahman et al. (2022) argued that the moral quality of a researcher's approach depends on the freedom of science, norms within an academic field, and trust and reliance on published results. Bougie and Sekaran (2020) emphasized the importance of responsible conduct of research training to enhance awareness of personal misconduct, foster positive attitudes, and improve behavior, resulting in sound ethical decision-making skills when conducting research. My goal was to adhere to the guidelines of both frameworks when performing data analysis to reinforce the study's commitment to ethical research practices.

Participants

The target population for this study comprised HR managers in the e-commerce industry. Researchers often use surveys to gauge participants' perceptions, attitudes, and emotional states (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020). Additionally, survey researchers can incorporate observational and physiological methods to obtain more comprehensive data (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020). This engagement survey specifically targeted online businesses with companies based in the Eastern region of the United States.

Identifying e-commerce HR managers in the United States Eastern area involves utilizing professional networks and social media platforms such as LinkedIn and

Facebook Live. Additionally, snowball sampling encouraged participants to share the study with other entrepreneurs. The eligibility criteria for participants included (a) full-time employment, (b) a job in the e-commerce industry, and (c) an HR manager role. Per the Walden IRB, scholars may conduct anonymous surveys of nonvulnerable adults. Therefore, I respected participants' rights and the measures to take to ensure data integrity and participant confidentiality.

This study aimed to illustrate how the HR manager's role influences work engagement. The design clarified each participant's purpose, the risks associated with the study, and the assurance of participant confidentiality.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Quantitative research, which systematically analyzes numerical data and mathematical techniques, was the appropriate methodology for this study. Researchers typically employ one of three methodologies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods) to explore business issues (R. B. Johnson & Christensen, 2019). The choice of research method depends mainly on the research question being addressed (Abulela & Harwell, 2020). This study investigated the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. Considering the contextual factors associated with each research method and the validity concerns is crucial.

Qualitative research focuses on exploring human experiences through methods such as personal interviews and case studies, often within a behavioral framework. However, Köhler et al. (2022) noted that qualitative research's various purposes can lead

to findings that are challenging to validate within scientific paradigms. This study did not aim to explore human perception, interpretation, and philosophy through interviews, so a qualitative approach was deemed unsuitable.

Mixed-methods research, which combines elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, was also not considered appropriate for this study. This method integrates both paradigms' data collection, analysis, and inference techniques to comprehensively understand and corroborate (Mizanur Rahman et al., 2022). Because qualitative methods did not fit this research, the mixed-methods approach was likewise not applicable.

Quantitative research is particularly useful in scientific inquiries where researchers assess a population and measure variables quantitatively. A quantitative approach is a systematic investigation primarily dealing with numerical data and statistical analysis to understand patterns, relationships, or trends (Taherdoost, 2022). The study used statistical analysis to understand the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. Thus, a quantitative correlational research design was selected to examine the potential relationships between independent and dependent variables.

Research Design

A correlational design that identifies whether independent variables contribute to specific outcomes was appropriate for this study. Among the three quantitative research designs available to researchers are correlational, experimental, and quasi-experimental methods (Mulisa, 2022). An experimental design is used to assess causal relationships by

randomly assigning participants to two groups (a control group and a test group), allowing for manipulation by the researcher (Knight et al., 2021). Quasi-experimental designs, on the other hand, enable causal inferences about an independent variable by manipulating the intervention and observing the resulting outcomes (Maciejewski, 2020). Because this study did not involve random assignment or require causal inferences of interventions, experimental and quasi-experimental designs were unsuitable.

Correlation design is beneficial for examining the relationships between variables and measuring how these relationships may predict other variables. Unlike experimental and quasi-experimental designs, a correlational design determines the prevalence and relationships among variables without needing control groups, random selection, random assignment, or active manipulation (Mundaca et al., 2023). This study aimed to measure the relationship, if any, between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement levels, making a correlational design the most fitting choice. Because it did not require the manipulation of independent variables or random assignment, experimental and quasi-experimental designs were deemed inappropriate.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study was comprised of HR managers located in the U.S. Eastern Region. The appropriate sample size determined using G*Power analysis ranged from 68 to 107 participants. The participants were drawn from the online industry, specifically those working in e-commerce, and included HR Managers. The selection criteria targeted organizations with a track record of innovation and vision, specifically

focusing on small to midsize e-commerce companies that had been in operation for at least three years.

A nonprobability sampling technique was employed for this study.

Nonprobability samples are cost-effective, especially when resources are limited or reliable sampling frames are unavailable (Chen et al., 2022). A nonprobability sampling technique includes two main techniques: purposive and convenience sampling (Chen et al., 2022). A convenience sample is obtained from a group readily accessible to the researcher (Andrade, 2021). Purposive sampling is for time and limitation concerns (Andrade, 2021). Purposive sampling was chosen for this study due to considerations of accessibility, cost, and geographical proximity.

