THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL PRESTIGE AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AMONG ACADEMICS IN MALAYSIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES: THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND CAREER EXPECTATION

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL PRESTIGE AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AMONG ACADEMICS IN MALAYSIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES: THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND CAREER EXPECTATION.

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This study investigates the intricate relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities. It delves into the mediating role of psychological capital and the moderating influence of career expectations. Guided by the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which explain how individuals acquire, protect, and utilize resources to manage job demands, this research employed quantitative methods, specifically a cross-sectional study, with data analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Data were collected from 323 academics across nine Malaysian private universities to enhance. The results illuminate a positive predictive relationship between perceived organisational prestige and psychological capital. Both perceived organisational prestige and psychological capital emerge as significant influencers of employee engagement. Notably, psychological capital assumes a crucial mediating role in shaping the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. Moreover, the study indicates that career

expectations also moderate this relationship. This research significantly contributes to the existing body of knowledge by proposing a new engagement framework tailored to Malaysian private university academics. The findings underscore the pivotal role of psychological capital in influencing diverse facets of organizational behaviours, emphasising its significance as a resource in an employee's coping mechanism against sociopsychological stress factors. Ultimately, this study provides valuable insights into the nuanced dynamics of employee engagement within the academic context, highlighting the relevance of the novel engagement framework in Malaysian private universities.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UTAR or other institutions.

Name __Britney Bong Sue Fun_

Date _____05/06/2024_____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CBSEM	Covariance Based Structural Equation Modelling
POP	Perceived Organisation Prestige
CE	Career Expectations
PsyCap	Psychological Capital
SET	Social Exchange Theory
JD-R	Job Demand-Resources
i.e.,	In essence
e.g.,	Example given
PHEIs	Private Higher Educational Institutions
COR	Conservation of Resources Theory

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Chapter one provides a comprehensive overview of the research context. This investigation explores how perceived organisational prestige influences employee engagement, taking into account the mediating role of psychological capital, along with the moderating and moderated mediating role of career expectations within the relationship. The chapter elaborates on a detailed problem statement, defines the research questions and outlines the research objective. Additionally, it also discusses the study's significance and underscores its relevance in advancing understanding of engagement dynamics in academic settings.

1.1 Background of Study

Embarking on a journey that spans from the fundamental quest for purpose in our earliest days to the intricate dynamics of the modern workforce, this research probes into the heart of academia—specifically, the compelling realm of employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities. As humans spend a substantial portion of their lives working, the relationship between work engagement and overall well-being becomes paramount (Naber, 2019: Okazaki et al., 2019). In the context of academic employment which is characterised by the intricate interplay of diverse skills and cross-generational collaboration, understanding the evolving meaning of work is essential (Bailey & Madden, 2016). Beyond the individual realm, the impact of private higher education institutions (PHEIs) on the broader

socioeconomic canvas cannot be understated. In the shifting tides of Malaysia's economic landscape, the transition from production-based to knowledge-based economics is not merely a conceptual shift but a tangible evolution with PHEIs at its forefront (Yaakub & Mohamed, 2020). These institutions contribute significantly to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), fostering an environment conducive to achieving the envisioned 'high-income knowledge-based economy.' Delving deeper, it becomes imperative to scrutinise not only the contribution, but also the growth rate of PHEIs, as they play a dual role in shaping the academic landscape and fuelling economic progress (Abdullah, 2012; Okebukola, 2019).

According to the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (2022), the increasing number of private higher educational institutions in Malaysia reflects the growing interest from private investors in the thriving educational sector. The revenue share of PHEIs industry reached USD 0.85 billion in 2021 and is projected to reach USD 1.50 billion by 2026. The Malaysian Qualification Register (2022) reports that approximately 83 private universities in Malaysia have attained accredited status. A university not only functions as an incubator of knowledge and ideas but, by integrating a diverse workforce with cross-generational backgrounds, skills and perspectives, it fosters diverse thinking and opportunities (Jolin, 2016). Malaysian PHEIs offer exceptional learning opportunities that attract both international and local students (Azman & Abdullah, 2021), hence contributing to foreign exchange earnings alongside uplifting the country's political, economic, and social sectors (MOHE, 2017). The distinct financial and organisational structures of private universities often pose unique challenges and opportunities compared to their public counterparts.

The Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has outlined the University Transformational Programme, Purple Book, as an initiative to address financial sustainability issues among higher educational institutions in Malaysia (MOHE, 2017). These initiatives have been implemented by the PHEIs to remain relevant. The new funding sources would be derived from asset optimisation, business ventures, academic and research programmes, participation in financial activities, and fundraising.

Despite the concerted efforts to enhance institutional reputation, elevate educational quality, and align with sustainable higher education practices through various policies and initiatives (Jayabalan et al., 2021; Zhaoh & Cheah, 2023), there appears to be a notable oversight—specifically, the centrality of academic considerations. According to Jayabalan et al. (2021), academics are the PHEI's main intellectual capital, however they fail to recognise the intellectual contributions for the overall effectiveness of the university due to shifted focus towards financial, technological, operational, structural, and social challenges. Academics play a prominent role in nationwide education, better known as those teaching in colleges or universities. Quality education requires quality academics to improve the institutional issues as a whole (Hartinah et al., 2020). However, academics in this current era must deal with a highly demanding and competitive workplace in PHEIs (Kim & Fah, 2020). Their job scope is typically challenging and demanding because it goes beyond just teaching as it also encompasses responsibilities such as research activities and paper publications, consultation, supervision, social commitments, as well as participating actively in faculty and program management (Khalil et al., 2020; Nordin & Hamzah, 2021). Consequently, a colossal workload could contribute

to losing interest in academic work and negatively influence their quality of work execution (Chong et al., 2019; Omar et al., 2019). Nonetheless, academics are accountable and play a fundamental role in shaping the younger generations as the country's future leaders and assets. Therefore, their morale and performances directly influence the students (Chong et al., 2019; Ekundayo & Ayodele, 2019). Hence, there is no denying that academics are the pillar of tertiary education success, and assessments are required to improve engagement among academics.

Employee engagement serves as a key factor as employees tend to increasingly seek organisations that align with their fundamental values (i.e., support, positive environment, and meaningful goals) to achieve fulfilling work satisfaction and experiences (Caprino, 2018). Nordin and Hamzah (2021) reported that academics generally demonstrate average levels of employee engagement, due to feeling optimistic about their duties and apt recognition of their valuable contributions to society. Their publications, research findings, and student achievements may also be contributing factors as it generates a sense of pride and reassurance (Nordin & Hamzah, 2021; Omar et al., 2019). Employees seek to be fully invested in their work, feel a strong sense of belonging within the organisation, and maintain an enthusiastic outlook for their duties. Although employee engagement and job satisfaction are considerably interrelated, the terms are not interchangeable. Job satisfaction refers to an employee's level of happiness, while employee engagement refers to the level of involvement towards the organisational goals (Maan et al., 2020). Engaged employees exhibit a favourable disposition toward the organisation; conversely, disengaged employees are more inclined to fulfil only the minimum

requirements of their roles and may actively undermine the organisation's reputation (Tao et al., 2022). Employee disengagement is also linked to several negative personal consequences, such as social isolation (Hollis, 2015), attentional, physical and psychological withdrawal (Egbo, 2015), a tendency to evade responsibilities (Hejjas et al., 2019) and manifestations of physical symptoms (i.e., stress-related illness) (Martin, 2013). Similarly, engaged academics are more likely to have higher performance, work-life balance, well-perceived by students and positive psychological wellbeing (Bailey & Madden, 2016; Teoh & Kee, 2020).

Traditionally, organisations set up task-oriented and annual goal settings or pay-by-incentives to increase employees' engagement and competence levels at work to produce productivity and profits (Bailey & Madden, 2016). However, it was claimed that these approaches are no longer practical as they merely boost motivation and engagement instead of actual enhancements in the quality of work (Cantone, 2021). Contemporarily, employee engagement is paramount in the global organisation among human resources practitioners (Bailey & Madden, 2016). The concept has gained increasing acclamation and attention since Kahn introduced it in 1990. Numerous researchers, academics, and practitioners have proven that employee engagement would effectuate a lucrative working industry (Bailey & Madden, 2016; Da et al., 2020; Naber, 2019). These strategies enhance work culture, productivity, customer and client relationships as well as profits while decreasing turnover rates (Bailey & Madden, 2016; Naber, 2019). In terms of the academia world, Agbionu et al. (2018) assumes that the result of employee engagement among academics is

reciprocal with the university management provided that they receive a conducive working environment and experience positive emotions at work.

Universities around Malaysia also claimed that they had made a substantial effort to align and achieve such goals (Rafidi, 2019). Sustainable development goals (SDG) goal 8, which is "to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all", is one of the prevalent choices among the industries to organise showcases and projects (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2015). Other related activities, such as corporate volunteering also fosters and encourages connectivity and involvement with local communities and have led to greater fulfilment, improved overall wellbeing, health and morale (Oliveira et al., 2022). The bigger vision of the organisation allows employees to visualise a framework to operate. These visions were claimed as the ingredients to employee engagement, whereby when employee visions are aligned, it increases organisational identification. In turn, identification serves as a guiding principle to adhere to during inevitable and unpredictable times (i.e., rumours, collapse) (Ramakumar & Priyadarshini, 2021). Other than sustainable developmental goals, the global corporate's top strategies for enriching employee engagement include improving communication, job enrichment, training and development, strategic compensations, and performance management (Dale Carnegie & Associates Inc, 2018).

Although these strategies have their merits, employee engagement efforts may only be well-spent if employers identify the factors of engagement among their own employees. Consequently, Smith (2012) claims that perceived organisational prestige can also be an effort to enhance employee engagement

and sense of belongingness within the company. This is because perceived organisation prestige can be categorised as socioemotional resources alongside personal and organisational resources. Mael and Ashforth (1992) characterised perceived organisational prestige as the perception formed by employees based on comparisons between their organisation and external entities. This concept encapsulates the perceptions, impressions, feelings of outsiders and thoughts regarding the associated organisation, influenced by their interactions with it.

Contrastingly, prestige, by itself refers to the reputation or esteem associated with one's societal position (Mathe & Scott-Halsell, 2012). They are evaluated based on present and past rank, good fortune, and achievement. In today's world, employee recruitment and retention are subordinate to prestige. As society evolves and the theory of mind expands, people are more likely to assign epithets to things that work as a mental scheme and change their behaviour to either approach a specific situation or flight from it (Heyes, 2012). Prestige is one of the epithets when it comes to the working industry as it establishes a sense of superiority to the individuals in a relationship with another prestigious social group. It is human nature to be liked, valued, respected, and relied on. It is important to recognise that perceived organisational prestige is a distinctive construct, as it is influenced by individuals' specific exposure to the information they receive (Smidts et al., 2001; Šulentić et al., 2016). Previous literature elucidates that an organisation's prestige enhances employee engagement and commitment, while affective assessments significantly shape individual perceptions (Cheng, 2022; Held, 2019; Fuente et al., 2018). A strong perception of organisational prestige enables employees to feel respected, valued, and appreciated, while also safeguarding their interests.

The concept has become an essential predictor of employees' attitudes and behaviour toward institutional missions. Global institutional rankings have led to a growing interest in competitive behaviour (Musselin, 2018). Private universities cannot evade the market's tyranny as a business entity. According to Manogharan and Thivaharan. (2018), numerous private universities are experiencing intense competition. They compete for faculty, lecturers, students, funding, donation, visibility and, most importantly, prestige to boost the organisation's reputation (Mintz, 2020: Musselin, 2018). Likewise, academics may be swayed by the world-class rankings as quality and encourage conformity to another reputable university to work. Furthermore, employees begin working with expectations based on their characteristics, career aspirations, and life experiences. Career expectations are an individual-level perspective towards a career that aligns with personal goals, values, and beliefs (Liu et al., 2019). Career expectations are essential psychological functions as the concept manifests in the individual's philosophy and values which are influenced by subjective inclination and the externalisation of professional values. Therefore, the goals differ from one person to another, whereby some may strive for enhancing welfare or increasing monetary values or career development. In terms of the academic setting, external research funding and publications as well as job advancement were found to stimulate employee engagement among academics as it promotes competence and commitments (Kyvik, 2013). Employees with high career expectations are more likely to remain with corporations that offer aligned work experiences (Knight et al., 2006) and demonstrate improved working performance (Zhang et al., 2018). Expectations that are left unmet, resulted in employees opting for other job

options, which cause a higher organisation turnover rate. However, evidence found that career expectations elicit buffering effects in hostile working environments (Zhang et al., 2018).

Additionally, a previous study conducted found that psychological capital is one of the determinants of employees' attitude, performance, and behaviour (Friends et al., 2016). In general psychology, it explains why people do what they do. However, psychology capital is described as a set of resources, scilicet, hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience that aids in improving job performances and success (Luthans et al., 2007). Psychological capital can be measured and enhanced by instilling a positive culture and supportive environment. This capital is just as significant as human capital in the working industry. Furthermore, it has been proven that psychological capital positively influence various elements, serving as a solid resource reservoir that fosters flourishing and organisational identification (Chen et al., 2015). Research indicates that elevated psychological capital correlates with heightened employee engagement, which often results in job satisfaction, workplace happiness, and organisational commitment, ultimately resulting in increased levels of employee engagement (Falola et al., 2018; Ngwenya & Pelser, 2020). This phenomenon can be attributed to the belief that individuals possess the ability to influence their future, adapt to challenging circumstances, and recover from setbacks and difficulties. Luthans et al. (2007) has proffered psychological capital intervention (PCI model) as a means to increase psychological capital. Previous research has indicated that the model effectively increases employees' physical and psychological well-being (Da et al., 2020) and aids in successful job searches (Georgiou et al., 2019).

Robertson-Smith and Marwick (2009) claim that the state of employee engagement can often be manifested through substantial efforts. The above indicated the challenges and detrimental effects of issues pertaining to employee engagement. Perceived organisational prestige, career expectations, psychological capital, and employee engagement represent distinct facets within the complex tapestry of an academic environment. These components coexist within the academic landscape, but the intricate dynamics of how they interact warrant exploration. Considering that there are multiple underlying psychological factors influencing employee engagement, the current study seeks to investigate the nuanced influences shaping the experiences of academics in Malaysian private universities.

1.2 Problem Statement

Employee engagement has been the focus of attention among human resource managers (Aktar & Pangil, 2017; Kim et al., 2016), businesses (Antony, 2018; Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019), social scientists (Bilal & Bilal, 2021; Boccoli et al., 2022) and academics (Bailey, 2016; Nordin & Hamzah, 2021). Notwithstanding that employee engagement is generally regarded in a positive manner, the majority of workers remain disengaged (Bilal & Bilal, 2021). The declaration of COVID-19 in March 2020 has left millions around the world aghast and halted the industrious world. It caused unpredictable global economic fluctuations and forced a substantial shift in the working mechanism, pressuring working adults around the world to adapt expeditiously to the new norms, where automation and digitisation made ends meet hence revolutionising the dynamics of hybrid work models (Lund et al., 2021). Despite these challenges, human resources have attempted employee

engagement efforts to hasten adaptations and boost employees' morale, motivation, and performances (e.g., digital classroom, virtual team up, live sessions, acquiring online skills) during COVID-19. The "State of the Global Workplace 2023" report underscores the critical aspect of employee engagement, revealing that the global percentage of actively engaged workers in 2023 reached 23%, reflecting a minute increase of merely 2% compared to the preceding year (Gallup, 2023).

Rasdi et al., (2022) suggest that engaged employees not only lead to cost reduction by minimising the need for hiring and management efforts or retaining talented employees but also boosts creativity and productivity. Subsequently, Malaysia's COVID-19 economic recovery has prompted a nationwide employee movement whereby Malaysia was at risk of 'The Great Resignation' wave that has already happened in the United States (Murad, 2021). This wave prompted a substantial number of individuals to reconsider the fundamental aspects of how, why, and where our occupational endeavours transpire (Smith, 2023). The seismic shift in the workforce landscape, marked by an augmented emphasis on flexibility, work-life balance, and evolving career priorities, has propelled a notable transformation in the realm of employee engagement (Page, 2023). In the aftermath of the pandemic, as the world has transitioned back to normal operation, the once-prominent concept of 'the great resignation' has somewhat diminished in relevance. While this phenomenon garnered significant attention during the pandemic, illustrating a widespread trend of employees reevaluating their professional priorities and leaving their jobs, it is essential to recognise that not all instances of this phenomenon manifest as overt resignations due to financial constraints (Pearce, 2022).

Amidst the discourse surrounding 'the great resignation', human resources authorities now raise concerns regarding the emergence of a subtler phenomenon termed 'quiet quitting'. This phenomenon may not involve formal resignations but instead involves employees gradually withdrawing from their roles, not loyal to the organisation and literally not wanting to go above and beyond unless absolute necessary (Tapper, 2022; Zenger & Folkman, 2022).

While the concept of quiet quitting has been launched recently, the main idea of it is not new. This term closely resembles work disengagement, a concept outlined by Kahn (1990) as a defence mechanism used by individuals to manage internal and external ambivalence, thus safeguarding their emotional and physical well-being in their work roles. Over time, employees may gradually withdraw from their job responsibilities or the organisation itself, exhibiting a lack of enthusiasm and allowing circumstances to erode their passion for their work (Hart, 2022; Lee & Varon, 2020). According to Formica and Sfodera (2022), quiet quitting is a consequence of the paradigm shift in response to the post-pandemic workforce, which has blurred the boundaries between work and personal life domains. Recent report by Flaherty (2022) shed light on a significant trend, with approximately 19% of American university provosts asserting that academics, including faculty members, are leaving the academic field permanently, contributing to a quarter of the Great Resignation wave. The similarities between these two phenomena suggest a potential threat to the academic setting.

Despite being a relatively new phenomenon, its impact on academics in tertiary education remains largely unexplored. Dr. Morrison-Breedy, the Chief Talent Officer of the Ohio State University in the United States, has recently

highlighted the dangers associated with quiet quitting, particularly among academic staff and faculty members. Dr. Morrison-Breedy's insights underscore the urgent need for academic institutions to address this growing concern, as the disengagement of faculty members and staff can have profound implications on organisational effectiveness, student outcomes, and institutional reputation. Quiet quitting among academic professionals poses a threat to the collaborative and innovative spirit necessary for fostering academic excellence and advancing institutional goals (Morrison-Breedy, 2023). Furthermore, evidence from other researchers suggests that this phenomenon is indeed observable within higher education, as studies by Lu et al. (2023), Ranieses (2023), and Zhong et al. (2023) have also identified significant trends of quiet quitting among academics.

In contrast, Malaysia is also not immune to such peril. In light of findings from The State of the Global Workplace 2023 report, Southeast Asia is confronted with a notably concerning quiet quitting rate of 62%, juxtaposed with a comparatively lower 21% rate of 'loud quitting' (Gallup, 2023). Delving deeper into the academic landscape in Malaysia, The Ministry of Education (2019) highlights a substantial increase in the turnover rate of academic staff in Malaysian private higher educational institutions compared to public universities. Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that turnover rates in Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEIs) surpass 26% annually (GuiXia & Rashid, 2019; Umi et al., 2023), while the turnover intention stands at 51.7% (Sinniah et al., 2022). In contrast, the turnover rate in public universities stands at 11% (Badiozaman, 2021), representing a significantly lower rate as compared to that of private universities. Despite this upward

trajectory, organisations have not thoroughly investigated the reasons behind the heightened turnover, leading academics to underperform and seek alternative opportunities (Orpina et al., 2022). Particularly concerning is the discernible strain on the academic community, where reports indicate a pervasive overwork situation, especially in private universities, leading to a lack of work-life balance among academics and scientists (Cheng, 2022).

This intensified work environment during the post-pandemic period, coupled with uncertainties about the future, stagnant salaries, instances of discrimination, emotional turmoil, burnout, and frustration with bureaucratic processes, has precipitated a disheartening trend of academics and scientists departing from their cherished professions (Clabaugh et al., 2021; Schmiedehaus et al., 2023). Alarming rates of depression and anxiety have been identified among faculty intending to leave academia, with many academics feeling disconnected from the intrinsic joy of teaching (Schmiedehaus et al., 2023). The pressure emanating from these challenges and job demands aligns with prior research indicating that complex job demands contribute to burnout, emotional strains, and dysfunctional workplace behaviors (Hasnan, 2021; Yang et al., 2016). Flaherty's (2022) findings' further reveal that academics who were once highly engaged before the pandemic are now extremely dissatisfied with their current positions and organisations. In light of these statistics, there is a pressing need for further research on employee engagement among academics in PHEIs, especially in the current post-pandemic stage.

In the context of employee engagement within tertiary academic settings in Malaysia, the existing body of literature is somewhat limited, with a predominant focus on diverse settings. For instance, Lu et al. (2018) conducted

a study examining work engagement, specifically exploring the mediating effect among special education teachers. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2021) delved into work engagement instead of employee engagement in a secondary education setting, concentrating on the factors of intrinsic motivation influencing work engagement. Keeping in mind, employee engagement involves the overall emotional commitment to the organisation, while work engagement specifically focuses on the positive and motivational aspects of an individual's job tasks (Kahn, 1990; Albrecht et al., 2023; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). It is worth noting that the investigation of employee engagement extends beyond the academic realm, encompassing settings such as hospitals (Janes et al., 2021) and primary corporate environments (Mardiansyah et al., 2022). In these studies, the employee engagement variable served as an antecedent, influencing outcomes such as patient safety and organisational commitment (Janes et al., 2021; Mardiansyah et al., 2022). Furthermore, Liu et al. (2016) explored employee engagement within business enterprises. However, despite these contributions, there remains a notable data gap in understanding the determinants of employee engagement among Malaysia's PHEIs, underscoring the need for further research in this area.

Organisational reputation emerges as a critical factor influencing employee behaviour. Esenyel and Emeagwali (2019) emphasise its significance, highlighting how a positive reputation fosters a sense of stability and security among employees. However, it is crucial to differentiate between perceived organisational prestige and organisational reputation. The former refers to the employee's perception of how others view the company (Sulentic et al., 2017), while the latter refers to the actual reputation of the company (Esenyel &

Emeagwali, 2019). A company's reputation is often built externally and indirectly through experience, products, media information or word-of-mouth; and is often summed up as a collective subjective representation built over a long time (Berger, 2019). However, the discrepancy between perceived organisational prestige and the organisation's reputation exists when there is a misalignment between insiders' and outsiders' beliefs towards the company. In other words, even when the company has a good image, if one still perceives it negatively, it will cause dissonance and emotional exhaustion which eventually affects their job performance (Peña-González et al., 2021). Therefore, perceived organisational prestige is considered a unique variable as it involves an individual's reinterpretation and perception of the information exposed by the organisation.

Drawing on the overlapping construct, perceived organisational prestige may influence employee behaviour, as social identity theory suggests it affects organisational identification and self-concept, which, in turn, indirectly enhances employee engagement (Ji & Cui, 2021). When an individual perceives positively towards an organisation, they are more likely to align their entire obligation and feel more connected to the organisation's overall objectives (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Sharma, 2017). Similarly, suppose employers are perceived as an out-group, employees may invest greater effort in leaving the organisation and search for a more prestigious company to preserve a positive social identity. According to Idris and Whitfield (2014), academics can be persuaded by university branding and reputation. If the above assumption is valid, the university is at greater risk of institutional failure as the idea of perception cannot be directly observed and is often overlooked in the industry.

As a result, the university may potentially face academics shortages due to the nature of job mobility and conformity (Alcbach, 2019).

However, the relationship between perceived organizational prestige and employee engagement remains unclear, especially when considering the nature of the profession (Mignonac et al., 2018; Şantaş et al., 2020). For instance, it was observed that perceived organizational prestige is not a significant factor for construction workers, but it holds relevance primarily for those in managerial roles (Mignonac et al., 2018). Meanwhile, public healthcare workers perceived that the organisational prestige is inconsequential towards employee engagement (Şantaş et al., 2020). The nature of profession among academics, public healthcare works and constructions workers are distinguishable based on job demands, risks, and merit-based rewards (Djastuji, 2010; Othman & Nasarudin, 2013). Hence, essentially job characteristics could pose contradictory results. However, identical results were found whereby career expectations contribute to employee engagement among these professions in order to seek for career promotions and professional development (Egerová et al., 2021; Price & Reichert, 2017; Xie et al., 2020). According to Kong et al. (2015), career expectations are highly linked to a person's value and were claimed to be a vital contributor to psychological functions. It motivates persistence in pursuing desired goals and opportunities. Career expectations were also claimed to serve as motivators and employees' self-regulation towards their unmet expectations and willingness to persevere (Haden, 2016). This may suggest that the strength or significance of the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement expected to vary based on the degree to which employees' career expectations are met or exceeded. Therefore,

the impact of employee engagement on perceived organisational prestige is contingent upon the level of alignment with individual career expectations, thereby acts as a moderating variable.

Therewithal, Zhang et al. (2018) showed that career expectations could have a buffering effect on adverse work experience and workplace incivility. In that sense, employees can redirect their motives and manage negative emotions effectively to meet high career expectations, despite being faced with stress in their work environment—a process likely influenced by their intrinsic motivation. Career expectations have also been identified to act as motivators, guiding employees' self-regulation in response to unmet expectations and their willingness to persevere (Haden, 2016). Indubitably, an evidence gap exists regarding this variable. Though, this could pioneer a more comprehensive study area due to the potential psychological effects of career expectations. Therefore, the proposed study would examine under what circumstances and what ground the career expectations could relate to perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement.

Academics' perception of organisational prestige is continually influenced by factors such as university management decisions (Shrand & Ronnie, 2021), global university rankings (Musselin, 2018), and instances of student protests (Jansen, 2017). These external pressures can significantly influence how academics perceive their respective institutions. Institutional changes are likely to have profound implications for academic careers, potentially eroding the psychological connection between academics and their employing universities, contributing to diminished organisational commitment and identification (Bolden et al., 2014). Moreover, when an academic colleague

perceives the university's prestige as low, even if it doesn't align with the actual corporate prestige, it may negatively impact the employee's perceived competence, self-determination, and job meaningfulness (Mathe & Scott-Halsell, 2012). However, despite these challenges, academics may still maintain intrinsic motivation in their work, as noted in prior research (Nordin & Hamzah, 2021). In this context, psychological capital (PsyCap) emerges as a critical mediator. PsyCap comprises positive psychological resources such as self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, which are fundamental to an individual's overall well-being and performance (Chaffin et al., 2023). The inclusion of PsyCap as a mediator is justified by its potential to offer new insights into the underlying mechanisms that link perceived organisational prestige with employee engagement.

Psychological capital acts as a mediating variable by influencing the cognitive and emotional processes that occur between an academics' perception of organisational prestige and their engagement. PsyCap is believed to be a vital personal resource that fosters and sustains optimism in the workplace (Mathe & Scott-Halsell, 2012). Furthermore, psychologically capable individuals are thought to cope more effectively with workplace challenges and pressures, demonstrating resilience in the face of internal and external threats (Sahoo et al., 2015). Despite widespread acknowledgment of the importance of PsyCap, an empirical gap exists in understanding its specific influence within the context of perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. Therefore, the present study seeks to explore and establish the nuanced role of psychological capital as a mediator, providing a deeper understanding of how psychological

capital may explain the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement.

Moreover, insights from Zhang et al. (2018) emphasise the pivotal role of career expectations, showcasing their potential as a buffering force against adverse work experiences and workplace incivility. Employees harbouring low career expectations often exhibit diminished motivation and contribute less to the organisation. Notably, career expectations have been identified as a mediator in the relationship between organisational identity and career management (Kong et al., 2019). When employees' career expectations diverge from corporate values, a weakened sense of organisational identity ensues, leading to reduced work contributions (Kong et al., 2020). In response to workplace stressors, employees with high career expectations adeptly recalibrate their motives and regulate negative emotions, possibly influenced by intrinsic motivation. Significantly, motivation assumes a central role in the cultivation and sustenance of psychological capital (Dilek et al., 2019; Rodrigues-Cifuentes, 2020). This suggests that career expectations may intricately navigate the psychological capital mechanism, acting as a moderator in its mediating effect, thereby influencing the overall relationship between employee engagement and perceived organisational prestige. Undoubtedly, a discernible gap in evidence surrounds this variable, making it a promising avenue for comprehensive exploration due to its potential psychological ramifications. Consequently, the proposed study seeks to meticulously examine the circumstances and grounds under which career expectations interplay with perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement.

In light of the aforementioned issues, the current study seeks to explore the link between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement, with a focus on the moderating effects of psychological capital and career expectations among academics in Malaysian private universities.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the discussion above, this study aims to answer a few questions regarding perceived organisational prestige, employee engagement, career expectation, and psychological capital among academics in Malaysian private universities.

1. Does perceived organisational prestige positively predicts employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities?

2. Does perceived organisational prestige positively predicts psychological capital among academics in Malaysian private universities?

3. Does psychological capital positively predict employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities?

4. Does psychological capital mediate the relationship of perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities?

5. Does career expectation moderate the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities?

6. Does career expectation moderate the mediating relationship of psychological capital in predicting employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities?

1.4 Research Objectives

The following research objectives are framed by the above research questions.

1. To investigate the relationship of perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities.

2. To examine the relationship perceived organisational prestige and psychological capital among academics in Malaysian private universities.

3. To determine the relationship psychological capital and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities.

4. To examine the mediating effect of psychological capital on the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities.

5. To study the moderating effect of career expectations on the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities.

6. To investigate the moderated effect of career expectation on the mediating relationship of psychological capital in predicting employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities.

1.5 Significance of Study

The current study may contribute to the field of academia, human resource agencies, Malaysian private universities, and policymakers. It helps to bring awareness to the importance of a meaningful working environment and to provide future enhancement of intervention. This study is significant because

the investigation of academics' employee engagement can assist in determining appropriate intervention, issues and predictors.

1.5.1 Theoretical Standpoint

The proposed study may bring an impact on academia. From the theoretical standpoint, the study aims to extend the current body of knowledge by integrating both the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model to provide a more comprehensive framework. An excellent theoretical contribution includes explanations for generalisable structures to illuminate a more comprehensive class of phenomena (Crane et al., 2016). Both the COR and JD-R theories offer valuable insights into how individuals acquire, protect, and deploy personal resources to manage job demands, which in turn influences their engagement levels. Prior studies have unveiled various theories that account for the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement (John, 2021; Saks, 2019), with the COR and JD-R models being central to this understanding. These frameworks offer a theoretical basis for exploring how workplace perceptions influence the development of personal resources while simultaneously activating the cognitive, emotional, and physical processes that define employee engagement, as outlined by Kahn (1990) and Shuck and Reio (2017). By integrating these theories, the present study aims to offer new insights that may shape future research on employee engagement, addressing gaps in existing models and potentially altering perspectives within this field.

The integration of COR and JD-R in this study offers new insights into the mechanisms through which organisational prestige affects employee engagement, expanding upon traditional models of employee engagement in the

private higher educational institution. Academics who perceive their private universities as more prestigious than alternative organisations are likely to have higher engagement. Therefore, it may also decrease the odds of deviant workplace behaviours and boost their performances. In that way, it assists private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in retaining their top talent, enhancing performance, and potentially sustaining their financial viability as they strive towards the goal of a 'high-income knowledge-based economy.' As a result, the present study builds upon and expands previous employee engagement models by investigating the effect of perceived organisational prestige and the mediating role of psychological capital as well as the moderating effects of career expectations. The combination of the variables mentioned above may also contribute to the nomological network of employee engagement. Subsequently, it also addresses the recent research calls made by Morrison-Breedy (2022) where more rigorous research on employee engagement is greatly needed to address the quiet quitting issue among academic professionals. This call is consistent with the appeals made by other scholars for research that positions the mechanisms of employee engagement within the context of psychological states among academics (Hamzah et al., 2021; Tuan & Anh, 2021; Schaufeli & Tafis, 2014). The current study contributes to the literature by thoroughly integrating a moderated mediation model, which may enhance the understanding of how career expectations and psychological capital serves to elucidate the concept of employee engagement. Presumably, a limited number of studies and data focuses on these variables to comprehend employee engagement issues holistically in Malaysia. Therefore, this study will address the existing gap in the literature on employee

engagement. Moreover, it could provide a foundation and references for future researchers for further analysis.

1.5.2 Practical Standpoint

Furthermore, the current findings of this study have the potential to provide valuable empirical insights and practical benefits to private universities in Malaysia. The research findings may promote the awareness of the importance of customers, suppliers, competitors, friends and family in how they perceive the organisations, as past studies claim that employees are willing to continue working in a high-prestige organisation even when the financial benefits are below the satisfactory level (Akgunduz & Bardakoglu, 2015). The findings may also provide useful ideas for administration of private universities to effectively apply in order to bring significant benefits to the institutions. The findings provide valuable insights for administrators seeking to devise strategies aimed at enhancing the engagement of academics across all levels. By enhancing the perception of organisational prestige through managerial and personal changes, employee engagement could be bettered.

Findings may also be significant to academics who play a major role in private universities as perceptions and psychological ownership may predict their subsequent behaviours. The findings, grounded in empirical evidence, have the potential to provide significant support and inspire creative strategies for practitioners, industry specialists, and human resource professionals. These insights may guide the development of more efficient and strategically targeted interventions to tackle these issues while enhancing employee engagement. Considering that variables such as perceived organisational prestige and career expectations can be categorised as subjective, that serves as a strong

psychological property. To date, there is barely enough awareness and practical intervention to tackle such issues. Therefore, the study's findings may allow new and meaningful insights into the factors influencing employee engagement.

The proposed study's findings can also provide valuable information and recent trends for the government and policymakers. This study sheds light on the career trajectories of academics in Malaysia, hence offering valuable information that could inform policy development to promote their well-being. By implementing these strategies, policymakers are able to support and inspire the next generation who are preparing to embark on similar paths. Additionally, the government could address the economic and underlying psychological factors contributing to employee disengagement and workplace dysfunction, paving the way for healthier work environments. As lecturers are the pillar of tertiary education, making a meaningful workplace would have a ripple effect throughout the education industry. This heightened awareness could encourage the government to implement appropriate policies aimed at addressing these challenges, hence ultimately improving the nation's economic stability and educational development.

1.6 Chapter Summary

To summarise, employee engagement is one of the key factors contributing to an organisation's success. As each individual attach different meanings in pursuing their careers, it becomes almost impossible to single out subjectivity influencing employee engagement levels. Communication inside and outside of the organisation is beyond control. Thus, the perceived organisation prestige may influence employee engagement. Establishing clarity and precision requires the provision of conceptual and operational definitions

for these key terms. Other than that, career expectations and psychological capital significantly impact the employee's behaviour and performance in the workplace. Therefore, the present study investigates the influence of career expectations and psychological capital on the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysia.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two discusses the empirical and theoretical reviews based on the relevance of the proposed constructs scilicet employee engagement, perceived organisational prestige, career expectations, and psychological capital. The chapter will first discuss the relevant theories widely used among other researchers and then narrow down to the justification of the selected theory. Each variable will be generally discussed in terms of the operational definition, related constructs, and established antecedent and consequent. Thenceforth, further literature reviews will be attempted to explore the relationships between the constructs. The level of employee engagement among academics, influenced by the relationship of perceived organisational prestige, psychological capital, and career expectation, has yet to be explored. Nonetheless, the present study intends to address the research gap. The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model will be used to further understand the dynamic relationship between positive resources and their effects. A conceptual framework is also drawn to show the interaction of key variables of the present study.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation of The Study

It is essential to position theories in the studies. According to Boer et al. (2015), theories provide explanations and explain facts on the dynamics of a phenomenon in the way they can be used, do, and should in making further predictions. As the current research aims to discover the fundamental truths on employee engagement, other relevant theories will be discussed to see the best

fit for the study. In addition, the current study plans to narrow and set boundaries into an individual-based perspective to further understand the underlying logic of employee engagement.

2.2.1 Relevant Theories of The Study

2.2.2.1 Job Demand-Resource Model (JD-R)

Bakker and Demerouti (2007) developed the Job Demand-Resources Model to explain the underlying psychological process of occupational stress. The model began with the assumption that different job characteristics offset dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1965) but also produce motivational potential (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) and eventually influence employees' wellbeing. Subsequently, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) categorised different job characteristics into job demand and job resources. Job demands refer to the organisational, physical, social, and psychological aspects of the job that require enduring emotional and cognitive effort, often consequently associated with psychological and physiological costs. On the contrary, job resources refer to the organisational, physical, social, and psychological aspects of the job that serves three functions (1) work goal achievement, (2) diminish job demands and the associated costs and (3) stimulate personal development, learning, and personal growth.

Job demands are expected to provoke employees' nervous systems and activate their defense mechanisms. In the initial stage, employees will attempt to endure the demands and strive for a higher level of job performance through burning additional energy. The continuous exposure to high job demands depleted employees' energy reserves and led to emotional exhaustion. These over-exhausted employees eventually attempt to escape and withdraw from the

job demands. These employees are more likely to be cynics (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001). In contrast, job resources encompass the tangible, mental, emotional, interpersonal, and structural components within a job that facilitate goal attainment and productivity in the workplace. These resources serve to mitigate the adverse impacts of job demands, fostering individual advancement, skill enhancement, and overall development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These resources facilitate goal accomplishment, psychological contract fulfilment, increased self-efficacy, positive psychological states and increased self-determination (Shao et al., 2022).

JD-R model has three basic assumptions. The first assumption is that job demands contribute to employees' exhaustion and depletion of physical and mental resources, influencing employee engagement. The second assumption is that job resources are instrumental factors that motivate and enhance employee engagement. The third assumption is that the interaction of job demand and resources has buffering effects toward negative job demand experiences (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Therefore, higher job demands, and lower job resources contribute to burnout, exhaustion, and other negative experience and vice versa. (Bakker et al., 2014). The JD-R model may limit predictor variables, but it includes general job characteristics, which were also part of previous models (i.e., the demand-control model and the effort-reward imbalance model). The model remains highly relevant to current organisational conditions (Rasool et al., 2024) and incorporates a wide range of working conditions. Hence, job demands, and job resources can be positioned at the team (e.g., teamwork pressure), work (e.g., workload), level of specific tasks (e.g., feedback from the task), and social relations (e.g., social support). General job

characteristics comprise contemporary jobs (e.g., emotional demands),

occupational specific (e.g., student's misbehaviour and patient confrontation),

service workers (e.g., customer misdemeanour) and home (e.g., family support)

(Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hakanen et al., 2008; Sundin et al., 2007). The JD-

R model also focuses on positive and negative outcomes as well as indicators

(e.g., burnout and motivation).

Figure 1

The Job Demand and Resources model (Bakker et al., 2007)
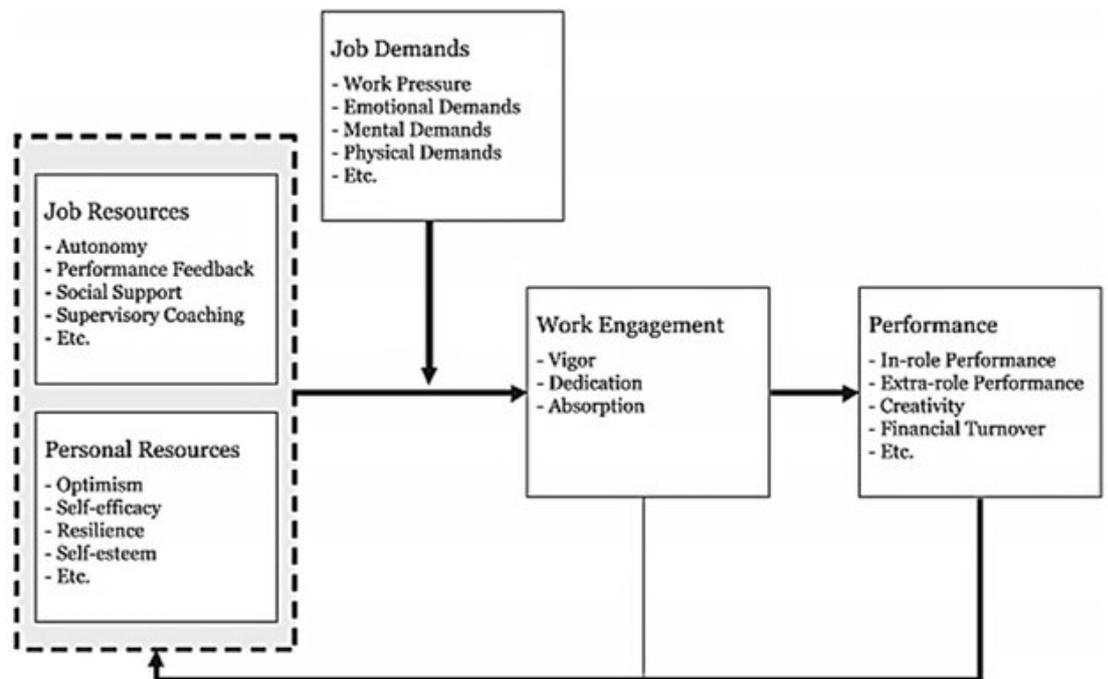
2.2.2.2 Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989)

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, introduced by Hobfoll

(1989), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how

individuals acquire, protect, and sustain valuable resources, particularly in the

context of stress and motivation. This theory posits that resources are anything

perceived as valuable to individuals, which can include personal traits (e.g.,

resilience and self-efficacy), conditions (e.g., social support and job stability), objects (e.g., material goods), and energies (e.g., time, money, and knowledge). At its core, COR theory is predicated on the notion that individuals are inherently motivated to protect their resources from depletion and to seek out new resources when possible. The pursuit of resources is essential for well-being and positive functioning, and the loss or threatened loss of resources can lead to psychological stress (Hobfoll, 1989).

Hobfoll's COR theory is underpinned by two key principles. The first is the primacy of resource loss, which asserts that resource loss has a disproportionately greater psychological impact than resource gain. The second is the resource investment principle, which posits that individuals must invest resources to protect against future resource loss, recover from resource loss, and gain new resources. This investment can take the form of effort, time, or social capital, and it reflects the dynamic nature of resource exchanges in various settings, including the workplace. Therefore, according to COR theory, individuals strive not only to avoid losses but also to accrue resources in a continuous process of self-enhancement and recovery (Hobfoll, 1989).

One of the core processes in COR theory is the resource caravans and resource passageways concept, which refers to the accumulation and mobilisation of resources over time. Resource caravans are clusters of resources that individuals bring into situations, while resource passageways are the environments that facilitate or hinder the flow of these resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). In the context of organisational behaviour, resource caravans might include a combination of skills, personal relationships, and psychological capital that employees rely on, to navigate work challenges. When these

resources are supported by a positive organisational environment (a resource passageway), employees are more likely to thrive. Conversely, in resource-depleting environments, employees may experience stress, burnout, and disengagement.

The underlying process within COR theory involves a continuous cycle of resource evaluation, acquisition, and protection. Employees assess their resource status in light of the demands they face, and based on this assessment, they engage in behaviours aimed at resource preservation or accumulation. When resource losses occur, individuals are motivated to restore balance by seeking new resources or by investing in recovery strategies. In organisational settings, this cyclical process is observed, as employees manage workplace challenges and maintain engagement over time, particularly in environments that are resource-depleting or demand-heavy. For example, when employees face excessive job demands, such as high workloads or emotional labour, their resource reserves are depleted. If additional resources, such as support from colleagues or time for rest and recovery are not available, employees may experience burnout or disengagement (Schaufeli et al., 2019).

The application of COR theory in the field of positive psychology and organisational behaviour has gained prominence, particularly in the last decade, as researchers have increasingly examined how the protection and accumulation of resources contribute to employee engagement, well-being, and performance. In organisational contexts, resources are often conceptualised as the support systems and conditions that employees rely on to cope with job demands, such as supportive leadership, professional development opportunities, and flexible work arrangements. The theory has been instrumental in understanding how

resource gains and losses affect employee outcomes, including motivation, job satisfaction, and psychological capital (Xanthopoulou et al., 2023; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2019).

Recent studies have reinforced the relevance of COR theory in explaining employee engagement and resilience during periods of organisational change and crisis (Cullen et al., 2020; Hobfoll et al., 2021). For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers found that employees with access to robust resource networks (i.e., strong social support and flexible work arrangements) were better able to adapt to new working conditions, avoid burnout, and maintain high levels of engagement (Hobfoll et al., 2021). These findings highlight the critical role of resource availability and accumulation in buffering against external stressors and enhancing individual resilience in times of crisis. Furthermore, the interplay between resource loss and gain cycles has been shown to have long-lasting effects on employees' ability to cope with ongoing job demands (Cullen et al., 2020).

The COR's theory emphasis on resource preservation aligns with contemporary perspectives on psychological capital, a construct rooted in positive psychology encompassing self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2020). Psychological capital can be seen as a valuable resource in its own right, one that employees cultivate to protect themselves from resource loss and to navigate workplace challenges more effectively. When organisational support is present, employees' psychological capital is further strengthened, creating a reinforcing cycle of resource gain that contributes to sustained engagement and well-being (Avey et al., 2021). Moreover, COR theory has been integrated into research on organisational behaviour to explore

how leadership styles and organisational climates influence employees' resource management strategies. For instance, transformational leadership has been identified as a key factor that fosters resource accumulation by promoting a supportive and empowering work environment. This leadership style facilitates the creation of resource caravans by encouraging employees to invest in their professional development, build strong networks, and engage with their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Leaders who emphasise growth, autonomy, and recognition can thus create resource passageways that enable employees to build and protect their resources, contributing to organisational success and employee retention.