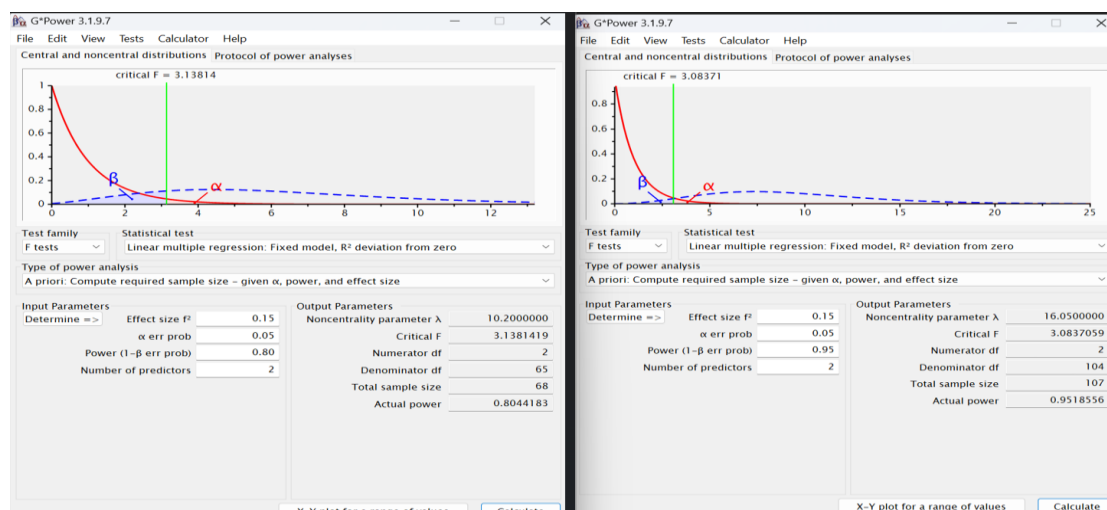
The G*Power software, version 3.1.9.7, calculates the minimum sample size necessary for this research. The G*Power statistical tool helps analyze correlation and regression in behavioral studies (Faul et al., 2007). The analysis is based on a medium effect size of 0.15 ($f^2 = .15$), a power level of .80, and a statistical significance level of .05 ($\alpha = .05$) with two predictor variables. A power level of .80 is selected to ensure a high probability of correctly rejecting the null hypothesis if it is false. These parameters indicated that a minimum sample size of 68 participants was necessary. The power level of .80 was chosen to provide reliable findings with an 80% to 95% confidence level, leading to a final sample size determination of 68 to 107 participants.

This sample size was deemed appropriate for the study, as it is sufficient for detecting a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$) in multiple regression analyses. Selecting an appropriate effect size is crucial for avoiding Type II errors, where a false null hypothesis

is not rejected (Serdar et al., 2021). Serdar et al. (2021) categorize Cohen's f^2 effect sizes as .02 (small), .15 (medium), and .35 (large) for quantifying variables in multiple regression analyses. Figure 1 displays the G*Power output.

Figure 1

*G*Power output for A Priori Power Analysis in Multiple Regression*



Ethical Research

When conducting research, researchers must consider the potential negative impact on the target audience and adhere to ethical practices. Ethical practices include maintaining discipline in research, respecting participant privacy, ensuring legal compliance, obtaining informed consent, and ensuring that data collected is not used for non-research purposes (Lantos, 2020). Gupta (2017) noted that researchers' use of internet-based methods increased by 49.5%, raising ethical concerns about obtaining informed consent, maintaining participant anonymity, and respecting the right of participants to give or withdraw consent at any time. It is the ethical responsibility of researchers to inform participants of their rights and ensure voluntary informed consent is

obtained (Facca et al., 2020). In this study, I adhered to the ethical guidelines outlined in The Belmont Report (see USDHHS, 1979).

There was no obligation for participants to take part in this study. Each participant was informed about the study's purpose, the confidentiality of their data, and the intended use of the information collected. To protect participant anonymity, no names or other identifying information was included in the survey, and no surveys were sent to nonparticipants. The informed consent form provided details about the study, explained participants' rights, and assures them of the confidentiality of their data. It also informed participants that they can withdraw from the study without penalty.

All participants received an informed consent form outlining the study's purpose, participants' rights, and confidentiality measures. Informed consent is essential for protecting participants in research and ensuring ethical reporting of best practices (Ritchie, 2021). The form explained that participation is voluntary and that participants can withdraw at any time by email. The consent form was distributed via social media platforms, using SurveyMonkey's audience participation options to target HR managers specifically. Participants were not offered any benefits or compensation for their involvement in the study. All collected data will be securely stored and password-protected for at least 5 years before destruction.

As a Walden University student researcher, I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (12-13-24-1168934). Using the SurveyMonkey tool to collect data from a targeted audience, I did not collect participants' personal information, including names, addresses, and places of employment,

Data Collection Instruments

This study employed three instruments for data measurement, administered electronically to the participants. These instruments were the Multimodal Social Capital Transfer in Creative Industries (MSCTCI) questionnaire for measuring work-life balance, the Human Capital Investment Index (HCI) for assessing professional growth, and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-3) for evaluating employee engagement. Screening surveys ensured that the participants meet the inclusion criteria.

MSCTCI Questionnaire

The MSCTCI questionnaire measures job effectiveness through the mediators of team commitment and knowledge transfer, focusing on work-life balance. The MSCTCI measures the social relationships that reflect individuals' positive characteristics and values (Lin, 2011). The questionnaire uses a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). The study utilized the work-life balance construct, comprising four items, to assess factor loading, composite reliability, and average variance.