Figure 2

The concept of Conservation of resource theory explained by Hou and Tao (2023)
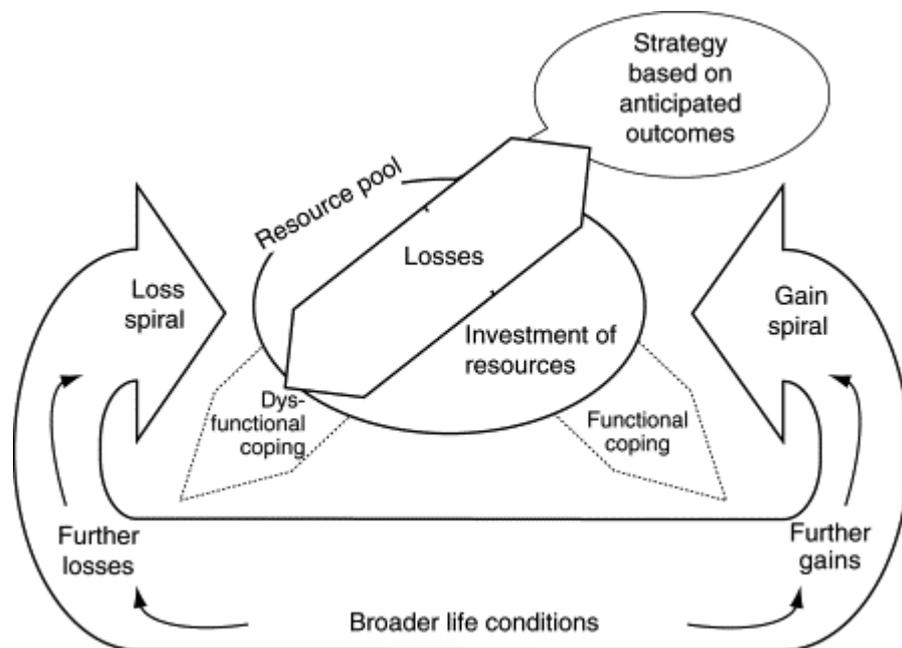
2.2.2 Justification of Selected Theory

Based on the empirical evidences, it was found that most research uses the Broaden and Build Theory, Job Demand-Resources model, Social Exchange Theory and Conservation of Resources theory as their respective theoretical framework in the current area (Barnes & Collier, 2013; Broek et al., 2017; Cullen et al., 2020; Hobfoll et al., 2021; John, 2021; Kaltianen et al., 2019; Lee & Vaesna, 2013; Saks, 2019; Sharma, 2021; Shuck & Rejo, 2014; Smith, 2012; Yan et al., 2021). This shows that these theories are dominant in this context and show stable support in employee engagement-related research. However, this current study focuses exclusively on the integration of the JD-R model and COR theory, given their relevance in explaining the relationship between job demands, job resources, and personal resources within employee engagement-related research.

The key variables of interest in the current research are perceived organisational prestige, employee engagement, career expectations, and psychological capital. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory provide complementary frameworks for understanding the dynamics of employee engagement, well-being, and performance in the workplace. While the JD-R model focuses on the interaction between job demands and resources in shaping employee outcomes, the COR theory emphasises the role of resource preservation and accumulation as central to individual motivation and stress management. By integrating these two theoretical perspectives, it is possible to explore the complex interplay between job demands, job resources, and personal resources in determining employee engagement, burnout, and resilience. As noted by Bon and Shire (2022),

integrating JD-R and COR theories provides a more comprehensive explanation for workplace behaviours, as both theories capture the resource dynamics that occur in high-demand work environments.

The exclusion of the Broaden and Build theory in this research is deliberate, due to the theory's emphasis on broadening one's thought-action repertoire through the experience of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). While this theory is relevant for exploring how positive emotions facilitate resource-building in the long run, it is less suited for explaining the immediate, day-to-day dynamics between job demands, job resources, and employee outcomes. The cross-sectional nature of this research focuses more on resource exchanges in response to immediate workplace stressors rather than on the long-term broadening effects of positive emotions. The JD-R model and COR theory are better aligned with this approach, as they directly address how employees respond to immediate job demands through resource investment and preservation strategies (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Similarly, the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) is not selected as the primary framework due to its focus on the reciprocity of social relationships, which, while useful in explaining organisational behaviors such as trust and loyalty, does not fully capture the resource dynamics emphasised in the JD-R and COR frameworks. Social Exchange Theory primarily revolves around interpersonal exchanges and the expectation of reciprocation, which can explain aspects of organisational behavior but may not fully encompass the broader array of job demands and resources, particularly personal resources, that are central to this research. While reciprocity can be a component of resource exchanges, the JD-R and COR theories offer a more comprehensive

understanding of how employees proactively manage stress and engagement through the acquisition, investment, and protection of resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

The JD-R model, initially developed by Demerouti et al. (2001), posits that all aspects of work can be classified into two broad categories: job demands and job resources. Job demands refer to the physical, psychological, or emotional efforts required to fulfill job responsibilities, such as workload, time pressure, and emotional labor. These demands can deplete employees' energy and resources, particularly when they are excessive or sustained over time, leading to stress, burnout, and disengagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). On the other hand, job resources include the physical, social, and psychological elements of the job that help employees meet job demands, achieve their goals, and grow personally and professionally. These resources (e.g., supportive leadership, autonomy, and opportunities for development) act as buffers against the negative effects of job demands and can enhance employee engagement and motivation (Schaufeli, 2017).

The integration of the JD-R model with COR theory is particularly useful in understanding how employees navigate the dynamic process of resource loss and gain in response to job demands. According to COR theory, individuals strive to protect their existing resources and acquire new ones to cope with stress and maintain well-being (Hobfoll, 1989). When job demands exceed the available resources, employees may experience resource depletion, triggering stress and disengagement. However, if adequate job resources are present, employees can mitigate the negative effects of job demands and even use these resources to build resilience and increase engagement. For instance,

when employees face high workloads, access to social support or autonomy can enable them to manage these demands more effectively, preserving their energy and psychological capital (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model identifies job resources as organisational characteristics that enhance work engagement by helping employees meet their work goals and mitigating the effects of job demands. Examples of these resources include autonomy, feedback, and supervisor support, all of which provide employees with the support they need to cope and manage with job-related stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Later adaptations of the JD-R model introduced the concept of personal resources, defined as positive psychological attributes (e.g., self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience) that employees bring to the workplace (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Unlike job resources, which are provided by the organisation, personal resources are internal assets that support employees in managing work challenges.

Contemporary research further supports the role of personal resources in helping employees' buffer against work-related stress, maintaining well-being and engagement even in high-demand environments. Employees with high levels of self-efficacy and resilience are more likely to remain engaged and less prone to burnout because they use their personal resources to proactively address and cope with job demands (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Additionally, proactive behaviors such as seeking additional resources and adjusting tasks are linked to higher levels of optimism and self-efficacy, further reducing job strain and enhancing performance (Van Wingerden et al., 2017). These findings underscore the evolving importance of personal resources as a complement to

organisational support in promoting sustainable employee engagement and productivity.

This is where the COR theory's concept of psychological capital becomes relevant. Psychological capital, comprising self-efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism acts as a personal resource that helps employees protect themselves against resource loss and accumulate additional resources. Luthans et al. (2020) argue that employees with high psychological capital are better equipped to cope with job demands because they are more likely to engage in resourceful behaviours, such as seeking social support, adjusting to challenges, and maintaining a positive outlook. As a result, they are less likely to experience burnout and more likely to remain engaged, even in demanding work environments (Avey et al., 2021).

The JD-R model's dual pathway also aligns with the resource gain and loss cycles, central to the COR theory. In the JD-R model, the health impairment pathway describes how excessive job demands can lead to resource depletion and, ultimately, burnout, particularly when job resources are insufficient. Conversely, the motivational pathway illustrates how job resources can promote engagement by providing the necessary tools for employees to meet job demands and achieve their goals. The process of resource investment, as posited by the COR theory, in the integration of this motivational pathway highlights how the accumulation of resources (i.e., both job and personal) can create a reinforcing cycle of resource gain. Employees who invest in building their psychological capital, for example, are likely to experience positive resource spirals, wherein the acquisition of new resources (e.g., social support, development opportunities) leads to increased resilience and engagement (Ten-

Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2019). The resource gain spiral suggested by Bon and Shire (2022) shows how resource accumulation, such as psychological capital, empowers employees to navigate workplace challenges more effectively while fostering proactive engagement in their work.

Furthermore, Hobfoll et al. (2018) introduced the concept of resource caravans and resource passageways, further justifying the integration of JD-R and COR. Resource caravans refer to clusters of resources that individuals accumulate over time, such as professional skills, social networks, and psychological capital. Resource passageways are the environments or conditions that facilitate or hinder resource flow (Hobfoll et al., 2018). In the organisational context, supportive leadership and an empowering work climate can act as resource passageways that promote resource accumulation and allow employees to manage job demands effectively. When employees work in environments rich in job resources, they are more likely to build resource caravans that help them navigate future challenges, contributing to sustained engagement and well-being (Schaufeli, 2017). Conversely, in environments with few job resources or high demands, employees may experience resource loss spirals, where the depletion of resources leads to disengagement and poor performance (Xanthopoulou et al., 2023).

Finally, the integrated JD-R and COR framework allows for hypotheses that explore how job resources moderate the impact of job demands on engagement. Based on the JD-R model, perceived organisational prestige functions as a job resource, motivating employees by reinforcing their sense of value and belonging within the organisation (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Cheng et al., 2022). Perceived organisational prestige as a job resource is particularly

effective in enhancing psychological capital, as it reinforces positive emotional states and fosters self-efficacy, which are critical for managing job demands and sustaining high engagement (Luthans & Broadwell, 2023; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2023). This enhancement reflects the JD-R model's perspective that job resources play a crucial role in amplifying personal resources, such as psychological capital, thereby motivating employees to engage more deeply with their work.

In the current study, psychological capital functions as a personal resource which acts as a mediator in the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. It increases employees' resilience and adaptive behaviours, hence directly contributing to higher levels of engagement (Newman et al., 2014; Alessandri et al., 2021). Thus, psychological capital strengthens employees' psychological resilience, encouraging proactive work behaviours, sustains motivation, and enhancing their engagement levels (Bakker et al., 2022). This reflects COR's theory of assertion that personal resources are critical in mitigating the impact of resource loss (Luthans et al., 2020). It focuses on resource investment, whereby employees who proactively invest in their resources, such as through job crafting, are more likely to enhance their engagement and well-being (Tims et al., 2022).

Career expectations in the proposed model serve as a moderator, amplifying the impact of psychological capital on employee engagement. According to both JD-R and COR theories, individuals with high career expectations are more likely to utilise and invest their personal resources effectively, leveraging psychological capital, to support future-oriented goals

and career progression (Chiniara & Bentein, 2022; Tims et al., 2016). From a COR perspective, the addition of career expectations motivates employees to intensify their resource investment, which fosters greater engagement (Hobfoll, 1989; Bakker & van Woerkom, 2020). Thus, the integrated framework of JD-R and COR theories provides a robust foundation for examining how POP, PsyCap, and career expectations collectively enhance EE, particularly in the context of job demands and limited resources (Bakker et al., 2022).

In summary, the integration of the JD-R model and COR theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate relationship between job demands, job resources, and personal resources in shaping employee outcomes. While the JD-R model provides a structured approach to analysing the dual pathways of health impairment and motivation, COR theory enhances this understanding by emphasising the importance of resource preservation and accumulation (Hobfoll et al., 2022). Together, these theories allow for a deeper exploration of how employees manage workplace stressors and maintain engagement, particularly in environments characterized by high demands and limited resources. As contemporary findings suggest, the interplay between job resources, personal resources, and job demands is crucial for fostering employee well-being, resilience, and sustained performance.

2.3 Conceptualisation of Key Variables

It is essential to determine the conceptual definition of variables to guide the whole study, in order to provide clear understanding. The following will describe past researcher's diverse views and terms of each variable namely,

employee engagement, psychological capital, perceived organisational prestige and career expectations.

2.3.1 Employee Engagement

Engagement itself refers to the commitment and the emotional involvement in doing something (Meriam-webster, n.d.). According to Chapman (2002), an engaging experience is when it draws in and holds a human's attention. It was also referred to as a state of being in the flow. Over the years, the emergence of the psychological concept has noted the term engagement across various domains such as leisure, marketing, education, and employment as it was eminent for causing manifestation in human choices and behaviours (Vreede et al., 2019). Therefore, terms associated with engagement come to light when researchers attempt to reflect on different definitions, which include personal role engagement, work engagement, employee engagement, social engagement, et cetera. However, across theoretical and empirical analysis, it was observable that the terms work engagement and employee engagement were frequently used interchangeably in the field of organisational industry (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019; Truss et al., 2013;). Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) claimed that to differentiate, the former refers exclusively to the relationship between employee and their work. In contrast, the latter includes the relationship between the employee, work, and the associated organisation.

A researcher has stated that the varying interpretations of the concept have caused confusion among business management, leading to ineffective interventions (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). In order to avoid confusion, the different definitions of engagement are explained relatively. As mentioned above, Kahn (1990) was the first to propose personal role engagement to study

the relationship between work and employee while delving further into the concept of 'employee engagement'. He regarded the concept as the process through which an individual brings their true self into their work, expressing their emotional, physical energy, and cognitive abilities into their professional life. Moreover, he claimed that these expressions contrast with disengaged people, as they will disconnect their true selves from work and suppress their involvement. Although it was established approximately 32 years ago that employee engagement is a multidimensional and multidisciplinary construct, there has been burgeoning interest among other researchers to operationalise Kahn's findings.

May et al. (2004) added that the flexibility of physical and emotional cognition plays a role in employee engagement when the employee has higher psychological meaningfulness and safety in the workplace. According to Wellins and Concelman (2005), engagement combines loyalty, ownership, commitment, and productivity. Cha (2007) added three dimensions, including a sense of work value, organisational recognition, and work engagement. These would control the employee engagement of active involvement in work accompanied by the physiological, cognition, and emotional states. On the other hand, Macey and Schneider (2008) argued that employee engagement is a broad-spectrum term that includes various types of engagement with different conceptualisations. The terms include trait engagements (i.e., proactive personality), behavioural engagement (i.e., organisational citizenship behaviours), and psychological state engagement (i.e., involvement). A model of employee engagement developed by Soane et al. (2012) explains that work engagement should meet three criteria: the work-role focus, positive affect, and

activation. Liu (2016) critically reviewed that employee engagement has six dimensions: dedication, harmony, vigour, pleasantness, organisational identity, and loyalty.

Other researchers also argued that employee engagement is a unidimensional construct. Employee engagement was defined as a dedicated willingness (Fang et al., 2010). It refers to the employee's willingness to positively describe their organisation, stay in it for a long time, and willingly strive for the company. It was claimed that when the organisation can provide sensuous benefits to the employee, it automatically generates rational engagement. Employee engagement is also a positive state of mind (Desselr, 2013; Schaufeli et al., 2002). It is characterised by dedication, absorption, vigour, and positive cognition. Researchers claimed that employee engagement does not focus on materialistic drives but is intrinsically driven by a spiritual awakening, motivation, and enthusiasm for work (Shahid, 2019) which leads to devotion to the organisation and encouraging experiences at work (Zeng & Han, 2005). On the other hand, Young et al. (2018) claimed that employee engagement is a personality trait as vigour, dedication and absorption are strongly related to extraversion, positive affectivity, conscientiousness, and proactive personality, as well as the opposite of neuroticism. There was also a notion that employee engagement is the contrast of burnout as its correspondent with the feature of cynicism, inefficiency, and exhaustion (Burnett et al., 2019; Cole et al., 2004; Schaufeli & Baker, 2001; Trógolo et al., 2020).

Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019) believed that employee engagement is an active and work-related psychological state as it constantly changes due to the features of emotion and cognition. Researchers summarised

that the precursor of employee engagement could be divided into three categories, namely job factors (i.e., job and work role characteristics, work interaction), organisational factors (group dynamics, supervision, organisation conflict), and individual factors (i.e., personality, outside life, positive psychological capital). The employee's physical input was displayed via behaviour reflected upon the mentioned factors. The consequences of employee engagement are relatively constant across the reviews, which shows the positive relationship between employee engagement and individual alongside organisation performance (Albrecht et al., 2023; Kahn, 1990; Shahid et al., 2019; Vreede et al., 2019). Inclusively, the unremitting components across the above domains were cognition, emotional and physical. Thus, the present study operationalises Kahn's (1990) definition of employee engagement, which underscores employees' comprehensive investment in their work, encompassing their physical, cognitive, and emotional involvement in fulfilling their job responsibilities within the organisational context.

2.3.2 Perceived Organisational Prestige

It has been established above that perceived organisational prestige and the actual organisation's prestige are incomparable due to the additional factors such as beliefs, interpretations, and unique exposure to the information. According to Peña-González (2021), the concept of organisational image, reputation and perceived organisational prestige are interrelated. Organisational image and reputation were reciprocated messages between outsiders and organisations. The organisational image is the transmitted messages by the management which has been assembled positively and coherently to the public (e.g., advertisement) (Dhir & Shukla, 2019). They are subjected to the

organisation's administration to diffuse and exert control over the influence of the outsiders. Simultaneously, the company's reputation is those messages relayed to the organisation by the external stakeholders (i.e., competitors and customers). The internal stakeholders (i.e., employees) were mainly the ones who received the transmitted feedback (Mignonac et al., 2006). The organisation's employees are both the primary and secondary receivers of the messages (Mignonac et al., 2006). Subsequently, the information emitted regardless of the company's external or controlled message leads to open interpretation by the employees and forms subjective opinions on how the external views the company (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Peña-González, 2021).

In general, research scholars agreed on the concept of perceived organisational prestige. It refers to the employee's belief in the widespread external opinion regarding the organisation's reputation (Bankins & Waterhouse, 2019; Smidts et al., 2001). It was first introduced by March and Simon (1958), who termed the organisational prestige perception as the employee's evaluation of their institutions, as a society and individually. Perceived organisational prestige is an evaluative construct in which it is the degree of comparison between the absolute reputation of the organisation compared to the judgement of various sources (Carmeli, 2005; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Smidts et al., 2001; Šulentić et al., 2016). It is a conclusive opinion regarding the organisation's status that was shown deference by other parties directly or indirectly (Carmeli, 2005). Other scholars used the term perceived external prestige interchangeably, suggesting that it derived from the same concept and beliefs (Smiths, 2012). Smidts et al. (2001) also believed that

perceived organisational prestige is an individual-level variable due to the distinctive features of subjective perception and interpretation.

The unique exposure of information in the process of forming perceived organisational prestige differs from one stakeholder to another. Researchers in the past argued that it is almost impossible to draw analysis as vast arrays of information (e.g., different interests and access to sources) could lead to many open interpretations. This led researchers to claim that the mutual spark of interest (e.g., financial status and relationships) between external and internal stakeholders substantially influences such perceptions (Sulentic et al., 2017). In the era of technological advancement, internal stakeholders are actively exchanging information with external stakeholders through the internet and the traditional ways (e.g., word of mouth). The knowledge of an organisation helps to understand others better, and even to expand their own potential. Therefore, all employees must be genuine in acting upon and embracing the organisational values. Furthermore, exchanging communication reveals a stronger connection between an employee's private and professional lives. Perceived organisational prestige is both the set of organisational values and its representative perspectives, as well as the connection, perception, and interest of the organisation's direct and indirect relationships (Yildiz, 2018).

Researchers believe that perceived organisational prestige facilitates the organisational identification process that eventually leads to positive results in the workplace (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). The notion is based on social identity theory, whereby employees will "bask in the reflected glory" when outsiders view the organisation positively (Cialdini et al., 1976). Employees care about the opinions of others and merge them with their own opinion to develop

organisational prestige (Carmeli, 2005), which is claimed to be associated with organisational pride (Mignonac et al., 2006). A strong sense of belonging within the organisation optimises employees' meaningful working experience, affiliations, and potential. Therefore, the fundamental effect of organisational identifications is that employees will impersonate themselves with the organisation and act upon its interests (Yildiz, 2018). In turn, employees exhibit positive workplace behaviours such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, cooperation, and citizenship. The researcher claimed that identifying perceived organisational prestige is essential in determining the employee's turnover intention (Sharma, 2021). Due to the antecedent and consequent of perceived organisational prestige, it is a strongly determinative and guiding principle for employees (Yildiz, 2018). The present study operationalises Mael and Ashforth's (1992) delineation of perceived organisational prestige, highlighting its subjective nature as perceived by both internal stakeholders, including employees, and external observers. This perception is influenced by various factors such as the organisation's reputation, historical track record, accomplishments, and its comparative standing within its industry or community.

2.3.3 Psychological Capital

Psychological capital is an essential concept that emerged from positive organisational behaviour and positive psychology that focuses on the development of human lives (Luthans et al., 2007). It denotes a positive psychological state that encompasses four psychological capital resources, hope, efficacy, resilience as well as optimism (Luthans et al., 2004; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017), as defined and utilised within the scope of the present

study. These assets met the criteria of positive organisational behaviour (Ramakrishnan, 2021). The concept was empirically supported and constructed based on the interrelationship and the unique characteristics of the four resources. Both concepts shared intentionality, a sense of control, and agentic goal pursuit. The four resources also fall under the same theme: motivation and perseverance influence the probability of success and positive appraisal of circumstances (Luthans et al., 2007; Torrente et al., 2021). In other words, these four resources aid in maintaining an internalised sense of control and intentionality in pursuing a goal. Based on social cognitive theory, efficacy is regarded as the confidence level of ability to mobilise cognitive resources, motivation, and courses of action to achieve a high-performance level (Bandura & Locke, 2003; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2019). Those with high self-efficacy tend to have stronger belief and self-confidence in their ability to address complex challenges successfully, and they will nurture their motivation to invest in the efforts to achieve their visualised goals.

Optimism reflects the expectation of positive outcomes in both current and future circumstances. Optimistic individuals tend to build positive expectancies and exhibit higher motivation to pursue their goals (Luthans et al., 2007; Carver et al., 2010). Hope, on the other hand, consists of two components. First is the agency, which refers to the goal-directed energy or motivation to succeed in a specific task. The second is pathways, which refers to the means to accomplish a task (Snyder, 2002; Luthans et al., 2004). Those with higher hope tend to show more potent goal-directed energy and willpower and have the ability to find alternatives to accomplish their goals, instead of limiting them to one solution. Resilience is the ability to bounce back from failure and setbacks

and are adaptive to changes. Individuals with higher resilience are more likely to adapt to negative experiences and changes, demonstrating persistence and a reduced likelihood of giving up easily (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2020; Masten, 2001; Luthans et al., 2006).

Human capital and social capital are associated with psychological capital. Human capital is referred to the human resources within the organisation. It is the compilation of human traits that include skills, knowledge and abilities that can be enhanced through training, experience, and education (Le et al., 2023; Newman et al., 2014). Opposingly, social capital is derived from sociology, which refers to the actual and potential resources of the network relationship with others in the society (Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998). Social capital focuses on 'who you know', while human capital focuses on 'what you know'. Psychological capital goes beyond social capital and human capital. Instead, it focuses on 'who you are becoming' and 'who you are' (Luthans et al., 2004). Luthans et al. (2007) believe that psychological capital starts with the influence of psychological awareness in the organisation. Negative vibes and approaches within the organisation manifest in lower employee emotional conditions (i.e., burnout, stress, conflicts, and disengagement). Negative vibes also stimulate management to think about short-term approaches and problems instead of realising personal needs and interests. Subsequently, psychological capital can be measured, assessed by both followers and leaders as well as effectively managed for performance advancement in today's workplace (Joo et al., 2023; Luthans et al., 2006; Prihatsanti, 2017).