Validity was confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis, showing that all indicators effectively measure their respective constructs, thus supporting convergent validity. The average variance extracted for each construct should exceed .51, indicating strong construct measurement with minimal error.

HCI

The HCI Index, developed by Kwon and Rupp (2013), measures organizational investments in human capital. The index is grounded in human capital theory, social

capital theory, and the cost-benefit perspective, examining high-performing employee turnover and firm performance. The HCI consists of 10 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). It includes three factors: (a) intensive employee training and development (3 items), (b) extensive selection (3 items), and (c) incentive-based pay (4 items).

A confirmatory factor analysis by the authors supported the three-factor model (model $\chi^2 = 67.34$, $df = 32$; GFI = .92, IFI = .96, CFI = .96), indicating sufficient internal consistency for aggregation. The validation involved samples from 155 businesses in Korea and additional samples of 167 undergraduate students and 114 workers, showing high reliability ($t = -.22$, ns; $r = .93$, $p < .01$).

UWES-3

The UWES-3, developed by Bakker et al. (2002), assesses three dimensions of work engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Dimension 1 (vigor) reflects the impact on employees' energy levels, Dimension 2 (dedication) measures enthusiasm and emotional involvement in work, and Dimension 3 (absorption) relates to happiness and full immersion in work.

Schaufeli et al. (2019) confirmed the reliability of these dimensions, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .77 to .85 across five national samples. The factorial validity was supported by data from 14,521 participants across Finland, Japan, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain, demonstrating consistent internal consistency and validity.

The UWES-3 uses a 9-item survey with responses on a 7-point Likert scale, from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). The latest UWES-3 revision involved students and employees capturing positive, fulfilling work-related states characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Gusy & Wolter, 2019). The scale's application in this study aims to determine the relationship between two independent variables and the ordinal measurement of surveys, providing transparency in the statistical analysis of ordinal outcomes.

Data Collection Technique

The study utilized SurveyMonkey, an online survey tool, to distribute the questionnaire and collect data, including participants' geospatial location details, as Brosnan et al. (2021) described. Due to health concerns during a global pandemic, the consent form and survey link was shared via social media platforms, leveraging SurveyMonkey's "buy audience" option to reach the desired participants. The survey was initially planned to be opened for 2 weeks, with a reminder posted after 1 week. However, given the target audience's usage patterns, the survey remained open for 3 weeks without sending reminders.

Online surveys offer several advantages, including accessibility through mobile applications, which can help participants who may lack computer or internet skills, encouraging participation. Online surveys are efficient, cost-effective, quick to administer, and easy to manage, with the added benefit of storing data in a secure repository upon form submission (Brosnan et al., 2021; Kimball, 2019). However, a notable disadvantage is the potential for low completion rates if participants find the survey too lengthy, leading to a loss of interest (Desalegn et al., 2020). This study used

survey instruments to measure the relationship between job demands, job resources, and outcomes, as these elements serve as indicators of employee engagement.

Data Analysis

The research question for this study was as follows: What is the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement within the e-commerce industry? The corresponding hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement within the e-commerce industry.

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement within the e-commerce industry.

I aimed to collect and analyze data using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analyses, employing SPSS software. The methodological framework emphasized understanding behavioral interactions and integrations over a short timeframe (i.e., a few weeks ; see Khosravi et al.; 2021). According to Khosravi et al. (2021), a significant characteristic of regression analysis is its ability to elucidate patterns of relationships among variables of interest. In multivariate regression, the value of R^2 increases only when a new variable enhances the model's predictive power. They also suggested that a time series model framework could help avoid spurious regression and produce robust results to examine statistical relationships among variables.

Statistical analysis methods, such as ANOVA and Pearson's correlation coefficient, were considered to analyze the relationships between multiple variables. However, nonstatistical analyses were deemed inappropriate for this study because they

would not adequately address the correlation between the independent and dependent variables. Montgomery et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of a numerical summary displaying correlation coefficients, which reveals how individual data points vary across the study region. This study aimed to use a simple correlation and predictive analysis of power values, utilizing G*Power for linear regression and single regression coefficients to examine whether relationships exist between the predictor variables and the variable of interest.

According to Abulela and Harwell (2020), quantitative researchers might sometimes underemphasize validity issues. However, this study ensured careful attention to quality tool selection, appropriate handling of missing data, clarifying the dependent variable's measurement level, and model checking. Although primarily statistical, the data analysis also considered the psychological effects of human disengagement, which may impact the target population concerning competitive industries and individual performance.

Data Cleaning and Screening

Data were collected through an online survey. Online surveys enable customized data collection, such as email surveys administered via web technology (Lai, 2021). This study employed data screening and cleaning techniques to ensure data quality and minimize inaccuracies. Challenges associated with online surveys include response rates, non-respondent characteristics, confidentiality maintenance, and ethical concerns, potentially leading to missing or lost data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). These challenges were addressed to prevent bias or unreliable information. Surveys with missing data were

excluded from the analysis, and graphs were used to test for the normality of distribution. Tables with interpolating points and predictors were employed to identify outliers.

Assumptions of Regression Testing

Multiple regression analysis, used in this study, helps understand the behavior of variables affecting an outcome of interest. Multiple regression involves one dependent variable and two or more independent variables (Audin, 2024). The four primary assumptions of multiple regression are as follows:

- Homoscedasticity: Ensuring equal variance across predicted values.
- Normality of residuals: Checking if data follows a normal distribution.
- No multicollinearity: No high correlation between two or more independent variables should exist.
- No Outliers: Detecting extreme values that could distort results.

Assuming errors follow a normal distribution, the coefficient outcomes minimize the squared deviation (Fabrigar et al., 2020). The study's analysis accounts for the distribution of errors and their validity. Normal distribution was checked to assess the distribution of power testing for multiple regression under the assumption of measurement errors. It is generally inappropriate to assume measurement error comes from a normal distribution. Homoscedasticity requires that parameters between independent and dependent variables maintain the same values (Pate et al., 2023). A scatter plot was used to represent values for the different numeric variables in the study, and data were evaluated for violations of these assumptions by observing behavioral trends identified in the literature.

Interpretation of Inferential Results

Inferential statistics were used to analyze the data, test a null hypothesis, and account for sample estimation errors (see Reito, 2020). Inferential techniques help interpret the results for population targeting. The strength of the relationships between predictor and interest variables is assessed using multiple regression analysis. A high multiple regression result indicates that the independent variables collectively explain a substantial proportion of the variance in the dependent variable (Reito, 2020). The interpretation of the results includes the power value and effect sizes, utilizing inferential statistics to understand the relationships among the variables.

Study Validity

This quantitative study analyzed the correlational relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. Kang (2021) provided guidelines on components impacting the validity of inferences, construct measures, proper handling of missing data, and adequate measurement of a dependent variable. Validity is crucial in supporting the integrity of research findings (Reio, 2021). Validity measures the constructs' reliability and the data's relevance to the target population of interest. Potential threats to the research include sample size limitations and statistical errors, such as Type I and Type II errors (López, 2022). This study focused on ensuring research integrity through external, internal, and statistical conclusion validity.

External Validity

External validity concerns the generalizability of the study's findings across different populations, settings, and times. External validity ensure² that inferences drawn

from the sample size can be applied to a broader population (Kang, 2021). This study used the G* Power analysis tool to calculate the appropriate sample size, which helps to mitigate common statistical errors and uphold the study's integrity. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses ensured the reporting quality and assessed the findings' generalizability.

Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to the degree to which a study can demonstrate a causal relationship between independent and dependent variables. Threats to internal validity may provide alternate explanations for observed relationships, undermining the reliability of the findings (McDermott, 2023). This study used a correlational design to mitigate internal validity threats, restricting participants to one-time survey access to maintain the integrity of the research results.

Statistical Conclusion Validity

Statistical conclusion validity addresses the accuracy of the relationship between variables of interest. Issues such as inadequate statistical power or replication failures can lead to Type I errors (Fabrigar et al., 2020). To ensure accurate statistical conclusions, the study used G*Power analysis, determining an appropriate sample size range of 68 to 107 participants. A medium effect size of $f^2 = .15$ was targeted, and an additional percentage would exceed the sample size to ensure adequate statistical power and minimize Type I error risks.

This careful consideration of external, internal, and statistical conclusion validity ensures the reliability and generalizability of the study's findings, supporting the research's overall integrity.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 provided a comprehensive restatement of the purpose statement and a critical discussion on the researcher's role. The section also detailed the research method and design used in the study, including the sampling approach and population estimation using linear regression analysis. Emphasis was placed on the importance of ethical practices within the research process, ensuring the integrity and validity of the findings. The discussion concluded with an examination of external and statistical conclusion validity, which is crucial for the reliability and generalizability of the study. Section 3 presents the research findings, exploring their application within professional practice. This section also discusses the implications for social change, reflects on the research experience, and offers recommendations for future research. The results provide valuable insights into the relationships between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement within the e-commerce industry, contributing to academic literature and practical applications in organizational settings.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

This quantitative correlation study aimed to explore the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement within the e-commerce industry. work-life balance, professional growth as the independent variables, while employee engagement was the dependent variable. Following data analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. The null hypothesis posited no predictive relationship, whereas the alternative hypothesis suggested a significant predictive relationship.

This chapter presents findings from multiple linear regression analysis. The results indicated that the regression model was statistically significant, demonstrating a strong positive relationship between the work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. Additionally, this chapter discusses key findings, their practical implications, recommendations for action, and suggestions for future research. The study employed various statistical tests using SPSS, including descriptive statistics, assumption testing (normality, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and outliers), and multiple regression analysis. Lastly, a concluding section reflects on the research process and personal experiences throughout this study.

Presentation of the Findings

This study utilized multiple analytical approaches, including descriptive statistics, assumption testing, and inferential analysis, to establish a theoretical discussion and conclude with an analytical summary. The study examined the relationship between

work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement within the e-commerce industry.

The significance of work-life balance and professional growth variables was confirmed through statistical testing. The hypotheses were examined using (a) descriptive statistics, (b) reliability analysis, and (c) multiple linear regression. The linear regression analysis results demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement ($p < .001$, $R^2 = .27$) within a sample size of $N = 72$.

Creation of Composite Variables

Because work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement were each measured using multiple survey questions, composite variables were created to consolidate responses into meaningful indices. Table 2 shows the composite variable calculation methods.