Psychological capital has also been shown to strongly predict employee performance, mental health, wellbeing, and turnover intentions (Avey et al.,

2010). It contributes to employees' positive attitude (i.e., organisational commitment), positive behaviour (i.e., organisational citizenship behaviour) and performance (i.e., supervisor evaluation) (Avey et al., 2011). In contrast, employees with low psychological capital contribute to negative attitudes (i.e., cynicism, low commitment, and work stress) and deviant misdemeanours (Akin et al., 2014; Cetin, 2011). The contributions are in line with the underlying mechanism of psychological capital, which is the positive agentic motivation theory by Bandura (2008). The synergies between hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism significantly impact motivation and efforts, increasing employee performance and desired attitudes.

2.3.4 Career Expectation

Expectations are the anticipation or forecast of the future and the possibilities of what will happen (Geers et al., 2011). The concept of career expectation has yet to have a unified standard, often confused with other concepts such as career aspirations, career ideals, career values and career goals. Woods (1993) suggests that career expectations are shaped by career aspirations, personal characteristics, and life experiences. It can also be defined as career goals that employees intend to achieve (Metz et al., 2009). According to Jiang et al. (2019), career expectation refers to personal career beliefs and goals. Therewithal, career expectations and work expectations were used interchangeably. Major et al. (1995) defined the term work expectation as the preconceived notion of new employees regarding the nature of the work environment. Researchers believe that career expectations arise from the parallel interplay between environmental and individual factors, which in turn shape self-positioning and self-cognition (Gottenfredson, 2005).

According to Maxwell et al. (2010) career expectations are composed and evolve on three levels- personal, social, and economic. At the personal level, career expectations are relevant to the engagement in previous experiences and met expectations, motivation to improve wellbeing, self-fulfilment, and formations. These experiences highly provoke career decision-making, goal-setting competencies aside from self and career awareness. At the economic level, career expectations are relevant to career plans, the occupational positions employees strived for and their working and economic conditions. Finally, it is relevant to friendships, leisure time, family, and work-life balance at the social level. Despite various research findings, one thing in common is that career expectation is an individual-level perspective. Building upon Liu et al.'s (2019) conceptualisation, this research adopts their definition of career expectations, which encompasses realistic and attainable personal goals, behaviours, attitudes, and active pursuit of career development. Furthermore, it acknowledges that these expectations are influenced by various individual characteristics such as gender, age, personality, values, goals, beliefs, experiences, socio-economic background, career adaptability, previous achievements, and salary considerations, as delineated in Liu et al.'s study.

Aligned career expectations with work experience were reported to retain employees longer and boost working performances (Knight et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2021). Researchers claimed that career expectations diverge in emerging economics. Therefore, it changes over time (Walk et al., 2013). The influence of availability of information, societal stereotypes, professional training and selection processes also play a pivotal role (Garavan et al., 2001). Individuals frequently and consistently explore their career paths (Jiang et al.,

2019). Therefore, when employees start to work in the organisation, they eventually begin to set an expectation for future career development based on career ambition, life experiences and personal characteristics. According to the expectancy confirmation theory, satisfaction and expectation are related. Levels of career expectations are distinguishable across generational cohorts (i.e., age, life events and location), professional careers (i.e., academics, medical staff and hospitality) and culture (i.e., western and Asian). It varies due to motivational drivers, work values, and attitudes (Egerová et al., 2021).

According to Anticipatory Psychological Contract Theory, career expectations refer to individuals' pre-employment beliefs pertinent to their future job (i.e., advancement. salary and status) as well as their potential and expected contribution to the workplace (i.e., skills, energy and talents) (De Vos et al., 2009). This theory explains that the relationship between employees and the organisation evolves depending on the new information given. Employees are more likely to consider other career options when expectations are not met. Young people tend to expect their job to be more flexible, meaningful, and challenging with professional freedom, exciting work content, better work-life balance, and higher rewards (Wu et al., 2020). Comparably, a study among STEM professors shows that they expect their work to consist of more work-life balance, tenure positions and institutional support (Gregor et al., 2021). Therefore, career expectations must be communicated, understood, and measured as they are essential in predicting employee turnover rate and performance.

2.4 Hypothesis development

The following are the hypothesis of the research as formulated based on past studies.

2.4.1 The Relationship Between Perceived Organisational Prestige and Employee Engagement

An organisation's outlook serves as a competitive edge, helping it attract talent over competitors alongside retaining customers but also as a significant internal resource for employees. It contributes to their sense of security and stability, hence enhancing their commitment and satisfaction within the organisation (Ugwu et al., 2017). However, its influence on engaging internal human resources have yet to be researched extensively. A study conducted among 107 mid-level managers explained on a causal relationship between perceived organisational prestige towards work engagement and turnover intention (Sharma, 2021). The researcher suggested that the primary objective for employees in assessing the organisation's image is to achieve a sense of superiority within their organisational membership. This perceived superiority enhances their motivation, leading to increased commitment and engagement, as they seek to elevate their self-esteem through their association with the organisation (Sharma, 2021). Dhir and Sukla (2019) reinforced this by discovering that a positive perception of organisational prestige instills a sense of pride in employees, motivating them to dedicate more effort to their respective roles. When viewed as a crucial job resource, perceived organisational prestige plays a significant role in enhancing employee engagement, aligning with the principles of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model.

Perceived organisational prestige also fosters a deeper emotional attachment between employees and their organisation, which further drives engagement. Zhu et al. (2020) claimed that employees who perceive their organisation to be prestigious, experience higher engagement because they align their personal values with organisational values, leading to greater emotional investment in their roles. A favourable external image is more likely to foster emotional attachment and organisational identifications leading to increased engagement. Khan et al's (2022) observation in Pakistan's banking sector shows that perceived organisational prestige was a strong predictor of an employee's emotion and corresponding behaviours, suggesting that perceived organisational prestige not only fosters engagement but also promotes loyalty and better work performance. Similarly, another study among 143 nurses in Nigeria also found that perceived organisational prestige positively relates to work engagement (Ugwu et al., 2017). Researchers suggest that building a strong connection between employees and the organization, along with cultivating a favourable reputation as a good employee, may reinforce employees' belief that their organisation is a valuable and esteemed entity. This in turn elevates their commitment and energy at work (Khan et al., 2022; Ugwu et al., 2017; Zhu et al., 2020).

The Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) model posits that perceived organisational prestige is a crucial job resource that enhances employees' capacity to meet work demands by satisfying their need for external validation and recognition, thereby reducing job-related stress and promoting engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Supporting this notion, Dalton et al. (2020) elucidated that organisational prestige stimulates employees' aspirations for

self-improvement and success, serving as a significant motivator for engagement. Employees who perceive their organisation as prestigious are more inclined to invest their energy in achieving both personal and organisational objectives, thereby strengthening the positive relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. To maintain their position within a highly regarded organisation, employees are motivated to enhance their performance (Akgunduz & Bardakoglu, 2015).

Employees are motivated to protect these resources by remaining engaged and performing well, as leaving the organisation would mean losing access to these valuable resources (Sadeghnezhad & Allhosseini, 2019). Tuna et al. (2016) found that perceived organisational prestige is negatively associated with deviant workplace behaviours, such as sabotage and aggression. The study suggested that dissatisfaction towards the organisation, perceived as a loss of valuable resources, often leads to the emergence of these negative behaviours. Consequently, adverse views of organizational prestige can be detrimental, potentially obstructing the growth of personal resources. Drawing from both empirical and theoretical evidence, the study proposes the following hypothesis regarding the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 1: Perceived organisational prestige positively predicts employee engagement among academics in Malaysian Private Universities.

2.4.2 The Relationship between Perceived Organisational Prestige and Psychological Capital

Employees serve as key connections within the psychological and social system between the organisation and its customers (Carmeli & Freund, 2009). Research by Mathe and Scott-Halsell (2012) demonstrated that perceived organisational prestige significantly influences psychological empowerment and psychological capital. The study indicated that employees' perceptions of low organizational prestige are associated with reduced levels of shared hope, resilience, efficacy, and optimism. Consequently, organizational prestige and image serve as essential motivational drivers for employees. Akgunduz, and Bardakoglu (2015) also agreed and added that employees who are employed in high-prestige organisations have higher self-esteem and believe that they are the ones who contributed to such status. Employees are willing to stay in a prestigious organisation even when the financial gain is below a satisfactory level due to the provided self-esteem. Recent research by Liao et al. (2023) supports this notion, revealing that employees in prestigious organisations report higher job satisfaction and engagement, suggesting that a positive organisational image acts as a critical job resource.

On the other hand, perceived organisational prestige contributes to a sense of pride and advocacy. It fortifies self-image in a positive way when their organisation is viewed in a positive light. This occurs as it boosts job satisfaction and cultivates positive attitudes by serving as a source of motivation (Çiftçioğlu & Sabuncuoğlu, 2011; Mathe & Halsell, 2012). Another study also found that the discrepancy in perceived organisational prestige causes ambivalent identification. Employees responded with cynicism and silence as

they processed the conflicting signals about their worth (Mignonac et al., 2018). This aligns with the conservation of resource theory, which emphasises the importance of resource conservation. Employees who perceive a loss of prestige may withdraw from their roles to protect their remaining resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Kinnunen et al. (2013) further supported this notion whereby negative organizational prestige experience tend to exhibit disengaged behaviours. Contradictory findings were found whereby, over-identification was more likely to happen among salesperson thus causing lower job performance (Viera et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, another study conducted by Fuller et al. (2006) stated that perceived organisational prestige might only have minimal impact on organisational attachment among the university staff. Perceived organisational prestige was salient for faculty members but not towards other staff and administrators. Fuller et al. (2006) explained that this might be due to the differences in how they access the organisation and the individual's need and priority for the resources. Recent trends show that academics are increasingly susceptible to public scrutiny through various channels of comparison (Peña-González et al., 2021). A study by Peña-González et al. (2021) reveals that employees' perceptions of organizational prestige greatly influence their social capital, which, in turn, affects their level of commitment to the organization. This result highlights the strong connection between perceived organizational prestige and employee engagement, particularly in the current academic landscape, where perceptions of prestige play a crucial role in influencing the career paths of academics in Malaysian private universities. Thus, the study

developed the following hypothesis on the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and psychological capital.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived organisational prestige positively predicts psychological capital among academics in Malaysian Private Universities.

2.4.3 The Relationship Between Psychological Capital and Employee Engagement

According to Avey et al. (2010), it was found that psychological capital is positively related to employees' positive emotions and influences their attitude of engagement. According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, psychological capital functions as a vital job resource that enhances employee engagement by fulfilling psychological needs and promoting well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). A study among 331 front-line employees in Taiwan found that psychological capital significantly affects work engagement in a positive manner (Tsaur et al., 2019). Researchers suggest that psychological capital influences an individual's internal mindset. This cognitive process aids in enhancing energy and focus as work, ultimately leading to greater work engagement (Tsaur et al., 2019). Similar results were obtained by Simon and Buitendach (2013) as well as Alessandri et al. (2018). Simon and Buitendach (2003) suggested that the elements of psychological capital - hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism serve as key drivers that organisational commitment, in addition to influencing employee attitude and behaviours.

The analysis using structural equation modelling revealed that psychological capital could have an indirect impact on job performance, with work engagement acting as a mediator (Simon & Buitendach, 2003).

Researchers assert that employees with high psychological capital who are highly engaged tend to be more proactive in adjusting their work environment to optimise job fit, ultimately aiming to generate additional resources (Alessandri et al., 2018). Moreover, recent research further substantiates this relationship, indicating that employees with high psychological capital experience increased motivation and satisfaction, leading to enhanced engagement levels (Liao et al., 2023; Dalton & Mclarty, 2020). Thus, according to past literature, the study formulated the following hypothesis on the relationship between psychological capital towards employee engagement.

Hypothesis 3: Psychological capital positively predicts employee engagement among academics in Malaysian Private Universities.

2.4.4 The Mediating Role of Psychological Capital

Positive organisational behaviour is the study and application of psychological capacities and positively oriented human resource strengths that can be developed, measured, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace (Luthans et al., 2004). Luthans et al. (2004) also used a positive criterion such as resilience, hope and confidence to measure this behaviour. A large amount of research indicates that psychological capital plays a significant role in fostering positive outcomes in the workplace, such as increased organisational commitment, improved performance, and greater job satisfaction (Alessandri et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2014; Simon & Buitendach, 2013). As mentioned above, psychological capital is considered as a personal resource which helps employees cope with job demands and enhance their capacity to remain engaged (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Resources (i.e., hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism) buffer against job stress, reduces exhaustion

and increases motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2012). Furthermore, Siu et al. (2015) found that psychological capital promotes positive emotional states and correspondingly improves work-related wellbeing.

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory suggests that psychological capital functions as a valuable resource that individuals seek to protect and build. Employees who possess higher psychological capital can better preserve their resources when faced with stressful or demanding work conditions, thereby enhancing their resilience and ability to engage with their work (Hobfoll, 1989; Avey et al., 2010). Research indicates that employees with high psychological capital perceive their work environment as less threatening and are more capable of maintaining engagement (Hao et al., 2015). Coherently, employees with psychological capital experience fewer negative outcomes such as turnover intention, job burnout, and job dissatisfaction (Frey et al., 2018; Yin et al., 2018). Contemporary research supports this, showing that psychological capital helps mitigate the effects of occupational stress and fatigue, even in high-pressure jobs such as those in healthcare and law enforcement (Tian et al., 2020). This aligns with both the Job Demand-Resources and Conservation of Resources frameworks, which emphasise the role of psychological resources in maintaining well-being and fostering sustained engagement.

Nonetheless, some researchers challenge the notion of psychological capital as an all-encompassing mediator. For example, Grover et al. (2018) found that psychological capital does not always buffer the effects of job demands on well-being and engagement, particularly among nurses. Instead, their results suggest that psychological capital might aid employees reframe job

demands in a better manner, thus promoting a healthier work environment and enhancing engagement (Grover et al., 2018). Similarly, Teng et al. (2020) conducted a study among Chinese healthcare professionals, revealing that while psychological capital does help to mediate work engagement, its effectiveness is influenced by external job resources like social support and job autonomy. The research suggested that psychological capital alone may not be sufficient to completely mitigate the negative effects of high job demands, particularly in high-pressure environments.

Despite some mixed findings, numerous researchers have empirically reviewed psychological capital as a mediator and moderator in organisational, physical, and psychological relationships (Hao et al., 2015; Hasyim & Mangundjaya, 2018; Tian et al., 2020; Yin et al., 2018). These studies illustrate its vast potential to positively influence work-related outcomes, such as reducing job burnout, improving well-being, and enhancing engagement. As displayed in Table 2.3.4, there is compelling evidence that psychological capital serves as a valuable resource in buffering against job demands, aligning with frameworks like the Job Demand-Resource and Conservation of Resource models. Without a doubt, this broad influence underscores the necessity of testing the following hypothesis to further understand the extent of its mediating effects.

Hypothesis 4: Psychological capital mediates the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian Private universities.

Table 2.3.4

Summary Table of Past Studies Incorporating the Mediating Role of Psychological Capital

Author(s)	Methodology	Variables	Main findings
Hao et al. (2015)	Cross-sectional study	Psychological capital, Family work conflict, Work family conflict, Self-efficacy	Psychological capital partially mediates the relationship of family-work conflict and depressive symptoms. Psychological capital moderated the relationship of work family conflict and depressive symptoms.
Yin et al. (2018)	Cross-sectional study	Psychological capital, positive display rule perceptions, emotional exhaustion, emotional labour	Psychological capital moderates the relationships between positive display rule perceptions and emotional exhaustion. Psychological capital moderates the relationship between deep acting.
Tian et al. (2020)	Cross-sectional study	Psychological capital, Occupational stress, Fatigue	Psychological capital mediates the relationship between occupational stress and fatigue.
Hasyim & Mangundjaya (2018)	Cross-sectional study	Psychological capital, Organisational climate, Work engagement.	Psychological capital mediates the relationship between organisational climate and work engagement.

2.4.5 The Moderating Role of Career Expectation

The preceding argument mentioned that the sense of pride generated by perceived organisational prestige could contribute to employee engagement (Dhir & Shukla, 2019; Fredrickson, 2000). However, empirical evidence suggests that there were ambiguous results in the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among healthcare staff and construction workers (Kong et al., 2020; Mignonac et al., 2018; Şantaş et al., 2020). An investigation developed by Şantaş et al. (2020) among public healthcare staff on the perceived organisational prestige found that it only influenced work engagement moderately by 37.8%. However, the sub-dimension for emotional engagement was explained by 41.2% of the total variance, while 26% for physical engagement and 30.2% for cognitive engagement. Mignonac et al. (2018) discovered that perceived organisational prestige among construction workers was improbable. It contradicts the established findings (Saks, 2019; Sharma, 2021; Ugwu et al., 2017). These findings suggest that the nature of work may influence this. Nevertheless, despite the differences in job characteristics among academics, construction workers and healthcare workers, they share a commonality: an active pursuit of professional development and career promotion (Egerová et al., 2021; Price & Reichert, 2017; Xie et al., 2020). This is because they have high expectations in their career aspects. Such pursuits are recognised as the subset of the operational definition of career expectation by Wu and Li (2001).

Although the relationship between career expectations and employee engagement is underexplored, some studies highlight the positive influence of career expectations on workplace behaviour. According to Baroudi et al. (2018),

career aspirations have a positive relationship with proactive behaviours, such as taking charge, as well as instrumental and psychosocial relationships within the workplace. Researchers denoted that having a clear aspiration for employees is equivalent to being an ambitious career employee. Such aspirations are a force to achieve a positive organisational outcome and a willingness to work with others to obtain rewards. Following that rationale, career expectations can be conceptualised as personal resources within the Job Demand-Resources model whereby, it interacts with both job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Past researchers have also evaluated the role of career expectations in contributing to better job performance, job satisfaction and overall job behaviour (Knight et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2020). Contrastingly, employees with low career expectations tend to have lower motivation levels and contribute less to the organisation. Therefore, it can be assumed that the level of career expectation plays a role as a motivational driver in professional pursuit.

Nonetheless, a study conducted among generation Y by Kong et al. (2020) found that career expectation mediates the relationship between career satisfaction and organisational career management. It was posited that these generation Y employees are highly aware of the organisation's support for their career expectations. This awareness leads to higher organisational identity and hence they are more likely to show significant support for their organisation. However, this contribution only applies to having clear expectations and having a high priority on education, training, and career development opportunities. Another generational study by De Hauw and De Vos (2010) shows that millennial's career expectations changes in times of depressive socioeconomic

states. However, expectations pertinent to financial rewards, career development, job contents and training remain high while lowers the expectations on social atmosphere and work-life balance. It was a notion that millennials are willing to make more tremendous efforts to help the organisation to succeed when they are optimistic about their opportunities in the labour market.

From the perspective of Conservation of Resources theory, career expectations can be seen as a part of 'resource caravan' that helps employees to acquire, maintain, and protect resources, especially under conditions of stress (Hobfoll, 1989). Past empirical evidence also shows that career expectations serve as buffering effects (Maden et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). A study among 227 employees in a Turkish setting showed that future job expectations have a moderating influence on employees' affective reactions and unmet job expectations (Maden et al., 2016). The researcher denoted that positive future expectations may serve as current motivators and act as a way of self-regulation for employees' affective reactions (i.e., emotional exhaustion) towards their unmet job expectations, which corresponds with the social cognitive theory by Bandura (1991). A study by Zhang et al. (2018) found that career expectation moderates the relationship between workability and workplace incivility among new nurses. High career expectation is a buffering system for nurses trapped in the negative psychological states of workplace incivility. In line with classical motivational theory, individuals in control of their goal pursuit and desires are shown to have higher motivation, and are able to mitigate their inferior status while being persistent (Zhang et al., 2018).

Therefore, the current study proposed career expectation as an enhancing moderating variable in predicting the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. Career expectations were claimed as an essential contributor to psychological functions as it serves as a motivation to pursue their goals (Kong et al., 2015). Building on Liu et al's. (2019) conceptual definition, career expectations are achievable and realistic career goals. Bearing these expectations for the future gives people the motivational drive to pursue their success. It is unclear whether career expectations generate positive emotions. However, Mejia and Hooker (2017) found that positive and negative emotions play a part as an underlying mechanism in goal pursuit. Researchers suggest that it takes a high level of openness and willingness to explore, as mixed emotions (i.e., uncertainties and frustration) will evolve when there is a conflict in goal progress. Subsequently, the perseverance to overcome mixed feelings leads to goal achievement and self-actualisation. Such perseverance and motivation reflect psychological capital that maintains employees' intentions and internal control to pursue their goals (Luthans et al., 2007). Provided that career expectations may increase perseverance; it could interact with the negative influence of perceived organisational prestige and further provide motivation in psychological capital.

Both the Job Demand-Resources and Conservation of Resources theories highlight the dual pathways by which career expectations may influence employee engagement. On one hand, high career expectations provide psychological resources that enable employees to buffer against job demands, preventing burnout. On the other hand, career expectations also act as a motivational resource, encouraging employees to strive for professional

success, even when organisational support or prestige is ambiguous or inconsistent (Knight et al., 2006; Baroudi et al., 2018). This interaction helps employees navigate the complexities of their work environment, reinforcing both personal resilience and engagement. In line with Conservation of Resources theory, the pursuit of career expectations helps individuals manage job stress by reinforcing their resource pool, thus preventing resource depletion and fostering greater engagement (Hobfoll, 2002). The Job Demand-Resources theory adds that career expectations not only provide personal resources but also act as a moderator that strengthens the positive impact of job resources, such as organisational prestige, on employee engagement. When employees have distinct and high career expectations, they are more likely to use organisational prestige as a resource to enhance their engagement and well-being, even in challenging job environments (Xie et al., 2020).

Thus, the empirical evidence in Table 2.3.5 supports the role of career expectations as a moderating variable, amplifying the impact of perceived organisational prestige on employee engagement. Drawing from the COR and JD-R frameworks, career expectations function as a vital resource that amplifies the impact of perceived organisational prestige on employee engagement. Consequently, the study developed the hypothesis on career expectations as follows.

Hypothesis 5: Career expectations moderate the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian Private universities.

Hypothesis 6: Career expectations moderate the mediating relationship effect of psychological capital in predicting between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian Private universities.

Table 2.3.5

Summary Table of Past Studies Incorporating the Moderating Role of Career

Expectations

Author(s)	Methodology	Variables	Main findings
Maden et al. (2016)	Cross sectional research	Efficacy Beliefs, Future Job Expectations, Unmet job expectation, Employee responses	Future Job Expectations moderates the relationship of employee responses and unmet job expectation.
Zhang et al. (2018)	Cross-sectional research	Work ability, workplace Incivility, Job performance, Career expectations	Career expectations moderates the relationship between workplace incivility and job performance.
De Hauw & De Vos (2010)	Cross sectional research	Optimisn, Careerism, Expectations About Employer Inducements, Psychological contract expectation	Millennials career expectations are significantly influenced by optimism, careerism, and individual variables

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model complement each other in explaining

the mechanisms through which perceived organisational prestige can influence

employee engagement. The COR Theory posits that individuals are driven to acquire, retain, and protect valuable resources—such as psychological capital and career expectations—to cope with job demands and avoid resource depletion. This theory also emphasises that gaining resources, such as prestige or psychological capital, can create a positive cycle, encouraging further investment in work roles and enhancing overall engagement. Building on this foundation, the JD-R model categorised perceived organisational prestige (POP) as a job resource that has the potential to motivate employees by reinforcing their sense of value and belonging within the organisation. This resource supports employees in managing job demands and contributes to enhancing their career expectations.