Table 2

Composite Variable Calculation Methods

Composite variable	Formula used in SPSS	Items included
Work- life balance (WLB_Avg)	MEAN (Q3, Q4, Q5)	Q3 to Q5
Professional growth (PG_Avg)	MEAN (Q6, Q7, ..., Q15)	Q6 to Q15
Employee engagement (EE_Avg)	MEAN (Q16, Q17, ..., Q24)	Q16 to Q24

By averaging the responses, each participant was assigned a single score for each construct, simplifying correlation and regression analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics summarize central tendency (mean, median), variability (standard deviation), and range (minimum, maximum) for key study variables. Table 3 gives the descriptive statistics for the key variables.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

Variable	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work-life balance	72	1.00	7.00	5.2454	1.18545
Professional growth	72	1.00	5.00	3.5681	.79254
Employee engagement	72	1.56	7.00	4.9028	1.40272
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	72				

- Work-life balance had the highest mean ($M = 5.2454$), suggesting that respondents generally feel work-life balance in their work.
- Engagement and professional growth also scored moderately high, indicating positive perceptions in these areas.
- The standard deviation values indicate a high level of variability in responses, suggesting that employees had diverse experiences regarding work-life balance, professional growth, and engagement. Some employees rated these aspects highly, while others rated them much lower. This variability could be due to factors such as company policies, or organizational culture.

Assumption Testing

Regression analysis requires several assumptions to be met to ensure valid and unbiased results. The four primary assumptions tested were as follows:

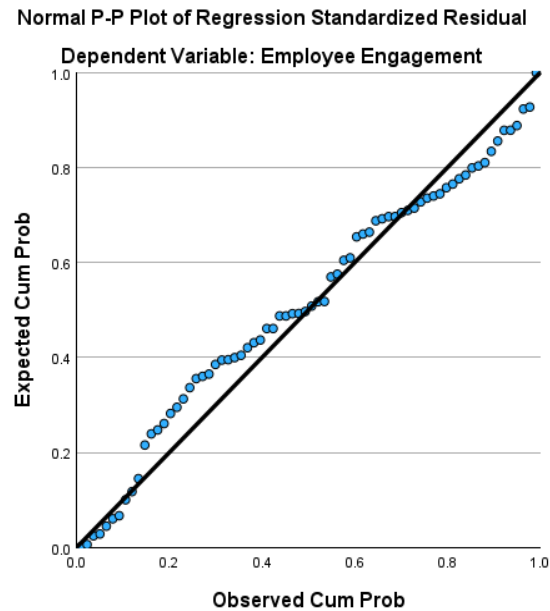
- Normality – Checking if data follows a normal distribution.
- Multicollinearity – Ensuring predictor variables are not highly correlated.
- Homoscedasticity – Ensuring equal variance across predicted values.
- Outliers – Detecting extreme values that could distort results.

Normality

The normality assumption was evaluated using a P-P scatterplot. To satisfy this assumption, the residual quantiles should align closely with the theoretical quantiles, without significant deviations (DeCarlo, 1997). Substantial deviations could suggest potential unreliability in the parameter estimates. The plotted results indicate that the assumption of normality was upheld. Figure 2 displays the P-P scatterplot of the model residuals.

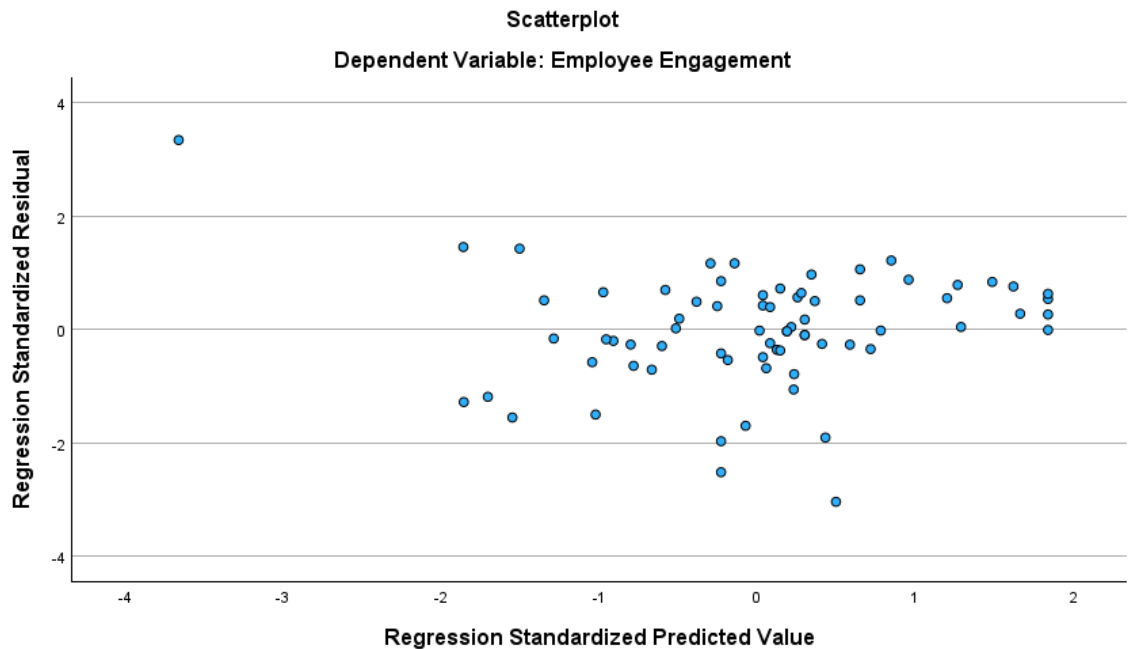
Figure 2

P-P Scatterplot for Normality of the Residuals for the Regression Model



Homoscedasticity

Homoscedasticity was assessed by plotting residuals against predicted values. This assumption is met when the data points are randomly distributed around a zero mean, without any discernible pattern or curvature (Bates et al., 2014; Field, 2017; Osborne & Waters, 2002). The scatterplot results indicate that homoscedasticity was maintained. Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between predicted values and model residuals.

Figure 3*Residuals Scatterplot Testing Homoscedasticity****Multicollinearity***

Variance inflation factors (VIFs) were computed to assess potential multicollinearity among predictor variables. Elevated VIF values suggest a higher degree of multicollinearity within the model. Generally, VIFs exceeding 5 raise concerns, while values above 10 are considered the critical upper threshold (Menard, 2009). Table 4 provides the VIF values for the independent variables included in the model.

Table 4*Variance Inflation Factors for Predictor Variables*

Predictor	VIF	Interpretation
Work- life balance	1.774	No collinearity issue
Professional growth	1.774	No collinearity issue

Outliers

Cook's distances were calculated to detect influential data points. Any value exceeding the 50th percentile was considered an outlier (Cook, 1977). The analysis indicated that no outliers were present in the dataset.

Inferential Results

The results of the regression model were significant, $F(2,69) = 12.475, p < .001$, $R^2 = .27$, indicating that approximately 26.6% of the variance in employee engagement is explainable by work-life balance and professional growth. Specifically, work-life balance significantly predicted employee engagement, $B = 0.20, t(69) = 1.46, p = .149$. This indicates that on average, a one-unit increase in work-life balance will increase the value of employee engagement by 0.20 units. Also, professional growth significantly predicted employee engagement, $B = .36, t(69) = 2.62, p = .011$. This indicates that on average, a one-unit increase in professional growth will increase the value of employee engagement by 0.36 units.

Inferential statistics were used to examine the relationships between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. The goal was to determine

whether the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variable (employee engagement).

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships between the independent variables (work-life balance and professional growth) and the dependent variable (employee engagement). The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used, which measures linear relationships between variables. Table 5 shows the Pearson correlation matrix. The Pearson correlation coefficient values range from -1 to +1, where

- +1 indicates a perfect positive relationship.
- -1 indicates a perfect negative relationship.
- 0 indicates no relationship between variables.
- A correlation above 0.5 is considered strong, between 0.3 and 0.5 is moderate, and below 0.3 is weak.

Table 5*Pearson Correlation Matrix*

		Employee engagement	Work-life balance	Professional growth
Pearson correlation	Employee engagement	1.000	.439	.493
	Work-life balance	.439	1.000	.661
	Professional growth	.493	.661	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Employee engagement	.	<.001	<.001
	Work-life balance	.000	.	.000
	Professional growth	.000	.000	.
<i>N</i>	Employee engagement	72	72	72
	Work-life balance	72	72	72
	Professional growth	72	72	72

- Professional growth had the strongest correlation with employee engagement ($r = 0.49, p < .01$).
 - This suggests that employees who perceive strong professional development opportunities are more engaged.
- Work-life balance was also positively correlated with employee engagement ($r = 0.43, p < .01$).
 - This implies that employees who feel a good balance between work and personal life tend to be more engaged.
- Work-life balance and professional growth are strongly correlated with each other ($r = 0.66, p < .01$), meaning organizations that support professional growth often also facilitate work-life balance.

These findings suggest that both independent variables are moderately predictive of employee engagement, warranting further investigation through multiple regression analysis.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis determines how much work-life balance and professional growth contribute to employee engagement. This allows me to answer the following question: Which factor plays a bigger role in predicting employee engagement?

By examining the R^2 value, ANOVA results, and regression coefficients, I can assess:

- How well does the model fit the data?
- Whether predictors significantly contribute to engagement.
- The strength and direction of their influence.

Table 6 shows the regression model summary.

Table 6

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
					R Square Change	F Change	$df1$ $df2$	
515 ^a	.266	.266	.244	1.21941	.266	12.475	2 69	<.001

a. Predictors: (constant), professional growth, work-life balance

b. Dependent variable: employee engagement

- $R^2 = 0.27$, which means that work-life balance and professional growth explain 26.6% of the variance in employee engagement.

- The Adjusted R^2 (0.24) accounts for predictor variables, confirming the model's reliability.
- The remaining 73% of variance is explained by other factors (e.g., leadership, company culture, rewards).

Table 7 gives the ANOVA results.

Table 7

ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1 Regression	37.101	2	18.551	12.475	<.001 ^b
Residual	102.601	69	1.487		
Total	139.702	71			

a. Dependent variable: employee engagement

b. Predictors: (constant), professional growth, work-life balance

- $F(2, 69) = 12.475, p < .001$, confirming that the model is statistically significant.
- This means work-life balance and professional growth significantly predict employee engagement.

Table 8 gives the regression coefficients.