Therefore, a conceptual framework was drawn up in Figure 3 to represent a visual summation of the relationships hypothesised in this proposed study. As indicated, perceived organisational prestige is hypothesised to directly predict both psychological capital (H2) and employee engagement (H1). Psychological capital, in turn, is expected to directly influence employee engagement (H3), and it also mediates the relationship between organisational prestige and employee engagement (H4). Additionally, career expectations are proposed to moderate the direct effect of organisational prestige on employee engagement (H5) and the mediating role of psychological capital in predicting employee engagement (H6). The conceptual framework illustrates various pathways, including mediation and moderation effects, to elucidate the mechanisms driving these associations.

Figure 3

Conceptual Diagram
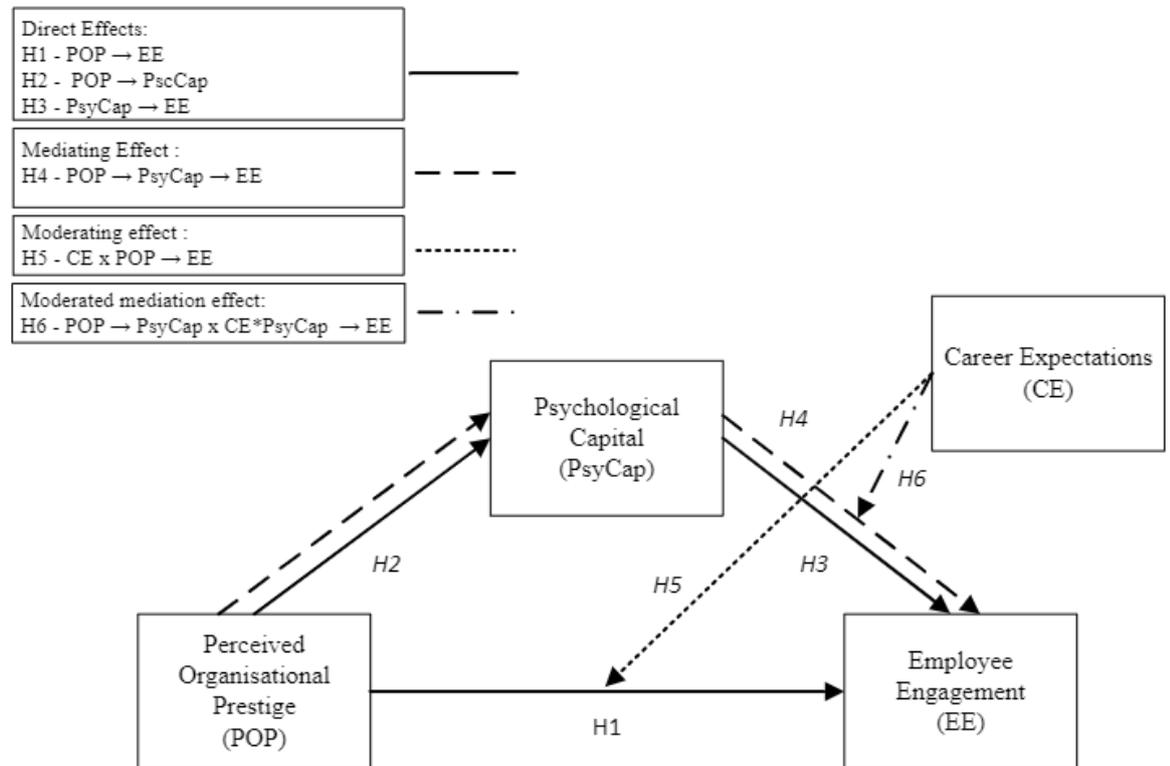
2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has offered the overview of the relevant theories and definitions commonly applied by past researchers in exploring employee engagement. Subsequently, the conservative of resources theory and the job demand and job resources theory were selected comprehensively to guide the current research. The literature review provides substantial insights and highlights convergent findings which support the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. However, these studies draw on varied theoretical perspectives. Literature reviews has also provided a significant potential of psychological capital and career expectations in influencing the relationship. Consequently, it has led to the formulation of hypothesis and conceptual framework which consisted of four variables as

articulated from past reviews to answer the research questions. The following chapter will further elaborate the methodological approaches to test the hypothesis.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the research methodology of the proposed study. This chapter is organised into seven sections to achieve the study's objectives. Section 3.2 elaborates on the research design where quantitative research is adopted. Section 3.3 explains the sampling strategy to determine the sample size. Section 3.4 outlines the ethical consideration to protect the right of research participants and to maintain scientific integrity as well as the survey administration of the proposed study. Section 3.5 introduced the measurement of variables of interest while section 3.6 further justified the development of questionnaires. Lastly, section 3.7 explains about the data analysis procedures to validate the result of the study.

3.2 Research Design

The current study employed a quantitative research design, specifically a cross-sectional research approach. This design allowed researchers to accumulate and analyse research data in a single phase through self-administered online questionnaires (Creswell & Poth, 2016). On top of that, adopting a cross-sectional research strategy was relatively effortless to perform, quick, and cost friendly (Sedgwick, 2014; Setia, 2016). A cross-sectional research design also allowed researchers to establish the prevalence of the variable, as well as to compare other variables simultaneously (Setia, 2016).

The study also incorporated elements of a descriptive approach to complement the quantitative design. The descriptive, quantitative design

facilitated a detailed exploration and presentation of the characteristics of the study variables (Taheerdoost, 2021). The application of the descriptive, quantitative design involved administering structured surveys to a diverse sample of participants. The survey instruments were carefully crafted to capture not only the prevalence and interrelationships of the variables, but also to gather nuanced insights into the participants' perceptions and expectations (Kabir, 2016). By employing statistical measures, it allowed for a more in-depth analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data which was collected. Pertinent to the present study, the combined approach of a descriptive, cross-sectional and quantitative designs aimed to provide a holistic and nuanced perspective on the influences of perceived organisational prestige, psychological capital, and career expectations towards employee engagement.

3.3 Sampling Method

The stratified random sampling method was employed in the current study. Hence, the following are procedures for selecting population, strata, and sample size as well as further justification regarding the inclusion and exclusion criterion.

3.3.1 Sampling Frame

The population is the complete set of individuals, objects, and events within the organisation that possess the characteristics of interest to the research study (Bryman, 2012; Elfil & Negida, 2017). The current population of interest is academics in Malaysian private universities. According to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2021), approximately 24,727 academics are working in private institutions in 2020 with different qualifications and gender, as shown in Table 3.3.1. There are also 83 private universities in Malaysia with an

accredited status, as shown in Table 3.3.2 depicted by the Malaysian Qualification Register (2022). Taking into consideration the vast size of the population, it is impractical and impossible for any researcher to access all academics in a single study (Berndt, 2020). Hence, researchers are required to develop a strategy to define a representative sample which are a subset of the population.

Consequently, the private universities involved in the current study are accordingly to the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Ranking list. The QS ranking is based on academic reputation (40%), employer reputation (10%), faculty/student ratio (20%), citations per faculty (20%), international faculty ratio (5%) and international student ratio (5%) (Quacquarelli Symonds Limited, 2023). According to Demereldorj (2018), such rankings help attract stakeholders for funding and recruitment, good students, nationwide collaboration, build institutional reputation, and also to compete in the global competition. Without a doubt, having high ranks does reflect the value of the universities. As organisation reputation plays a role in the current study, QS ranking will fall under the predetermined criteria of the study as the selection of strata.

Additionally, the present research relied on the list of 'Top Malaysian Universities in the 2023 QS World Ranking' as provided by IQI Global (Aman, 2023). The decision to limit the study to the top universities in Malaysia is grounded in several key considerations as indicated by QS ranking. This choice was made to mitigate the risk of inadvertently excluding other Malaysian universities, given the complexity of navigating the QS ranking list. Moreover, it enhances feasibility and manageability by ensuring a manageable scope while

still capturing a representative sample of Malaysia's higher education landscape. Importantly, the decision to exclude lower-ranked universities from the study framework is deliberate and serves to uphold the integrity of the research methodology. Given that this study utilised QS rankings solely as a sample frame and was not intended for a comparative analysis, the omission of lower-ranked universities does not introduce bias into the results. Instead, this targeted approach ensures a focused examination of the academic landscape within Malaysia's top universities, thereby enhancing the study's feasibility, manageability, and overall reliability. Furthermore, findings from these top-ranked institutions are likely to hold greater relevance and impact within academic and policymaking circles, as they have achieved high scores based on the QS ranking indicators.

Therefore, the list which was provided encompassed 24 Malaysian universities, including both public and private institutions. Consequently, given the research focus on academics within Malaysian private universities, this study excluded public universities from consideration. Thus, the remaining nine private universities constituted the selected stratum for further research (see Table 3.3.3). Sampling frame is available as the population of academics are an open access and information are obtainable through respective universities' staff directories online. The number of population and seven identified strata are as shown in Table 3.3.3 (Quacquarelli Symonds Limited, 2023).

Table 3.3.1

Numbers of Academics in Malaysian Private Higher Institutions

Degree/Year	2020	Gender/Year	2020
Ph.D	5589	Male	11,247
Master	12,850	Female	13,480
Bachelor's degree	5248		
Diploma	548		
Others	492		
Total	24,727	Total	24,727

Note. Others: Professional certificate, Advance Diploma and Professional.
Source: Ministry of Education Malaysia (2021)

Table 3.3.2

Numbers of Private Universities with Accredited Status in Malaysia

No	States	Number of Private Universities	Percentage (%)
1	Johor	6	7.23
2	Kedah	4	4.82
3	Malacca	2	2.41
4	Negeri Sembilan	3	3.61
5	Pahang	2	2.41
6	Penang	2	2.41
7	Perak	6	7.23
8	Sarawak	4	4.82
9	Selangor	35	42.17
10	Terengganu	1	1.20
11	Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur	16	19.28
12	Wilayah Persekutuan Putrajaya	1	1.20
13	International	1	1.20
Total		83	100

Source: Malaysian Qualification Register (2022)

Table 3.3.3

Private University according to QS World Ranking

No	Universities (Strata)	World Ranking	Populations
1	Taylor's University	284	530
2	UCSI University	300	567
3	Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP)	401-500	277
4	Sunway University	801-1000	310
5	Universiti Tenaga Nasional (Uniten)	801-1000	433
6	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)	1001-1200	1245
7	University of Kuala Lumpur (UniKL)	1201-1500	564
8	Multimedia University (MMU)	1201-1500	617

9	Management and Science University (MSU)	1201-1500	655
	Total		5195

Source: 2023 QS World University Rankings (Quacquarelli Symonds Limited, 2023) adapted from (Aman, 2023)

3.3.2 Sampling Size

Investigating the optimal sample size is crucial for reducing the generalisation error of the population (Perneger et al., 2014). According to Hair et al. (2014), PLS-SEM performs well with minimal sample size estimation. However, there have been contrasting opinions on the number of respondents to be obtained (Awang, 2015).

The '10-times rule' is commonly used for minimum sample size estimation by researchers (Barclay et al., 1995; Hair et al., 2011). This rule assumes that the sample size must be ten times greater than the number of latent variables linked in the model. Hair et al. (2010) suggested that the minimum sample size for SEM should depend on the basic measurement model characteristics and the model's complexity. Following Hair's suggestion, the current study involves three latent constructs, and it is recommended to have a minimum sample size of 100 (see Table 3.3.2.1 for a summary of Hair's suggestion).

However, a sample size of 100 is considered too small for a complex model (Kline, 2016). On the other hand, Kline (2005, 2016) and Weston & Gore-Jr (2006) suggested that at least 200 samples are significant for a complex model. This recommended sample size is neither considered too small nor too large, and it is less likely to produce Type I and Type II errors (Memon et al., 2020). Researchers also recommend using this sample size, provided that two criteria are fulfilled: (1) No missing data, and (2) Normal distribution (Kline,

2005, 2016; Weston & Gore-Jr, 2006). Given that the current research meets these criteria, the study has collected 323 data points, indicating that the sample size is deemed sufficient.

Table 3.3.2.1

Minimum Sample

No	Model Characteristic	Minimum sample size
1	Lesser than five constructs with each more than measuring items	100
2	Lesser than seven latent constructs with each more than measuring items	150
3	Lesser than seven latent constructs that some more than measuring items	300
4	More than seven construct that some have more than three measuring items	500

Source: Hair et al. (2010)

3.3.3 Sampling Technique

The current study employed a probability sampling technique, precisely the stratified sampling method. The probability sampling method tends to achieve a better outcome when the population of interest is significant, and variations can be identified from the proper population parameters (Berndt, 2020). In the stratified sampling method, data are divided into various smaller groups named strata, according to their unique characteristic. In this case, the current study has seven strata classified into seven top private universities in Malaysia. Then, a random sample from each stratum is proportionately selected to the size of the stratum in the population. The main advantages of using the stratified random sampling method are its' precise estimation for subgroups, precise representation of the group of interest, as well as efficiency of conducting the survey (Acharya et al., 2013). A random number generator will be used to implement a simple random sampling method, selecting a sample from the list of academics within the identified strata before distributing the questionnaire. The major advantage of using simple random sampling is the lack of human bias and its simplicity (Taherdoost, 2016).

Table 3.3.3.1 shows the identified strata, the population of academics, sampling fraction, and required sample size. In order to obtain the sample size in each stratum, a systematic approach was followed utilizing the formula for calculating sampling fractions and sample size. Initially, the population of academics within each stratum was acquired through respective online staff directories. Subsequently, the sampling fraction in each stratum was calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Sampling Fraction (in strata)} = (\frac{n}{N}) \times 100\%$$

Here, n represents the number of academics in the specific stratum, and N denotes the total population of academics across all strata. Following this calculation, the sample size in each stratum was determined using the formula:

$$\text{Sample Size} = \text{Sampling Fraction (in strata)} \times \text{Total Sample Size}$$

Here, the total sample size refers to the desired sample size for the entire study. This formula allowed for the allocation of sample sizes proportional to the population size within each stratum, ensuring a representative sample from each segment of the population. Through the systematic application of these formulas to each stratum, the sample sizes required for the study were derived, ensuring adequate representation of academics across all relevant categories while maintaining statistical rigor and reliability.

Table 3.3.3.1

Sample Selection with Proportionate Stratified Sampling

No	Strata (Private Universities)	Populations of academic	Sampling Fractions in Strata (%)	Sample size in each stratum
1	Universiti Teknologi Petronas	277	5.33	11
2	Sunway University	310	5.96	12
3	University Tenaga National	433	8.33	17
4	University Tunku Abdul Rahman	1245	23.97	48
5	University of Kuala Lumpur	561	10.80	22
6	Multimedia University	617	11.88	24
7	Management and Science University	655	12.61	25
8	Taylor's University	530	10.20	20
9	UCSI University	567	10.91	21
	Total	5195	100%	200

3.3.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

According to the stated strata, the participants were academics employed in Malaysian private universities. The inclusion criterion of the study is (1) female and male academics, (2) not experiencing covid-19 while participating in the survey study, (3) not diagnosed with any mental health issues, and (4) having no physical illness during the survey period. Researchers have found that people admitted due to the Covid-19 virus are more likely to experience psychological distress (i.e., fear, anxiety, stress) (Sahoo et al., 2020). It was also found that having adverse mental health is more likely to induce momentary stress, negative emotional states, and aggressive behaviours (Mofatteh, 2021). Furthermore, Hawkins (2019) claims that the body and mind are connected. Hence, being physically unwell influences emotions (i.e., depression, exhaustion, and irritation). As the study incorporates the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, it posits that maintaining a healthy mental and physical state is essential for preserving personal resources. The exclusion

criteria are those infected with Covid-19, diagnosed with any mental health issues, and physically unwell while participating in the survey. Hobfoll (1989) emphasises that stress occurs when resources are threatened or lost. In these conditions, the ability to leverage personal resources is compromised, which may distort the findings.

3.4 Procedures

3.4.1 Ethical Procedures

The present study has obtained ethical clearance approval prior to conducting the pilot study and actual data collection from UTAR Institute of Postgraduate Study and Research (IPSR) and Scientific and Ethical Review Committee (SERC) under the supervision of Dr. Tan Chi Hau and Dr. T'ng Soo Ting (see Appendix D). This process is to certify that the research procedures and information used are ethical and will produce a beneficial result.

3.4.2 Data Collection Method

The data for this study were gathered through self-administered questionnaires distributed using the online survey tool Qualtrics. The email addresses used for survey dissemination were sourced from the professional email accounts of academic staff. Preceding the distribution of survey links, a total of 5195 email addresses belonging to academic personnel were compiled from the publicly accessible staff directories of nine selected private universities. These directories were openly available to the public. The amassed email addresses were meticulously catalogued within an Excel spreadsheet, facilitating efficient navigation and systematic distribution for subsequent stages of data collection.

The selection process for respondents from each university involved a meticulous approach to ensure fairness and representativeness. After obtaining the email addresses of potential participants, a systematic probability sampling method was employed, utilising a random number generator to perform simple random sampling. This method was chosen to eliminate bias and ensure an unbiased selection process. Executing this sampling technique involved using a random number generator, specifically the Calculator Soup designed by Edward (2023). Each email address in the list was assigned a unique numerical identifier. Random numbers were then generated within the range of these identifiers, ensuring that every email address had an equal chance of being selected.

To enhance the likelihood of obtaining an adequate sample size, the size of the stratum for each university was multiplied by a factor of 3. This multiplication increased the probability of obtaining a sufficient number of respondents from each university, thereby ensuring robust representation. Figure 4 illustrates the process wherein the range for generating random numbers was determined based on the maximum email addresses obtained from each university. The settings of the random number generator were adjusted to generate a list that was three times the size of each stratum, without allowing repeats, and sorted in ascending order for ease of navigation. In each round, the lists are generated separately from each university. Once the list of randomly selected email addresses was generated, the research proceeded to distribute surveys to the selected respondents. This systematic approach ensured that the selection process was fair, unbiased, and methodical, thereby contributing to the

reliability and validity of the research findings. In the initial round, a total of 600 questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents.

Figure 4

Random Number Generator

It was followed up with email reminders once a week for three consecutive weeks. Despite these efforts, upon review after the three-week period, it became evident that the attained sample size did not meet the minimum requirements stipulated by the proportionate stratified sampling method, as outlined in Table 3.3.3.1. In response to this shortfall, the research team initiated another round of data collection. In this new phase, a fresh list of random numbers was generated to select additional respondents. To prevent duplication and ensure the inclusion of new participants, the email addresses of the initial respondents were removed from consideration. This precautionary measure aimed to maintain the integrity of the sampling process and avoid

redundancies in the dataset. Therefore, the current research undertook two rounds of data collection efforts, resulting in the distribution of a total of 1200 questionnaires.

Continuing the data collection process, at the beginning of the online survey, a personal data information statement was attached to safeguard the anonymity of participation, followed by a consent form for research participation and personal data protection to obtain informed consent before answering the actual questionnaires. All participation is voluntary in nature; hence, respondents maintain the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any pressure or consequences. In the event of a decision not to participate or to withdraw, respondents were directed to a sign-out page. These measures are implemented to uphold ethical standards.

3.5 Measurement of Variables

The current study has four instruments namely Perceived Organisational Prestige Scale, Employee Engagement Scale, Psychological Capital Scale and Occupational Expectation Scale. The following will elaborate further on the description of instrument, scoring system, meaning of scores and the original value of reliability and validity.

3.5.1 Perceived Organisational Prestige (POP)

Perceived Organisational Prestige (POP) is developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992) to measure the employee's perception of organisational prestige. The scale consists of 8-items and rated on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 *(strongly disagree)* and 5 *(strongly agree)*. Items 4, 6, 7 and 8 are reversed items. The total score is measured by the summation of all items and

higher scores would indicate that the organisational prestige was perceived positively. The scale was initially published for the use in an educational context for alumnus perspectives. Hence, for the best fit of the study, wording of the items was adjusted to be relevant in the academics' perspectives. Other researchers have also used this scale in other contexts with good reliability such as tourism (Akgunduz & Bardakoglu, 2015), and working adults (smith, 2012). It was reported to have good validity and good reliability with a Coefficient alpha .79 (Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

3.5.2 The Employee Engagement (EE)

The employee engagement (EE) is adopted from a revised Employee Engagement Scale developed by Shuck and Reio (2017). The scale is grounded on Kahn's (1990) operationalised definition of employee engagement. This scale was selected because of its comprehensiveness and its ability to encompass the full spectrum of immediate work experiences while reflecting an active psychological state. The scale considers employees' active involvement in their work, job roles, team dynamics, and overall organisation (Khodakarami et al., 2017). Moreover, the scale also includes an attachment-like state to the organisation but is not specifically defined by it (Shuck & Reio, 2017). The scale consisted of 12 items, with 4 items assigned to each of the three subscales: cognitive, behavioural and emotional. Each item was rated on on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "*strongly disagree*" and 5 indicated "*strongly agree*". The scores are calculated in summation of all items. Higher scores would indicate higher levels of employee engagement. It was reported to have good internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .94$ for

cognitive engagement, α = .91 for behavioural (physical) engagement, and α = .88 for emotional engagement (Shuck & Reio, 2017).

3.5.3 The Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

In this study, a shorter version of the Psychological Capital scale (PsyCap) was utilised, as developed by Avey et al. (2011). This adaptation of the scale, originally devised by Luthans et al. (2007) was used to measure psychological capital, consisting of 12 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale. It evaluates dimensions including efficacy, hope, self-efficacy, and optimism. The decision to opt for this abbreviated version was motivated by its lack of reversed items. The total score is measured by summing up the scores of all items and higher scores would indicate higher positive psychological capital. Hence, the shorter version has three items in each four subscales respectively. It was reported to have good validity and adequate reliability, with a Cronbach alpha of .70.

3.5.4 Career Expectations (CE)

Career expectations (CE) was adopted from the revised Occupation Expectation Scale developed by Kong et al. (2015) which was initially developed by Wu and Li (2001). The scale consist of 18-items and has three subscales. There are four items in Prestige factor, six items in Intrinsic Value factor, and eight items in Extrinsic Value factor. The scale was selected because it aligns with Özek and Ferraris' (2020) operationalised definition of career expectations, in which it manifests the personal, social, and economic dimensions. Furthermore, the scale was widely used in previous studies, especially within the Asian cultures and has demonstrated a high degree of reliability and validity (Guo, 2003; Kong et al., 2015; Kong et al., 2019; Liu,

2009; Wang, 2009). The scale uses a Seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 *(Strongly Disagree)* to 7 *(Strongly Agree)*. The scores are calculated in summation of all items. Higher scores would indicate higher levels of career expectation. The original study shows that the scale has good reliability, with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.935 and validity (Wu & Li, 2001)

3.6 Questionnaire Development

The questionnaires used in the current study were structured into three sections. Section A comprised screening questions designed to assess the inclusion criteria, which included three dichotomous questions related to mental health, physical health, and COVID-19 diagnosis (see Appendix A). Section B gathered demographic information from participants, such as age, gender, years of work experience, job position, organizational tenure, relationship status, estimated income, ethnicity, and religion, through both closed-ended and open-ended questions (see Appendix B). Section C includes four variable instruments as shown in Table 3.6, scilicet, the employee engagement scale, occupational expectation scale, psychological capital scale as well as perceived organisational prestige scale (see appendix C). Upon successfully filling out all the required information and questionnaires, respondents will be directed to a sign-out page accompanied by a thank-you message acknowledging their participation.