Table 8*Regression Coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.382	.723		1.910	.060
Work-life balance	.238	.163	.201	1.461	.149
Professional growth	.638	.243	.360	2.621	.011

- *B* (unstandardized coefficients) shows how much employee engagement changes for each one-unit increase in the predictor:
 - Work-life balance: For each 1-point increase in work-life balance, employee engagement increases by 0.238 points, holding professional growth constant. In practical terms, when employees perceive even a small improvement in their work-life balance (e.g., better flexibility or reduced workload), their engagement levels also rise, though the effect is modest. Organizations can consider implementing flexible work schedules or wellness initiatives to enhance this area.
 - Professional growth: For each 1-point increase in professional growth, employee engagement increases by 0.638 points, holding work-life balance constant, which shows a stronger practical impact on employee engagement. Employees who feel they are growing professionally (through training, skill development, or career advancement opportunities)

are significantly more engaged. Investing in professional development programs may be a more effective strategy for boosting employee engagement.

- Beta (standardized coefficients) measures the relative importance of each predictor:
 - Professional growth ($\beta = 0.36$) slightly outweighs work-life balance ($\beta = 0.20$) in predicting engagement.
- p -values ($< .001$) confirm that both predictors are significant.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 9 illustrates that the results confirm H_1 and reject H_0 .

Table 9

Results Confirm Alternative Hypothesis and Reject Null Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Statement	Supported?
H_0	No significant relationship exists between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement.	Rejected
H_1	A statistically significant relationship exists between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement.	Accepted

These findings validate Kahn's (1990) employee engagement theory, which emphasizes how work-life balance (physical and emotional engagement) and professional growth (cognitive engagement) influence employee engagement.

Applications to Professional Practice

This study examined the potential relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement within the e-commerce industry to determine whether to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis. The results supported rejecting the null hypothesis, as a statistically significant relationship was identified between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. These findings may provide e-commerce HR managers with valuable insights and data to enhance employee development initiatives, strengthen leader-employee interactions, and promote overall employee well-being, fostering organizational creativity. The study's results highlight the significance of employee involvement as a key factor in driving organizational commitment and enthusiasm.

By promoting work-life balance, leaders can identify strategies to enhance employee satisfaction, improve business profitability, and cultivate an inclusive workplace culture. Furthermore, understanding the importance of professional growth can contribute to the organization's overall health and well-being.

Implications for Social Change

Providing strong evidence for the interconnectedness of work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement has the potential to contribute to a significant social change. Engaged employees are more likely to be satisfied and stay with their employers, reducing costly turnover and fostering a more stable work environment (Lyons & Bandura, 2020). This research can empower employees by highlighting their right to a healthy work-life balance and professional growth

opportunities. This awareness can equip them to advocate for their own needs and well-being in the workplace. On the other hand, this research can challenge the notion that long hours equal high productivity. By highlighting the connection between work-life balance and employee engagement, companies can encourage a shift towards (Gangan & Sankar, 2020). Findings can nudge organizations to view employees as whole individuals with needs beyond just their work performance. The results can lead to a more positive and supportive work environment that benefits both the employees and the organization.

Recommendations for Action

Based on this study's inferential results, the following recommendations for action are proposed to help organizations in the e-commerce industry enhance employee engagement by focusing on work-life balance and professional growth. These recommendations are based on statistical findings, theoretical frameworks, and practical business applications.

To enhance employee engagement in the e-commerce industry, organizations should prioritize work-life balance initiatives and professional growth opportunities. Implementing flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and adaptable schedules, can significantly improve employees' ability to manage professional and personal responsibilities. Furthermore, companies should invest in mental health programs, wellness initiatives, and social support networks to foster a healthier work environment. Employees who feel supported in balancing their work and personal lives are more likely to be motivated, productive, and committed to their roles, reducing stress and improving overall job satisfaction (Lin, 2011).

In addition to work-life balance, career development and continuous learning are crucial for sustaining engagement (Hassanein & Özgit, 2022). Companies should establish structured career paths, leadership training programs, and learning opportunities to empower employees with new skills and career advancement options. Encouraging cross-departmental training, mentorship programs, and certification sponsorships can help employees feel valued and invested in the company's long-term vision. Performance-based incentives, such as bonuses and recognition programs, should also be implemented to reinforce high performance and motivation. These strategies will boost engagement and contribute to higher employee retention and loyalty.

To ensure the effectiveness of these initiatives, organizations must regularly monitor engagement levels through surveys, feedback sessions, and performance indicators. Analyzing trends in employee retention, absenteeism, and productivity will allow leadership to make data-driven decisions and adjust strategies as needed. Leadership plays a key role in fostering an inclusive and transparent work environment where employees feel heard and valued. By investing in engagement strategies and tracking their impact, organizations can create a workplace that attracts, retains, and nurtures top talent, ultimately driving long-term business success.

Recommendations for Further Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement in the e-commerce industry, further research is needed to expand and refine these findings. Future studies should consider exploring additional variables, such as leadership styles, organizational culture,

job autonomy, and compensation structures, which may also significantly influence employee engagement. Additionally, incorporating qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, could provide richer insights into employee perceptions and motivations that may not be fully captured through survey-based quantitative methods.