Table 3.6

Summary Table of Variables

Type of variable	Name of variable	Items	Sources
Dependent	Employee Engagement	8	Shuck and Reio (2017)
Independent	Perceived Organisational Prestige	12	Mael and Ashforth (1992)
Moderator	Career Expectations	18	Kong et al. (2015)
Mediator	Psychological Capital	12	Avey et al. (2011)

3.6.1 Pre-test

Generally, a questionnaire should not be used in the research field without extensive pretesting. Considering that the author who designed the questionnaire has a differing perspective for the intended context. Subsequently, conducting a pre-test is vital in order to test the questionnaires on a small sample of respondents to identify and eliminate potential problems (Memon et al., 2016). Pre-testing is advantageous for researchers as it helps to provide insights into the overall quality of the formatting, acceptability, and face validity of measurement tools, evaluates whether the items were understood and interpreted correctly, and assesses the appropriateness of the administration method (Richland et al., 2009). Pre-testing is also important to reduce bias, verify uncertainties of meaning in the questionnaires and to improve the quality of the measurement (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016)**.**

A pre-test study, also known as content validity assessment, was carried out prior to the pilot study. Content validity is defined as the extent to which elements of an assessment instrument is representative of the targeted constructs and are relevant to serve the assessment purposes (Cook & Beckman, 2006).

Content validity is a systematic approach for content validation which is vital to ensure the overall validity of an assessment. The elements of an assessment instrument refer to all aspects of the measurement process that can affect the data obtained such as questionnaire items, instructions and response formats. The relevance of an assessment tools refers to the appropriateness of its elements for the targeted constructs and functions of the assessments (Davis, 1992). Another domain tested is the clarity of the assessment tool, which involves determining how clear or ambiguous the wording of the items is (Rodgrigues et al., 2017). Consequently, based on the suggestions, the questionnaires are amended prior to the pilot study and actual data collection.

Current research used an expert review method as a part of pre-testing measure. The selection of individuals to review and critique an assessment tool is based on their expertise in the subject matter being studied. The current study invited two experts as recommended by Davis (1992). The experts were chosen based on their academic and field expertise (i.e., positive psychology and industrial organisation psychology). The panels included an associate professor and an assistant professor from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. The content validation form was sent to the expert's work emails with clear instructions provided to evaluate the questionnaire (Appendix A). In the content validation form, the definition of domains and items representing the domains are clearly provided to the experts. The experts are requested to critically review the items before assigning scores to each item. Experts were also encouraged to provide written feedback to enhance the relevance of the items. All comments were then carefully taken into consideration to further refine the assessment tool. Furthermore, the current study utilised both I-CVI (item-level content validity

index) and S-CVI/Ave (scale-level content validity index based on the average
method) to assess construct validity of expert review (Davis, 1992; Polit et al.,
2007). The definition and formula of content validation used are displayed in
Table 3.6.1.

Table 3.6.1

The definition and formula of I-CVI, S-CVI/AVE and S-CVI/UA

The CVI Indices	Definition	Formula
I-CVI (item-level content validity index)	The proportion of content experts giving item a relevance rating of 3 or 4	I-CVI = (agreed item)/ (number of expert)
S-CVI/Ave (scale-level content validity index based on the average method)	The average of the I-CVI scores for all items on the scale or the average of proportion relevance judged by all experts. The proportion relevant is the average of relevance rating by individual expert.	S-CVI/Ave = (sum of I-CVI scores)/ (number of item) S-CVI/Ave = (sum of proportion relevance rating)/ (number of expert)
S-CVI/UA (scale-level content validity index based on the universal agreement method)	The proportion of items on the scale that achieve a relevance scale of 3 or 4 by all experts. Universal agreement (UA) score is given as 1 when the item achieved 100% experts in agreement, otherwise the UA score is given as 0.	S-CVI/UA = (sum of UA scores)/ (number of item)

Note: the formula is taken as per suggested by Davis (1992), Lynn (1986), Polit & Beck (2006), and Polit et al (2007).

3.6.1.1 Results of Pretest Study

As this current study involved 2 experts, it is recommended that the acceptable CVI values should scores should be at least 0.80 to ensure relevance (Davis, 1992).

3.6.1.1.1 I-CVI Results (relevancy of individual items).

The I-CVI calculations for the relevancy of each item are in Table 3.6.1.1.1. There are fifty-one items in total and the I-CVI scores ranges from 0 to 1. 1 item from POP scored 0, and 3 items from POP scored 0.5. 5 items from EES scored 0.5, and another 5 items from PsyCap scored 0.5. Overall, 37 items scored 1. Majority of the items were considered relevant; however, 13 items scored moderately which indicate it requires revision and one item must be removed.

3.6.1.1.2 S-CVI Results (relevancy of the overall questionnaire)

For POP, the S-CVI/UA = 0.5 and the S-CVI/Ave = 0.7. For EES, the S-CVI/UA = 0.6 and the S-CVI/Ave = 0.8. For PsyCap, the S-CVI/UA = 0.6 and the S-CVI/Ave = 0.8. Lastly for OES, the S-CVI/UA = 1 and the S-CVI/Ave = 1. Overall, the Universal Agreement indicates moderate content validity, while the Average demonstrates high content validity.

Table 3.6.1.1.1

CVI Results

Scale 1: Perceived organisational prestige scale (Mael & Ashforth, 1992)				
Item	Rater 1	Rater 2	Number in Agreement	I-CVI
1	4	4	2	1
2	2	1	0	0
3	4	4	2	1
4	4	4	2	1
5	4	2	1	0.5
6	4	4	2	1
7	4	2	1	0.5
8	4	2	1	0.5
			S-CVI/AVE	0.6875
			TOTAL AGREEMENT	4
			S-CVI/UA	0.5

Scale 2: The Employee Engagement Scale (Shuck et al., 2014)				
Item	Rater 1	Rater 2	Number in Agreement	I-CVI
1	4	3	2	1
2	4	3	2	1
3	4	2	1	0.5
4	4	3	2	1
5	4	1	1	1
6	4	4	2	1
7	4	2	1	0.5
8	4	1	1	0.5
9	4	2	1	0.5
10	4	4	2	1
11	4	2	1	0.5
12	4	4	2	1
			S-CVI/AVE	0.8
			TOTAL AGREEMENT	7
			S-CVI/UA	0.58
Scale 3: Psychological Capital Scale (Luthens et al., 2007)				
Item	Rater 1	Rater 2	Number in Agreement	I-CVI
1	4	4	2	1
2	4	2	1	0.5
3	4	3	2	1
4	4	4	2	1
5	4	1	1	0.5
6	4	4	2	1
7	4	1	1	0.5
8	4	2	1	0.5
9	4	3	2	1
10	4	1	1	0.5
11	4	4	2	1
12	4	4	2	1
			S-CVI/AVE	0.8
			TOTAL AGREEMENT	7
			S-CVI/UA	0.58

Scale 4: Occupational Expectation Scale (Kong et al., 2015)				
Item	Rater 1	Rater 2	Number in Agreement	I-CVI
2	4	3	2	1
3	4	4	2	1
4	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
6	4	4	2	1
7	4	4	2	1
8	4	3	2	1
10	4	4	2	1
11	4	4	2	1
12	4	4	2	1
13	4	3	2	1
14	4	3	2	1
15	4	4	2	1
16	4	4	2	1
17	4	4	2	1
18	4	4	2	1
			S-CVI/AVE	1
			TOTAL AGREEMENT	18
			S-CVI/UA	1

3.6.1.1.3 Clarity Results (Clarity of Overall questionnaire)

The results for clarity are measured using inter-rater reliability (i.e., percent agreement for two judges) as shown in Table 3.6.1.1.3. POP scored 75%, EES scored 100% and PsyCap scored 90% respectively. As the value falls under the acceptable range of the 75% agreement, it indicates excellent clarity (Norcini, 1999). However, CE scored 67% which is moderate, hence indicating the need for improvement.

Table 3.6.1.1.3

Clarity Results

Scale 1: Perceived organisational prestige scale (Mael & Ashforth, 1992)			
Item	Rater 1	Rater 2	Agreement
1	4	3	2
2	3	2	1
3	4	4	2
4	4	4	2
5	4	4	2
6	4	4	2
7	2	3	1
8	4	4	2
		Percent agreement	75%
Scale 2: The Employee Engagement Scale (Shuck et al., 2014)			
Item	Rater 1	Rater 2	Agreement
1	4	4	2
2	4	4	2
3	4	3	2
4	4	4	2
5	4	4	2
6	4	4	2
7	4	4	2
8	4	4	2
9	4	4	2
10	4	4	2
11	4	3	2
12	4	4	2
		Percent agreement	100%
Scale 3: Psychological capital Scale (Luthens et al., 2007)			
Item	Rater 1	Rater 2	Agreement
1	4	2	1
2	4	3	2
3	4	3	2
4	4	3	2
5	4	4	2
6	4	4	2
7	4	1	1
8	4	3	2
9	4	3	2
10	4	1	1
11	4	4	2
12	4	4	2
		Percent agreement	90%

Scale 4: occupational expectation scale kong et al 2015			
Item	Rater 1	Rater 2	Agreement
1	4	2	1
2	4	4	2
3	4	1	1
4	4	2	1
5	4	3	2
6	4	4	2
7	4	4	2
8	4	2	1
9	4	3	2
10	4	2	1
11	4	4	2
12	4	4	2
13	4	4	2
14	4	1	2
15	4	4	1
16	4	4	2
17	4	4	2
18	4	4	2
		percentage agreement	67%

3.6.1.2 Refined Questions

Items that received low CVI scores are being revised accordingly, as suggested by the experts. Items are either removed, refined for clarity or split into separate items that may convey two different meanings. Based on the expert's suggestions, one item from the Perceived Organisational Prestige Scale was removed because it may not measure the intended construct, while another item was rephrased, as seen in Table 3.6.1.2. Item 1 was removed due to overlap with Item 2. Additionally, items from the Employee Engagement Scale were rephrased for clarity purposes, as seen in Table 3.6.1.3. Lastly, one item from the Occupational Expectations Scale was separated into two different items, as it may hold two different meanings, as seen in Table 3.6.1.4.

Table 3.6.1.2

Rewrite Questions for Perceived Organisational Prestige Scale

Item	Before	After
2	It is considered prestigious in the religious community to be a former employee of my company.	Removed
7	A person seeking to advance his or her career in this area of employment should downplay his or her association with my employer. ®	A person seeking to advance his or her career in this area of employment should devalue his or her association with my employer.

Source: Developed for the research

Table 3.6.1.2 displays the original and revised versions of the questions

that has been rewritten for the Perceived organizational Scale.

Table 3.6.1.3

Rewrite question for The Employee Engagement Scale

Item	Before	After
1	I am really focused on my job when I am working.	Removed.
9	I really push myself to work beyond what is expected of me.	I really push myself to work beyond what is expected on me.
11	I often go above what is expected of me to help my team be successful.	I often go above what is expected on me to help my team be successful.

Source: Developed for the research

Table 3.6.1.3 depicts the original and revised versions of the questions

rewritten for Employee Engagement Scale**.**

Table 3.6.1.4

Rewrite questions for The Occupational Expectation Scale

Item	Before	After
10	I expect a fair opportunity and competition in my career.	I expect a fair opportunity in my career. I expect a competition in my career.

Source: Developed for the research

Table 3.6.1.4 shows the original and revised versions of questions that has been rewritten for Occupational Expectation Scale**.**

3.6.2 Pilot Testing

A pilot test is typically a small-scale version of the original study that is conducted prior to the actual data collection (Zikmund et al., 2014). The main purpose of a pilot study is to test the reliability and validity of the scales as well as to refine the methodology (Zikmund et al., 2014). The respondents of the pilot study should be recruited based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, as the pilot study serves as a baseline (Srinivasan & Lohith, 2017). It is also advantageous for researchers, as it helps to assess the feasibility of the research, to identify sample size and gaps, to examine the adequacy of the research instrument as well as to measure potential success and the overall practicality (Srinivasan & Lohith, 2017; Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). Conducting a pilot study also helps to ensure that the actual data collection will achieve a better result (In, 2017). After obtaining ethical approval, 30 academics were recruited randomly from the seven strata through the online platform (i.e., email and Microsoft teams) via an online survey form (i.e., Qualtrics).

The sample size is in accordance with Connelly's (2008) recommendation, whereby it is suggested that the sample size of the pilot study should be at least 10% of the actual sample size. Thus, as the actual study aims to collect 200 respondents, Lewis et al. (2021) recommended at least 30 to 36 samples are required for the sample study. Henceforth, the pilot study successfully gathered data from 30 respondents, utilising convenience sampling methods. The pilot study was conducted among foundation lecturers across the nine universities. It was mandatory for respondents to input their email

addresses in the pilot study survey so that they would be excluded from the actual questionnaire distribution. By selecting participants from specific categories, the pilot study ensured diversity and minimised the risk of data duplication or interference with the main questionnaire distribution process. However, the current study ensured that the pilot study samples adhere to the inclusion and exclusion criteria established for the main study, as recommended by Julious (2005) and Fowler (2013).

Subsequently, the questionnaires were administrated online, comprising all necessary information such as acknowledgement, consent form, three-filter questions, demographic data, and the instruments listed above. IBM SPSS Statistic version 26 software was used to analyse the reliability of the scales. The pilot study's result particularly shows that the Employee Engagement Scale has an inconsistent item. According to Piedmont (2014), the inter-item correlation should range between .20 to .40. However, the results show that the value for item 3 ranges from -0.09 to 0.20 (refer to Appendix F). Nevertheless, other items from other scales are retained. The reliability in Cronbach Alpha for the Perceived Organisational Prestige Scale (POP), Psychological Capital Scale (PsyCap), Employee Engagement Scale (EE), and Occupational Expectancy Scale (OE) were 0.872, 0.875, 0.896 and 0.932 respectively (refer to **Table 3.6.2**). The values are considered high and acceptable for applied research, according to Nunnally (1970).

Table 3.6.2

Reliability Results of Pilot study

Variable	n	Items	Cronbach's α	Comments
Perceived Organizational Prestige	30	7	.872	Good
Psychological Capital	30	12	.875	Good
Employee Engagement	30	11	.896	Good
Career Expectations	30	19	.932	Excellent

Note. n= sample size.

3.7 Data analysis procedures

The current study employed a descriptive analysis via Statistical Package for Social Science (IBM SPSS) version 26 to analyse the collected data of the respondents' as well as reliability and validity of the instruments. SPSS was also used for data preparation in terms of the preliminary data analysis which included outliers, normality, missing data, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. In addition, inferential analysis was obtained by Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) Analysis, via SmartPLS 4 to address the inter-relationships among all variables.

3.7.1 Justification of Using PLS-SEM

The present study utilised Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis, a second-generation regression technique. Although scholars have argued the ultimate suitability of PLS-SEM for exploratory models (Nilzt, 2016), PLS-SEM is also a valuable tool for explanatory models, especially when it involves dealing with complex models (Hair et al., 2017; Hair & Alamer, 2022). Hair et al. (2017) highly recommends researchers to utilise PLS-SEM due to its ability to intricate causal relationships

and mechanisms for non-linear relationships as well as higher-order constructs. According to Dash and Paul (2021), PLS-SEM is a versatile method that is effective in both explanation and prediction. It was connoted that researchers are able to estimate the relationships between multiple latent and observed variables, without facing convergent issues (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2014). Through its bootstrapping procedures, it enables researchers to explore how relationships between variables vary under unprecedented conditions, thus superbly investigating the potential underlying mechanisms. The predictive focus in PLS-SEM marks its cruciality for a complex model. This is in line with the current research's interest, as it incorporates moderated mediation model. The research goal is definite to discover a new insight on employee engagement.

Other than that, PLS-SEM is beneficial for researchers due to its robustness. The technique requires smaller estimates and sample size than covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) which is in line with the current study's preferences (Hair et al., 2014). Additionally, it is robust to violations of normality assumptions (Hair et al., 2017; Hair & Alamer, 2022). Therefore, researchers with limited available data, non-normally distributed data or dealing with behavioural data are privileged to the technique as it still captures a reliable result. PLS-SEM is also known for its flexibility in model specifications (Nilzt, 2016). The technique works effortlessly on both reflective and formative indicators in the measurement models which is practical in the moderated mediation model. However, it is essential to determine the measurement model in PLS-SEM for the appropriate analysis, accurate model specifications and to ensure a sound theoretical and empirical conclusion was

made. Consequently, the current study utilised Confirmatory Tetrad Analysis (CTA-PLS) to determine whether the constructs were reflective or formative. According to Wong (2019), if zero falls between the lower and upper bounds of the adjusted confidence interval, the measurement model is considered reflective. *Appendix I* shows the CTA-PLS results which provides the empirical support to reflective measurement. Table 3.7.1 has summarised the differences of CB-Sem and PLS-SEM.

Table 3.7.1

The differences of CB-sem and PLS-SEM.

Aspect	CB-SEM	PLS-SEM
Analysis Technique	Covariance-based	Partial Least Squares
Suitability	Exploratory models	Exploratory and Explanatory models
Complexity Handling	Effective for less complex models	Valuable for complex models
Sample size requirement	Require larger sample size	Require smaller sample size
Data type	Sensitive to normality assumptions	Robust to normality assumptions violations
Flexibility and model specifications	Limited flexibility in model specifications	Flexible in handling both reflective and formative indicators

3.7.2 Preliminary Data Analysis

Preliminary data analysis should be conducted prior to data analysis to ensure data accuracy and suitability for further hypothesis testing (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The analysis could examine the effectiveness of any manipulations, check the internal reliability of measures, evaluate the distribution of each measure and identify outliers (Bem, 2003). Furthermore, preliminary data analysis of the study also included normality assumption checking to reach the acceptable multivariate normality. Table 3.7.2 shows the tests that were adopted to measure this analysis.

Table 3.7.2

Preliminary Data Analysis

Assessment	Purpose	Analysis Test	Criteria	Reference
Data Cleaning and Filtering	To filter data that does not meet the inclusion criteria and incomplete data	Response rate analysis	Responses that are incomplete and met the exclusion criteria were removed from the dataset	Fincham, 2008
Missing data	To address issues of incomplete data	MCAR test	P > .05	Little (1988)
Multivariate Outliers	To identify and remove inconsistent points	Mahalanobis distance (D²)	Highest D² values (significant) (α) is .001 or .005	Hair et al. (2010) Kline (2011)
Multivariate Normality	To check the normality for each variable	Mardia's multivariate kurtosis and skewness	P > .05	Mardia, 1970
Multicollinearity	To assess the correlation between the variables	Variance Inflation Factor	The benchmark for tolerance is ≤ .10, (VIF) ≥ 10	Hair et al (2010) Pallant (2016)

3.7.3 Measurement Model

Reliability testing determines whether a measure produces consistent results, while validity testing evaluates whether the measure produces accurate results (Field, 2009). Table 3.7.3 illustrates a detailed description of the reliability and validity testing.

Table 3.7.3

Measurement model

Assessment	Purpose	Analysis Test	Criteria	Reference
Internal consistency	To evaluate internal consistency reliability of the variables	Cronbach's alpha	> .70	Nunnally (1978)
		Composite reliability (CR)	> .90 - Good > .80 - Satisfactory > .70 - Acceptable > .60 - Acceptable	Janadari et al. (2018) Fornell & Larcker, (1981) Nunnally & Bernstein, (1994) Hair et al (2014) Hamid (2017)
Factor loading	To examine the estimation relationship between the latent variables and the indicators	Standardized factor loading	Item below .50 must be removed	Hair et al. (2009)
Convergent validity	To evaluate the extent to which an indicator reflects the convergence of a construct in comparison to indicators measuring other constructs.	Average variance extracted (AVE)	> .05	Fornell & Larcker (1981)
Discriminant validity	To evaluate the distinction of one construct to another	Heterotrait-monotrait ratio	HTMT < .85	Hamed (2017) Kline (2011)

3.7.4 Structural Model Evaluation

The analysis of the structural model was conducted first, followed by

the assessment of unidimensionality, validity, and reliability of all constructs

using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hence,

a detailed summary of the correlational, mediating, moderating and moderated

mediation tests are outlined in Table 3.7.4.

Table 3.7.4

Structural Model Evaluation

Assessment	Purpose	Analysis Test	Criteria	Reference
Path coefficient	To assess relationships		From -1 to +1 -1 - negative relationships +1 – positive relationships	Hair et al. (2014)
t- statistics	To assess the significance of structural path of the hypothesized direction	Bootstrapping procedure at 95% confidence interval	t-value > 1.96, $p < .05$	Hair et al. (2017)
Coefficient of determination (R 2)	To measure of how much variability is accounted for by the exogenous observed variables on the endogenous variables	R^2	.75 – substantial .50 - moderate .25 - weak	Henseler et al. (2009)
Cohen's indicator	To measure the effect size	F^2	.02 – small .15 – medium .35 - large	Cohen (1988)
Stone Geisser's Indicator	To determine the accuracy of adjusted model	Q^2	> 0	Hair et al. (2017)

Mediation Analysis	To access the significance of direct and indirect effects	Bootstrapping procedure at 95% confidence interval	t-value > 1.96	Preacher and Hayes (2008)
			Full mediation: Significant indirect effects, insignificant direct effects	
			Partial mediation: Significant direct and indirect effect	
			No mediation: Non-significant direct and indirect effects	
Moderation analysis	To access the conditional direct and indirect effects of moderator	Bootstrapping procedure at 95% confidence interval for conditional effects	Moderator has significant effects on the direct relationship of X and Y	Hayes, 2013
Moderated mediation analysis			Moderated mediation has significant indirect effects.	
			Partial moderated mediation has significant indirect effect of X on Y through Mediator by Moderator	

3.8 Conditional Mediation Model

The CoMe analysis model, abbreviated for Conditional Mediation model, integrates mediation and moderation techniques to investigate how mediated connections function, in response to contextual factors, limitations, or individual distinctions (Cheah et al., 2021). Scholars contend that CoMe

analysis enhances PLS-SEM by enabling robustness checks, predictive assessments, and improved interpretations of analyses (Chin et al., 2020; Hair, 2020; Shmueli et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2019, 2021). Moreover, it facilitates the determination of interaction terms, assessing both the rate of change and the magnitude of relationships (Cheah et al., 2021).

The CoMe model overcomes the constraints of sequential methods by facilitating the analysis of intricate interrelationships and accounting for measurement errors often present in multi-item measurements (Hayes & Scharkow, 2013). However, the role of the index of moderated mediation (the CoMe index) in PLS-SEM applications and its assessment has not been fully explored (Hair et al., 2022). The CoMe index assesses how the moderator impacts a mediated relationship (Hayes, 2015). A significant CoMe index indicates that the conditional mediated effect may vary in strength or direction based on the moderator's value. As previously discussed, CoMe analysis examines the influence of contextual factors or boundaries on mediated relationships, particularly when a moderator interacts with one or more paths in the mediation (Hayes, 2017, 2018).