Another avenue for future research is to examine the long-term effects of work-life balance and professional growth initiatives on employee engagement over time. A longitudinal study tracking engagement levels over several years would provide a deeper understanding of how engagement fluctuates in response to policy changes, career advancements, and evolving workplace dynamics. Additionally, expanding the study beyond the e-commerce sector to industries such as healthcare, finance, and technology could reveal whether these findings are industry-specific or generalizable across different work environments. Comparative studies across sectors could also help identify best practices for employee engagement.

Lastly, future research should focus on the impact of remote and hybrid work models on employee engagement, as flexible work arrangements have become more prevalent post-pandemic. Investigating how remote employees perceive work-life balance and professional growth opportunities compared to on-site employees could provide crucial insights for companies designing hybrid work policies. Furthermore, the role of generational differences in engagement (e.g., Millennials vs. Gen Z) warrants further exploration to develop personalized engagement strategies. By addressing these

gaps, future studies can build upon the current findings and provide actionable insights for organizations striving to foster a more engaged workforce.

Reflections

This journey began with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of entrepreneurial perspectives on corporate interpersonal challenges and the factors influencing employee responses to various workplace situations. Through research, this exploration provided additional insights into employee behavior and how they react to their work environment.

As the workforce navigated the challenges brought on by the pandemic, the organizational landscape shifted, requiring employees to adapt and businesses to respond to evolving demands. This period highlighted the dynamic nature of workplace interactions and the necessity for organizations to remain agile in addressing workforce needs.

Conclusion

This quantitative correlation study investigated the relationship between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. SPSS version 29 was used to analyze the research question by conducting descriptive statistics, testing assumptions, and performing a linear regression analysis. The findings indicated a positive correlation between employee engagement and both independent variables.

Understanding these results is crucial, as many HR managers may lack awareness of the connection between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. This study's overall findings emphasize the importance of integrating

employees' perspectives and ideas into organizational decision-making to enhance engagement and workplace effectiveness.

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Appendix A: Participation Invitation Letter

My name is Kwami Dzahini, and I am currently a doctoral candidate in Walden University's Doctor of Business Administration program. I am reaching out to invite you to participate in a research study I am conducting as part of my doctoral work. The purpose of this study is to explore the potential relationships between work-life balance, professional growth, and employee engagement. Specifically, I aim to gather insights into how collaboration occurs among employees, their leaders, and their surrounding environment. I am seeking participation from U.S. Eastern Region HR Managers within the E-commerce industry. If you are interested in contributing to this study, please click on the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LQYPLB9>

Appendix B: Human Capital Investment Index

Strongly	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Intensive employee training and development

1. ____ This organization provides employees with a variety of training and development opportunities (Q6).
2. ____ This organization spends much money on employee training and development (Q7).
3. ____ This organization provides employee with structured formal training and development programs (Q8).

Extensive selection

4. ____ This organization selects people according to highly refined selection criteria and procedures (Q9).
5. ____ This organization hires people by utilizing different kinds of selection tools (interviews, aptitude test, written examination, etc.) (Q10).
6. ____ This organization spends much money to select right people (Q11).

Incentive-based pay

7. ____ This organization bases pay raise decisions on employee performance (Q12).
8. ____ This organization has wide range in pay within a same job grade (Q13).
9. ____ This organization extensively utilizes a company-wide profit-sharing and/or a gain-sharing program (Q14).
10. ____ This organization utilizes seniority-based rewards practices (Q15).

Fit indices w2

df w2/df GFI CFI IFI

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Appendix C: Multimodal Social Capital Transfer in Creative Industries Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire invites you to respond to statements concerning your interactions with employees. Listed below are four descriptive statements. Please choose the response that best reflects your level of agreement with each one.

Use this rating system (1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Often Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Often Agree, 7 = Totally Agree) to answer the questions below:

	1= Totally Disagree	2= Often Disagree	3 = Disagree	4= Neither Agree nor Disagree	5= Agree	6= Often Agree	7= Totally Agree
1. Employees feel connected to other colleagues (Q3)							
2. Employees trust colleagues to lend them a hand if they need it (Q4).							
3. Employees trust colleagues to lend them a hand if they need it							
4. Employees can rely on other colleagues when they need support in their work (Q5).							

Appendix D: Work and Well-Being Survey (UWES)

The next 9 statements relate to your feelings about your job. Please read each one carefully and consider whether you have experienced this feeling at work. If you have never felt this way, mark “0” in the space provided. If you have felt this way, choose the number (from 1 to 6) that best represents how often you experience this feeling.

Never 0	Almost Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Very Often 5	Always 6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

1. _____ At my work, I feel bursting with energy. a (Q16)
2. _____ I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose. (Q17)
3. _____ Time flies when I am working. (Q18)
4. _____ At my job, I feel strong and vigorous. a (Q19)
5. _____ I am enthusiastic about my job. a (Q20)
6. _____ When I am working, I forget everything else around me. (Q21)
7. _____ My job inspires me. a (Q22)
8. _____ When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work. a (Q23)
9. _____ I feel happy when I am working intensely. a (Q24)

Source: Schaufeli and Bakker (2003).

Note: WLB_Avg = Work-life balance average; PG_Avg = Professional Growth Average;
EE_Avg = Employee Engagement Average.

a. Shortened version (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale–9 [UWES-9])