Within a CoMe model, the independent variable X affects the dependent variable Y through one or more mediators M, with the relationship influenced by one or more moderators, W and/or Z (Hayes, 2017, 2018). The CoMe effect captures the mediation of X's effect on Y through M, dependent on the moderator W (Hayes, 2017). When the moderator is continuous, an index analysis is required to measure how the relationship changes. This index, the index of moderated mediation, quantifies the linear connection between the

indirect effect and the moderator (Hayes, 2015). Therefore, the present study utilizes the CoMe model for slope analysis.

To formally test the CoMe effect, Hayes (2018) proposed the following equation:

$$\omega = p1 \cdot p2 + p1 \cdot p5 \cdot W$$

The coefficient "$p1 \cdot p2$" reflects the relationships between the mediator and the variables X and Y, while W represents the moderator. A significant "$p1 \cdot p5$" index indicates that the moderated mediation effect of X on Y through M is influenced by W, with "$p1 \cdot p5$" representing the slope of the mediated effect, depending on ω, the CoMe index (Hayes, 2015; Morgan-Lopez & MacKinnon, 2006). The CoMe index (ω) can be readily acquired from the path coefficient output produced by any PLS-SEM software.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the detailed plan and process of the research method and research paradigm employed in this study. The present study adopted quantitative techniques and a cross-sectional research design to achieve the research objectives. An online questionnaire was developed and underwent both a pre-test and pilot study. The sampling frame of the study involved academics employed in the seven selected Malaysian private universities. The chapter has discussed the procedures of data screening, and data analysis by using IBM SPSS version 26 and SmartPLS 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the details of the gathered data on the survey "the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement with the influence of psychological capital and career expectations among academics in the Malaysian private universities". All data were entered into SPSS version 26 software to analyse the demographic profile of the respondents, descriptive data of the variables and preliminary analysis. After data cleaning, the dataset was then inputted into Smart PLS 4 software to analyse both the measurement model and the structural model. The results of the hypothesis are summarised in this chapter.

4.2 Response Rate

The survey was conducted across seven distinct strata, comprising Multimedia University, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Sunway University, University of Kuala Lumpur, Management and Science University, University Technology Petronas, and Universiti Tenaga National. Online questionnaires were employed to collect responses. Over a period of approximately eight months, from November 17, 2022, to July 1, 2023, a total of 1200 questionnaires were distributed to participants within these strata. Based on the formula pioneered by Mitchell (1989), the response rate is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Response Rate } (\%) = \left(\frac{Total\ number\ of\ returned\ questionnaires}{total\ number\ of\ distributed\ questionnaire} \right) \times 100$$

Following the data collection phase, the responses underwent meticulous examination using SPSS software. Out of the 1200 questionnaires distributed,

568 were returned, yielding a response rate of 47.33%. Among the returned questionnaires, 323 were deemed suitable for analysis. However, 226 incomplete questionnaires and 19 responses failing to meet the predetermined criteria were excluded from the analysis. These exclusions included 8 respondents with documented mental health issues, 3 with physical health concerns, and 3 individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 at the time of survey completion.

The response rate of 47.33% is considered acceptable, aligning with the findings of prior studies that reported relatively low response rates for online surveys in educational-related fields. For instance, Wu et al. (2022) found an average response rate of 44.1%, and Neil et al. (2020) reported response rates of 39.72% for a mixed-method survey among educators. The current response rate, therefore, falls within a comparable range and supports the validity of the collected data. Table 4.1 displayed the response rate in detail.

Table 4.1

Response Rate Analysis

Response	Frequency
Number of distributed questionnaires	1200
Retrieved Questionnaires	568
Removed Questionnaires - Incomplete response (226) - Diagnosed with mental health issues (8) - Diagnosed with physical health issues (8) - Diagnosed with COVID-19 upon answering questionnaire (3)	245
Retrieved and usable	323
Questionnaires not returned	532
Response Rate	47.33%

Source: Developed for present research

4.3 Demographic Profile

The sample consisted of 323 academic staff from various Malaysian private universities, with ages ranging from 29 to 60 years (M = 40.83, SD = 7.256). The gender distribution comprised a higher proportion of female respondents (n = 180, 55.7%) compared to male respondents (n = 143, 44.3%). In terms of ethnicity, the majority of participants were Chinese (n = 157, 48.6%), followed by Malays (n = 113, 35.0%), Indians (n = 39, 12.1%), and other minority groups (n = 14, 4.3%). Marital status revealed that 59.1% were married (n = 191), 36.2% were single (n = 117), and 3.4% were divorced (n = 11), with 1.2% identifying other statuses (n = 4). Regarding teaching experience, 7.1% of respondents had less than 3 years of experience (n = 23), 9.6% had between 3 to 5 years of experience (n = 31), 30.3% had between 5 to 8 years of experience (n = 98), and 52.9% had 10 or more years of teaching

experience (n = 171). In terms of educational qualifications, 7.1% of respondents held a bachelor's degree (n = 23), 0.6% held professional qualifications (n = 2), 39.0% held a master's degree (n = 126), and the majority, 52.3%, held a doctorate (n = 169).

The teaching disciplines represented were predominantly in the social sciences (n = 148, 45.8%), followed by education and teaching (n = 42, 13.0%), engineering (n = 40, 12.4%), and pure science and technology (n = 33, 10.2%), with smaller representations in medicine-related fields (n = 24, 7.8%) and other specialised areas. Regarding job titles, the largest group comprised lecturers (n = 140, 43.3%), followed by senior lecturers (n = 73, 22.6%), and associate professors (n = 57, 17.6%). In terms of income, 53.9% of respondents (n = 174) reported earning between RM 5001 and RM 8000 per month, while 11.8% (n = 38) earned less than RM 5000, and 22.3% (n = 72) earned between RM 8001 and RM 10,000. With regard to religious affiliation, the majority identified as Muslim (n = 123, 38.1%), followed by Buddhists (n = 106, 32.8%), Christians (n = 49, 15.2%), and Hindus (n = 32, 9.9%), with 4.0% (n = 13) reporting other religions. Finally, the respondents were distributed across universities, with the largest group from UTAR (n = 79, 24.5%), followed by MSU (n = 40, 12.4%), MMU (n = 35, 10.8%), and Sunway (n = 27, 8.4%).

Table 4.2

Demographic Profile

		Frequency (n = 323)	%
Gender	Male	143	44.3
	Female	180	55.7
Ethnicity	Malay	113	35.0
	Chinese	157	48.6

	Indian	39	12.1
	Others	14	4.3
Marital Status	Single	117	36.2
	Married	191	59.1
	Divorced	11	3.4
	Others	4	1.2
Years Of Teaching	Less Than 3 Years	23	7.1
	Less Than 5 Years	31	9.6
	Less Than 8 Years	98	30.3
	10 Or More Than 10 Years	171	52.9
Educational Level	Bachelor's Degree	23	7.1
	Professional courses	2	0.6
	Master's Degree	126	39.0
	Doctorate Degree	169	52.3
	Others	3	0.9
Teaching Field	Medicine Related	24	7.8
	Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, agro-industry and veterinary	4	1.2
	Education And Teaching	42	13.0
	Pure Science and technology	33	10.2
	Social Science	148	45.8
	Law	3	0.9
	Humanity, religious	3	0.9
	Engineer	40	12.4
	Fine art and applied arts	2	0.6
	Others	24	7.4
Job Title	Lecturer	140	43.3
	Assistant Lecturer	13	4.0
	Senior Lecturer	73	22.6
	Assistant Professor	23	7.1
	Associate Professor	57	17.6
	Professor	14	0.9
	Senior Professor	3	.9
	Others	0	0
Income per month	Less Than RM 5000	38	11.8
	RM 5001-RM 8000	174	53.9
	RM 8001-RM 10000	72	22.3
	RM 10001 Or more	39	12.1
Religion	Buddhism	106	32.8
	Christianity	49	15.2
	Islam	123	38.1
	Hinduism	32	9.9
	Others	13	4.0
University	UTP	22	6.8
	Sunway	27	8.4
	Uniten	28	8.7
	UTAR	79	24.5

UniKL	30	9.3
MMU	35	10.8
MSU	40	12.4
Taylors University	34	10.5
UCSI University	28	8.7

Note. N=sample. UTP = Universiti Teknologi Petronas, UNITEN = Universiti Tenaga Nasional, UTAR = Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, UniKl = University of Kuala Lumpur, MMU = Multimedia University, MSU = Management and Science University.

4.4 Preliminary Analysis

Data were cleaned appropriately prior to analysis to ensure the validity and reliability. Missing data, multivariate outlier, data normality and multicollinearity tests were performed by using IBM SPSS Software version 26.

4.4.1 Missing data

Missing data occurs when respondents, either unintentionally or intentionally overlook one or more questions in the questionnaire. The present study utilises Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test (Little, 1998) in order to analyse missing values effectively. Table 4.3.1 shows the result of the MCAR test, which reflected 0% of missing data issues.

Table 4.3.1

MCAR Test

Variable	N	Missing	
		Count	Percentage
Perceived organisational prestige	323	0	0
Psychological capital	323	0	0
Employee engagement	323	0	0
Career expectations	323	0	0

Source: Developed for research.

4.4.2 Outliers

An outlier is characterised as an anomalous observation that significantly deviates from the remaining data points (Aggarwal, 2015). In this particular investigation, outliers were identified by utilising the z-score and Mahalanobis distance. According to Hair et al. (2017), a z-score value should not exceed 4, and the Mahalanobis probability must be greater than ($p < 0.001$), to be considered within the norm. Consequently, the present study discovered that the case with ID 25, 27 and 28 did not adhere to the established criteria and was accordingly excluded from the study, resulting in a sample size of 320 remaining subjects for analysis.

Table 4.4.2

Multivariate outlier

Case ID	Mahalanobis distance (D²)	P-value	Decision
27	48.099	.00000	Removed
28	38.909	.00000	Removed
25	23.089	.00000	Removed

4.4.3 Data Normality

Normality signifies the shape of the data distribution for each variable and its correspondence to the recommended benchmark of normal distribution (Hair et al., 2010). The current study applied skewness and kurtosis to access normality as recommended by Hair et al. (2010) and Kline (2011). In general, the distribution value for skewness and kurtosis are considered normal if the value falls between the range of -1 to +1 (Field, 2009). Based on table 4.3.3, all the variables except Employee Engagement Scale did not fall between the said benchmarks. However, according to Kline (2011), the absolute value of skewness greater than three and kurtosis value greater than ten indicate

abnormal distribution. Bryne (2010) and Curran et al. (1996) argued that skewness values ranging from -2 to +2 and kurtosis values between -7 to +7 indicate moderate normality when assessing multivariate normality. Consequently, the acceptable range of skewness are -3 to +3. Consequently, all items in the study falls within the acceptable range.

Table 4.4.3

Results of Skewness and Kurtosis

Variables	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Perceived organisational prestige	3.812	-.225	-.307
Psychological capital	5.585	-.001	.169
Employee engagement	5.419	-.491	1.048
Career expectations	21.413	-2.040	4.252

Source: Developed for research.

4.5 Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)

The study employed a two-step analysis encompassing both the measurement model and structural model, conducted through the utilisation of the Partial Least Squares (PLS) Algorithm as proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). All hypotheses were subjected to testing during this stage. The SmartPLS 4 software was employed to execute all the tests. Subsequent sections will provide a comprehensive presentation of the data analysis.

4.5.1 The Measurement Model

In the initial phase of analysis, referred to as the measurement model or outer model validation, rigorous examination was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the constructs (Lin et al., 2007; Scott & Walczak, 2009). The establishment of the models depended on the satisfactory assessment of these scores. The strength of the measurement model was assessed by

evaluating convergent, construct, and discriminant validities, as well as composite reliability for each indicator (Ramayah et al., 2011). Additionally, a reliability test was employed to determine the consistency of the instrument, while a validity test was conducted to assess the accuracy of the instrument in relation to its intended purpose (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

4.5.1.1 Internal Consistency Reliability

Composite reliability is defined as the ratio of the total variance of the latent constructs to the sum of the variance of the latent variables and the error variance (Bacon et al., 1995). It is commonly used to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scale. A higher value of composite reliability indicates a better reliability of the measurement scale. Although various researchers hold diverse perspectives on the rule of thumb, in most cases, a value above 0.70 is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2014; Hamid, 2017; Janadari et al., 2018; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Alternatively, Janadari et al. (2018) and Fornell and Larcker (1981) argued that a value of 0.6 is also considered acceptable. Consequently, the values of Composite Reliability for perceived organisational prestige, employee engagement, psychological capital, and career expectations are .864, .936, .929, and .972, respectively (see Table 4.4.1.3). Therefore, these values have been empirically proven to achieve high internal consistency reliability.

4.5.1.2 Outer Loading

Outer loading discusses the correlation between an observed variable and its latent constructs. It signifies how well each of the observed variable represent the underlying constructs (Hair et al., 2014). Generally, higher outer loading represents a higher reliability of the observed variable. However, the

general criterion underlined that an outer loading higher than 0.5 are considered acceptable and necessary for practical significance (Hair et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2014). Researchers are recommended to remove items with outer loading values below 0.5, only if the deletion of items could aid in increasing in the composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted (Hair et al., 2014). Furthermore, according to Hair (2017), item deletion should not exceed 20% of the total indicators. Consequently, POP7R has been deleted to improve the measurement model (see Table 4.4.1.3). It is noteworthy that the total percentage of item deletion in the current research amounts to 2.04% out of the initial 49 items.

4.5.1.3 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity measures whether the indicators of the same constructs are positively correlated with each other (Janadari et al., 2018). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is used to determine the convergent validity, with a minimum recommended value of greater than 0.5 (Fornell and David, 1981). Table 4.4.1.3 showed that all constructs excluding Career Expectations has met the threshold value. However, convergent validity can be verified by multiple assessment such as the composite reliability (CR), AVE and factor loadings (Safiih &Azreen, 2016). This is supported by Fornell and David (1981), who argued that the AVE value of 0.4 is acceptable with the condition that the CR is greater than 0.6 and factor loading is within the range of 0.4 to 0.7. Subsequently, the convergent validity of all constructs is acceptable.

Table 4.4.1.3

Factor Loading, Cronbach Alpha, CR, and AVE

Latent variable	Item Code	Indicator reliability	Internal Consistency Reliability		Convergent Validity
		Factor Loading (> .50)	Cronbach's Alpha (α ≥ .70)	CR (≥ .70)	AVE (≥ 0.50)
POP	POP1	.792			
	POP2	.839			
	POP3R	.701			
	POP4	.796	.819	.864	.520
	POP5R	.638			
	POP6R	.506			
	POP7R	Dropped			
PsyCap	PsyCap1	.730			
	PsyCap2	.725			
	PsyCap3	.795			
	PsyCap4	.681			
	PsyCap5	.748			
	PsyCap6	.780	.916	.929	.523
	PsyCap7	.759			
	PsyCap8	.643			
	PsyCap9	.577			
	PsyCap10	.626			
	PsyCap11	.726			
	PsyCap12	.746			
EE	EES1	.683			
	EES2	.679			
	EES3	.767			
	EES4	.771			
	EES5	.831			
	EES6	.771	.924	.928	.571
	EES7	.786			
	EES8	.732			
	EES9	.826			
	EES10	.727			
	EES11	.721			
CE	CE1	.701			
	CE2	.756			
	CE3	.582			
	CE4	.589			
	CE5	.844	.970	.972	.646
	CE6	.832			
	CE7	.862			
	CE8	.880			
	CE9	.895			

| Latent variable | Item Code | Reliability | | | Validity |
| | | Indicator reliability | Internal Consistency Reliability | | Convergent Validity |
		Factor Loading (> .50)	Cronbach's Alpha (α ≥ .70)	CR (≥ .70)	AVE (≥ 0.50)
CE	CE10	.878			
	CE11	.777			
	CE12	.825			
	CE13	.861			
	CE14	.839			
	CE15	.829			
	CE16	.791			
	CE17	.783			
	CE18	.827			

Note. CR= Composite Reliability Deviation, AVE= Average Variance Extracted, CE= Career Expectations, EE= Employee Engagement, PsyCap= Psychological Capital, POP= Perceived Organizational Prestige.

4.5.1.4 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is used to examine whether the extent of different constructs is distinct from one another. The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) is utilised to access the discriminant validity, ensuring that each construct do not excessively overlap and that each construct measures different dimensions. According to Kline (2011), the HTMT ratio must be below 0.85. Ergo, as shown in Table 4.4.1.4, the values of HTMT ratio for employee engagement, career expectations, perceived organisational prestige and psychological capital are lesser than 0.85, which indicates that the items highly load with their constructs.

Table 4.4.1.4

The results of HTMT Ratio

		Discriminant Validity			
	EE	CE	POP	PSYCAP	CE x POP
EES					
OES	.229				
POP	.652	.125			
PsyCap	.824	.181	.726		
CE x POP	.378	.158	.210	.442	
CE x PsyCap	.471	.053	.254	.502	.781

Source: Developed for research. POP = Perceived Organizational Prestige, PsyCap = Psychological Capital, EE = Employee Engagement, CE = Career Expectations.

Figure 5

Structural Equation Modelling (PLS Algorithm)
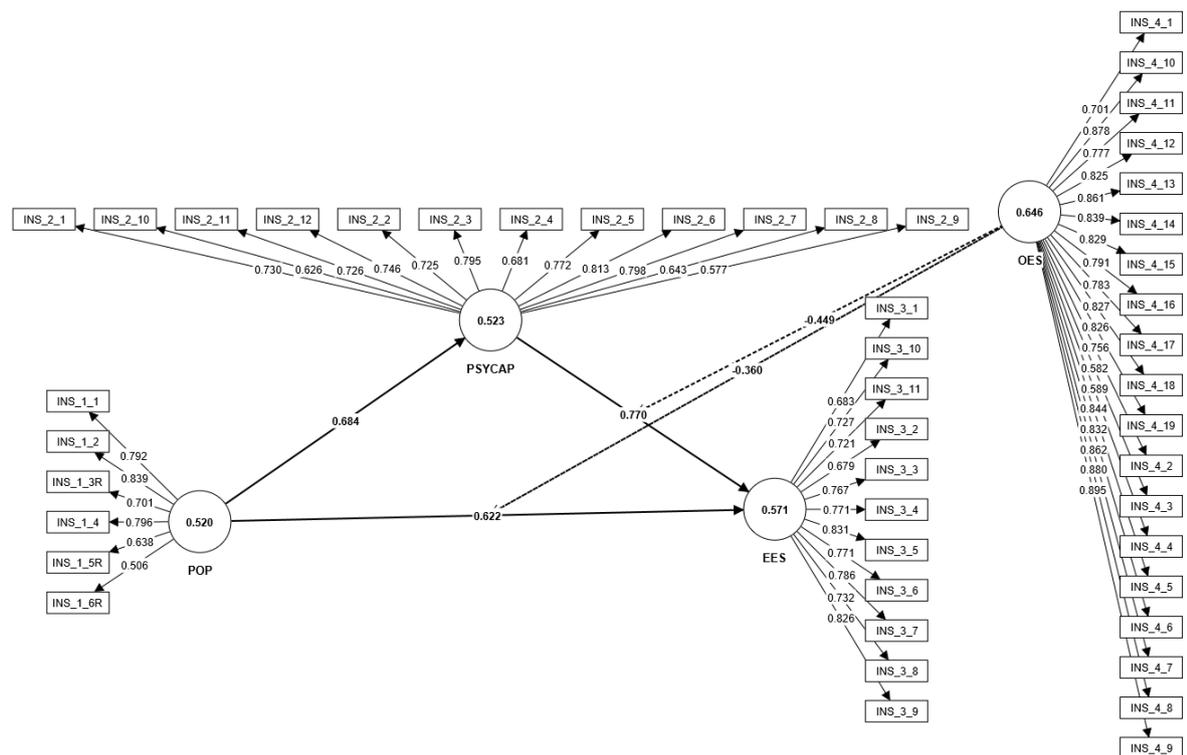
4.5.2 The Structural Model

Subsequent to validating the measurement model, the structural model was examined to measure the relationships between variables. It is examined

through SmartPLS 4 by using the bias-corrected bootstrapping method (5000 subsamples) of the path coefficient of indicator and level of significance (Hair et al., 2017).

4.5.2.1 Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity refers to the absence of correlations between the variables (Saunders et al., 2016). A Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test was performed to access multicollinearity issues in the study. According to Pallant (2016) and Hair et al. (2010), if the VIF value falls outside the ranges of -10 to +10, it is considered problematic and shall be removed from the study. However, table 4.4.1.5 statistically proved that all variables are free from multicollinearity issues.

Table 4.4.1.5

Multicollinearity

Variables	VIF (-10 to +10)	Collinearity issues
POP	1.591	No
PsyCap	1.591	No
CE	1.000	No

Source: Developed for research. CE= Career Expectations, PsyCap= Psychological Capital, POP= Perceived Organizational Prestige.

4.5.2.2 Path Coefficient

The structural measurement PLS-SEM test was performed to answer 6 research questions as mentioned in Chapter 1. The results of direct effects are concluded in Table 4.4.2.2, explaining each path's hypothesis and level of significance. The results have shown that perceived organisational prestige ($\beta = 0.181$, $p < .001$) and psychological capital ($\beta = 0.573$, $p < .001$) were positively related to employee engagement. Whilst, perceived organisational prestige ($\beta = 0.933$, $p < .001$) were also positively related to psychological capital. Therefore,

H1, H2, and H3 are supported. Thus, this addresses the first, second and third research questions.

Table 4.4.2.2

Results of Direct Effects

H	Relationships	Beta	T-statistics	P-value	Decision
H1	POP → EE	0.181	4.044	0.000	Supported
H2	POP → PsyCap	0.573	10.302	0.000	Supported
H3	PsyCap → EE	0.933	10.220	0.000	Supported

Source: Developed for research. EE= Employee Engagement, PsyCap= Psychological Capital, POP= Perceived Organizational Prestige.

4.5.2.3 Coefficient of Determination, Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

The Coefficient of Determination, also known as R^2 is a statistical measure used to assess the goodness of fit of a regression model (Henseler et al., 2009). It quantifies the extent to which the predictors explain the variation in the outcome variable. The R^2 value ranges between 0 and 1, where 0 indicates no explanation of variability and 1 indicates perfect predictive accuracy. A higher R^2 value signifies a better fit of the data; however, interpretations may vary among researchers based on the field of study. In the international marketing context, Henseler et al. (2009) proposed the rule of thumb that values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 are considered weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively.

In Table 4.4.2.3, the R^2 values exceeding 0.25 suggest that a moderate portion of the variation in human behaviour can be accounted for by the factors analysed in the study. For instance, a value of 0.427 indicates that 42.7% of the

variation in psychological capital can be attributed to variations in perceived organisational prestige and career expectations, while a value of 0.591 indicates that 59.1% of the variation in employee engagement can be attributed to variations in perceived organisational prestige and career expectations.

Furthermore, the F^2 value is crucial for effect size interpretations as it indicates the significance and insignificance of the effects. Cohen (1988) and Cohen et al. (2003) argued that F^2 values in human behaviour studies tend to be lower due to the inherent difficulty in accurately predicting human behaviour. Cohen (1992) suggested F^2 values of 0.02, 0.13, and 0.26, denoting small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. In Table 4.4.2.3, the effect sizes of F^2 values are presented. The results indicate a small effect size for the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement, whereas the relationships between psychological capital and employee engagement, as well as perceived organisational prestige and psychological capital, show large effect sizes.

Additionally, the Stone-Geisser indicator, also known as predictive relevance (Q^2), was utilised to assess the model's predictive quality by using a blindfolding procedure. To be considered acceptable, the Q^2 value must exceed 0 (Hair et al., 2017). In Table 4.4.2.4, Q^2 values greater than 0 indicate that the research model exhibits good predictive relevance.

Table 4.4.2.3

Coefficients of Determinations, and Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

Predictors	Outcome	R^2	F^2	Effect size
POP			0.062	Small
CE	EES	0.633	0.039	Small
PsyCap			0.337	Large
POP	PsyCap	0.468	0.880	Large

Source: Developed for research. CE= Career Expectations, EE= Employee Engagement, PsyCap= Psychological Capital, POP= Perceived Organizational Prestige.

Table 4.4.2.4

Coefficients of Predictive Relevance

Predictors	Q^2	Predictive relevance
EES	0.349	Good
CE	0.252	Good
POP	0.169	Good
PsyCap	0.238	Good

Source: Developed for research. CE= Career Expectations, EE= Employee Engagement, PsyCap= Psychological Capital, POP= Perceived Organizational Prestige.

4.6 Mediation Analysis

Subsequently, bootstrapping analysis for mediation test was performed to answer H4 and the fourth research question. The significant results of both direct effect (H1) and indirect effect (H3) confirms a partial mediation. Consequently, Table 4.5 points out that psychological capital partially mediates the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.535$, $p < .001$). Therefore, H4 is supported, addressing the fourth research question.

Table 4.5

Results of mediation analysis

H	Path	B	SD	95% Ci	T-value	P-value	Decision
H4	POP → PsyCap → EES	0.535	0.046	[0.357, 0.664]	7.199	0.000	Supported

Source: Developed for research. POP= Perceived Organizational Prestige, PsyCap = Psychological Capital, EES= Employee Engagement

4.7 Moderation Analysis

The analysis of the present study reveals a significant indirect influence of career expectations (β = -0.80, *p* = 0.029) on the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement, as presented in Table 4.6. Figure 6 illustrates a simple slope representing the moderating effect of career expectations. Consequently, the results provide support for Hypothesis 5, suggesting that career expectations mitigate the correlation between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement.

Table 4.6

Results of Moderation Effects

H	Relationships	B	SD	T-statistics	P-value	Decision
H5	CE x POP → EE	-0.80	0.36	2.189	0.029	Supported

Source: Developed for research. CE= Career Expectations, EE= Employee Engagement, PsyCap= Psychological Capital, POP= Perceived Organizational Prestige.

Figure 6

Moderating effect of Career Expectations (Simple Slope)

4.8 Moderated Mediation Effect

Additionally, the findings indicate a significant conditional indirect influence of career expectations on employee engagement, as presented in Table 4.7. The result is obtained via Process Macro by performing bootstrapping procedure with 5000 subsamples at 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the index value of career expectations for moderated effect is significant (index = -0.035, SE = 0.010), 95% CI (-0.051, -0.02). The results revealed that higher levels of career expectations on the indirect effect of POP on EE through PsyCap (path = 0.509, t = 5.761, $p < .000$) is lower in comparison to the indirect effect at low career expectations (path = 0.655, t = 7.466, $p < .000$). Figure 3

illustrates the path notation for the conditional indirect effect of career expectations as adapted from the Hayes' moderated mediation model 15. Consequently, the results support Hypothesis 6 whereby there is an interaction impact of career expectation between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement on psychological capital.

Figure 7

Statistical Model
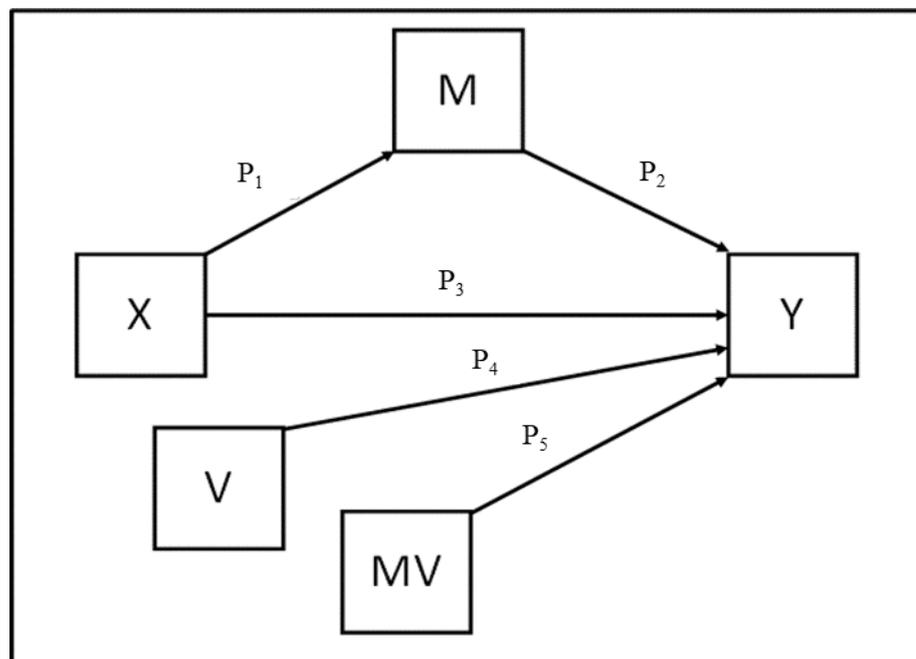
Source: Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach (Hayes, 2017).

Within the CoMe model, the central focus lies in investigating the influence of the moderator (CE) on the mediated effect (p1 · p2) (see figure 7). Initially, the index of moderated mediation, also referred to as the CoMe index (ω) (Hayes, 2015), is computed using the equation 'p1 · p5' or (POP > PsyCap x CE*PsyCap > EE). To explore interaction effects, the bootstrapping outputs of specific indirect effects (i.e., p1 – p5) are computed by SmartPLS.

Subsequently, using an Excel Spreadsheet, these interactions are multiplied (p1

· p5). Upon estimation, the resulting outcomes reveal a significant index (β = -

0.03, t-value = -3.31, p <.001), indicating significance as the t-value exceeds

1.96. Moreover, the findings support the use of the continuous moderator, as the

confidence interval excludes zero (95% CI: -0.051 to -0.020). Figure 8 displays

the summarised outcome of the statistical analysis.

Figure 8

Path Notation
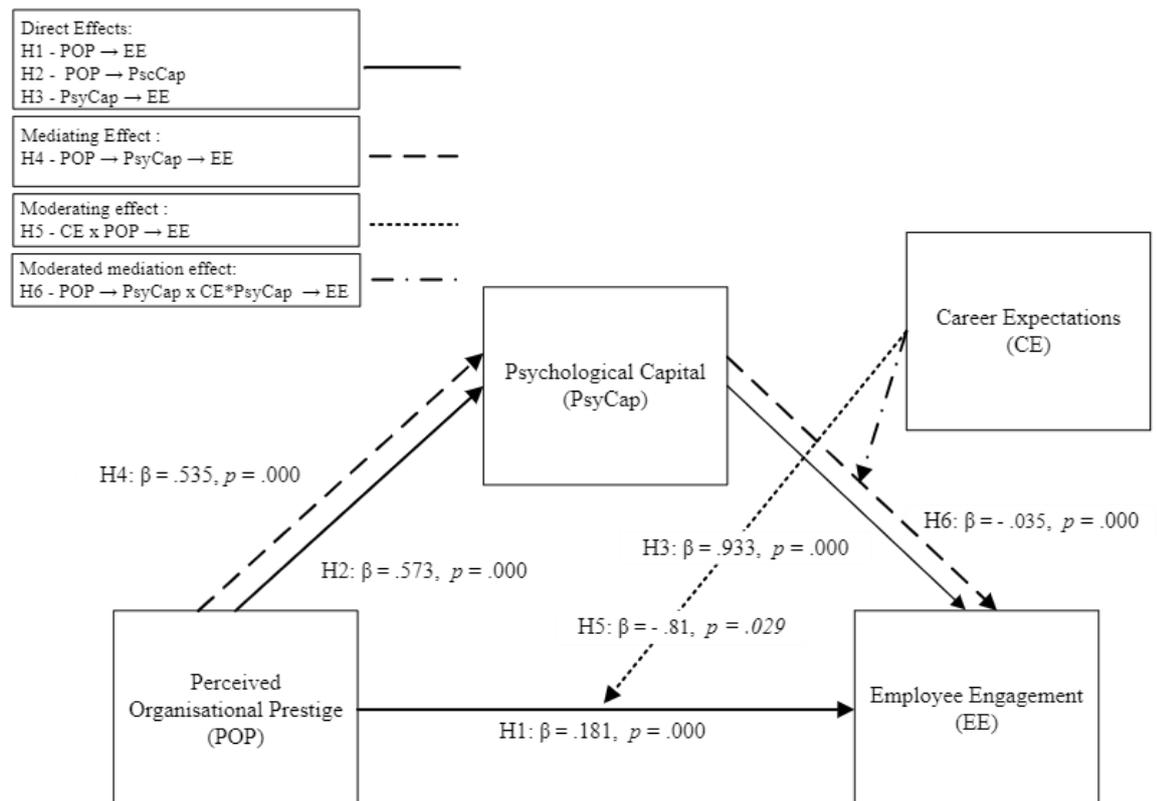
Table 4.7

Results of Moderated mediation Effects

Relationships	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Confidence interval Low/high	P-value
Direct effect: X → M	.181	.535	[.357/.664]	0.000
Indirect Effect: X → M → Y				
POP → PsyCap → EE				
Probing Moderated Indirect Relationships				
Low level of career expectations		.655	[.549/.753]	0.000
High Level of career expectations		.509	[.366/.646]	0.000
Mean Level of career expectations		.582	[.466/.696]	0.000
Index of moderated mediation		-.035	[-.051/ -.02]	0.000

Source: Developed for research. POP = Perceived Organizational Prestige,
PsyCap = Psychological Capital, EE = Employee Engagement, CE = Career
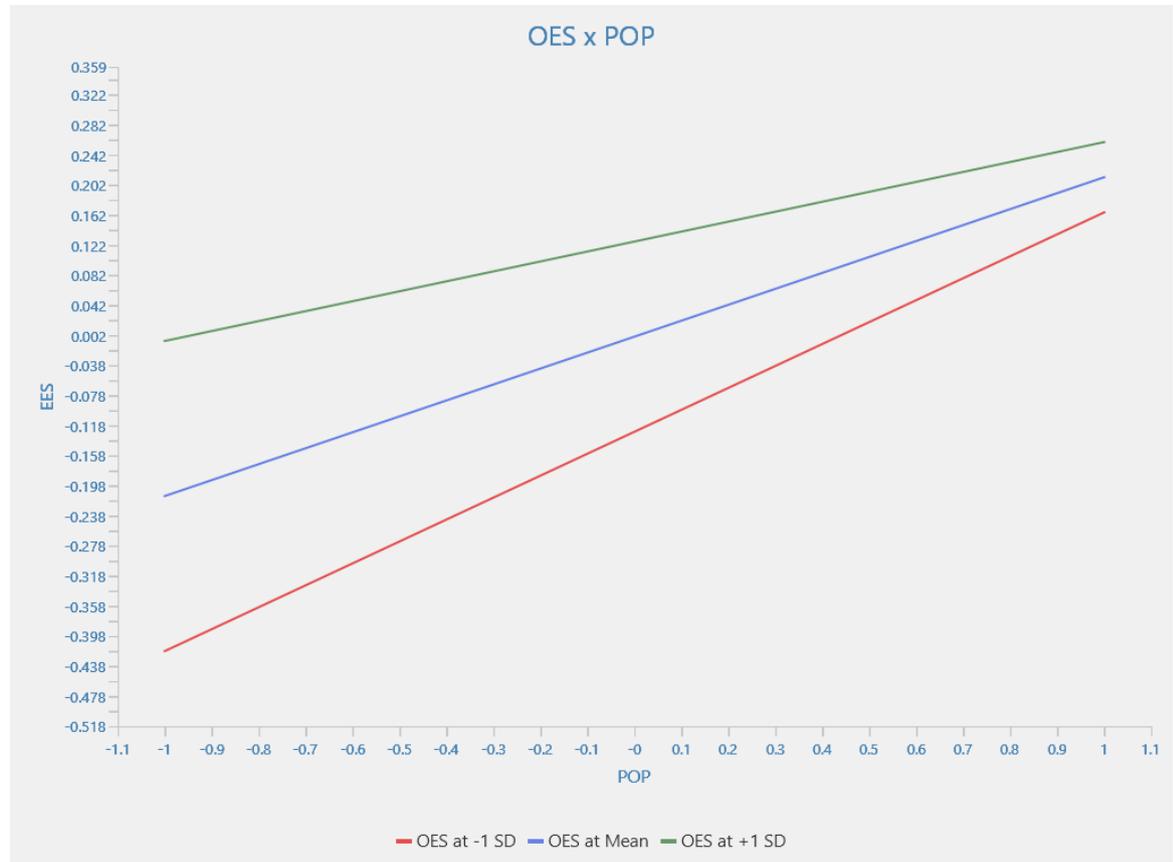Expectations.

Moreover, this study aims to investigate the change in rate (slope analysis) by examining various levels of CoMe effects at low, mean, and high levels of the moderator. CoMe effects are computed using an Excel spreadsheet, applying equations provided by Cheah et al. (2021) which involve multiplying the percentile bootstrap confidence interval. The CoMe effects for low, medium, and high levels are determined as follows:

CoMe effect (low) = [(p1 + (p5 · - SD of W)) · p2]

CoMe effect (medium) = [(p1 + (p5 · SD of 0 for W)) · p2]

CoMe effect (high) = [(p1 + (p5 · + SD of W)) · p2]

Subsequently, the computed CoMe effect results at different levels are incorporated into the data of the graph (refer to Figure 9).

Figure 9

Conditional Indirect Effect of Career Expectations

	-21.413	0	21.413
Indirect Effect (IE)	1.813	0.5364	-0.741
Lower Bound	1.139038	0.417353	-1.38898
Upper Bound	2.5192	0.649527	-0.17026
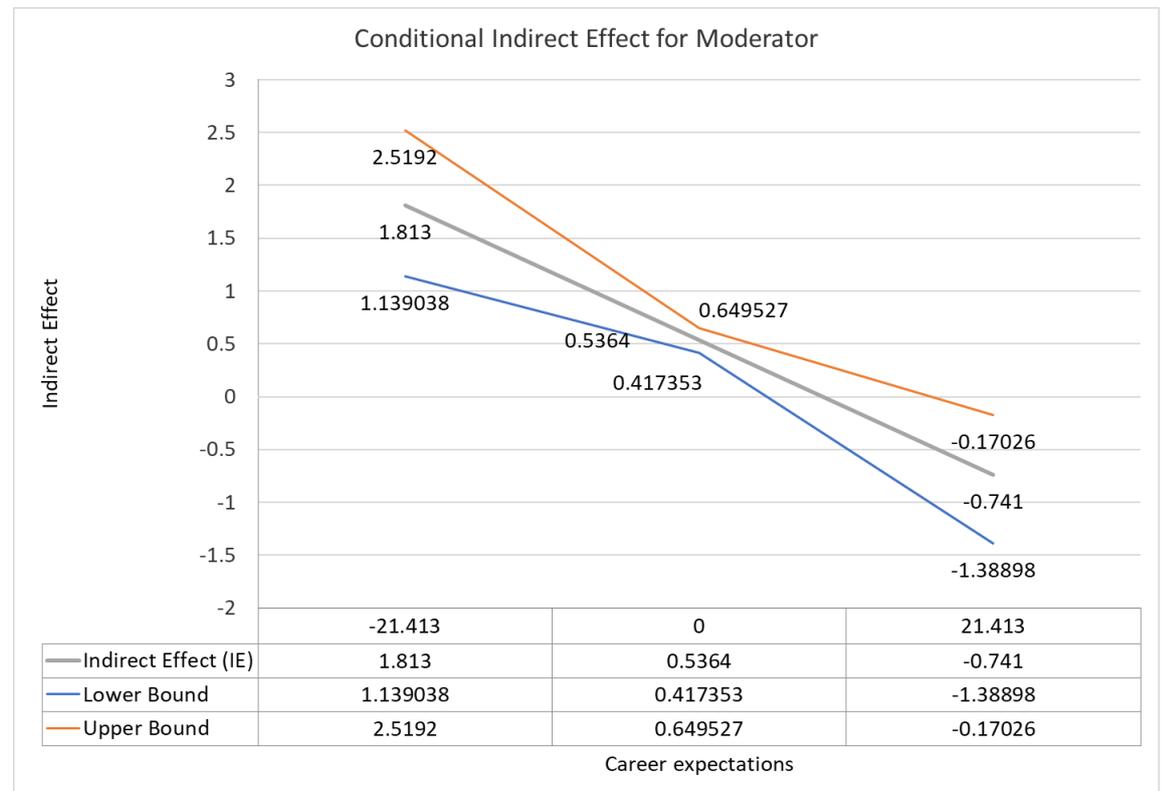
Note. The standard deviation of Career Expectations is 21.413.

4.9 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive statistical analysis to investigate the six research questions posed in this study. The initial analysis and descriptive data were examined using SPSS, while the hypotheses were confirmed through partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results revealed that perceived organisational prestige significantly influences both employee engagement (H1) and psychological capital (H2). Furthermore, psychological capital was found to play a direct and indirect role in promoting employee engagement (H3 & H4). However, the examination of career expectations indicated a lack of significant moderating and moderated

mediation effects on these relationships. Consequently, the ensuing chapter will delve into a detailed discussion of the current findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The present research was executed to investigate the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities. This investigation delved into the ways in which psychological capital and career expectations impact the connection between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. As a result, Chapter 5 has been formulated to comprehensively address all six research questions. Subsequently, the implications of this research will be explored from both theoretical and managerial standpoints. The subsequent segment of this chapter will outline the limitations identified within the study, followed by recommendations for future research endeavours.

5.2 Discussion

The current research discussion revolves around the analysis of six main research objectives, including (1) to investigate the relationship of perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement, (2) to examine the relationship of perceived organisational prestige and psychological capital, (3) to determine the relationship of psychological capital and employee engagement, (4) to examine the mediating effect of psychological capital on the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement, (5) to study the moderating effect of career expectations on the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement and (6) to investigate the moderated effect of career expectation on the mediating relationship of psychological capital in predicting employee

engagement among academics in Malaysian Private University. Table 5.2 summarised the findings of the research.

5.2.1 Perceived Organisational Prestige and Employee Engagement

The outcomes of the study provided empirical evidence supporting the formulated hypothesis, demonstrating a positive relationship between perceived organisational prestige and the level of engagement exhibited by academic staff in Malaysian private universities. To put it differently, a favourable perception of an organisation's prestige contributes to an increased propensity for active participation and commitment within the professional environment. This observation aligns with earlier research findings (Akgunduz & Bardakoglu , 2015; Dhir & Shukla, 2019; Sharma, 2021; Ugwu et al., 2017), underscoring its consistency across various investigations. It has been established that perceived organisational prestige produces a sense of pride and confidence in employees, thereby motivating them to channel heightened energy into their respective roles within the workplace (Dhir and Shukla, 2019). This is because the pursuit of higher prestige has been associated with benefits such as asserting dominance and superiority (Sharma, 2021).

Scholars have posited that this phenomenon is attributable to prevailing social conventions, wherein it stipulates that individuals occupying higher positions in the social hierarchy inherently possess elevated levels of prestige (Maner & Case, 2016). Though, this observation is not a recent revelation but rather a persistent phenomenon that has endured over time. Over the continuum of evolutionary history, being at the top of the social hierarchy gives greater access to resources, respect, control and opportunity for success (Manstead,

2018). In other words, higher hierarchy influences cognition, behaviour, identity and feelings. Similarly in the working realm, employees may seek superiority in the society through the organisational affiliation. As favourable perspectives are established, loyalty and motivation are fostered among employees which in turn contributes to higher employee engagement (Ugwu et al., 2017).

The findings of the present study find resonance with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, as they suggest that the recognition of organisational prestige can act as a personal and job resource. This, in turn, fosters an augmented sense of both motivation and self-esteem among employees, thereby leading them to invest more intensively and purposefully in the fulfilment of their job responsibilities (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

5.2.2 Perceived Organisational Prestige and Psychological Capital

Based on the outcomes derived from the analysis of collected findings, it was determined that perceived organisational prestige serves as a significant predictor of heightened engagement levels among academic staff within Malaysian private universities. This observation validates the original hypothesis posited by the study, suggesting that a favourable perception of an organisation's prestige corresponds to collective feelings of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. This discovery aligns harmoniously with the conclusions drawn by Mathe and Scott-Halsell (2012), who observed that perceived organisational prestige plays a facilitating role in cultivating psychological empowerment and psychological capital. However, the findings

stand in contrast to the results presented by Fuller et al. (2006), wherein the evidenced that the impact of perceived organisational prestige on organisational attachment among university staff remains limited.

This dichotomy further reinforces the notion that current employment within esteemed educational institutions engenders a sense of pride and advocacy, thereby contributing to heightened self-esteem among academics. This elevated self-esteem is not merely an individual benefit; it resonates throughout the academic community, fostering a collective sense of identity and commitment to institutional values (Huang et al., 2022). The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory posits that perceived organisational prestige is instrumental in enabling employees to acquire, maintain, and protect their psychological resources, particularly during periods of stress. When academic staff view their institution as prestigious, they are more inclined to develop and depend on robust social networks, which can alleviate feelings of isolation and stress (Peña-González et al., 2021).

Recent empirical studies indicate that employees who feel valued within a prestigious environment report lower levels of burnout and emotional exhaustion, reinforcing the idea that organisational prestige can act as a resource that promotes well-being (Bishop et al., 2021; Zacher et al., 2022). In the grand scheme, when academics regard their academic institutions with a sense of prestige, they tend to exhibit self-assuredness in their competencies, display optimism about their forthcoming prospects, harbour aspirations of attaining their objectives, and manifest resilience when confronted with challenges within their professional milieu.

5.2.3 Psychological Capital and Employee Engagement

The findings of the present study corroborated the formulated hypothesis, demonstrating that psychological capital positively predicts employee engagement. To articulate it differently, an elevation in psychological capital levels amplifies the tendency for employee engagement. This observation finds alignment with prior research endeavours (Alessandri et al., 2018; Avey et al., 2010; Simon & Buitendach, 2013; Tsaur et al., 2019). It has been suggested that psychological capital plays a pivotal role within employee's cognitive functions, contributing to heightened vigour and absorption within the professional context (Simon and Buitendach, 2013).

It captures the essence of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model whereby psychological capital functions as a vital job resource that enhances employee engagement by fulfilling psychological needs and promoting well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This emotional impetus enhances proactivity in shaping the work environment to attain optimal alignment with the job role. Taken together, psychological capital directly influences employee engagement by fostering positive psychological states that aligns with an engaged employee's attitude and behaviour. It fosters a mindset that stimulates proactive problem solving, active participation and sustained dedication to professional responsibilities.

5.2.4 Mediating Effect of Psychological Capital

The present study empirically establishes that psychological capital serves as a mediator in the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private

universities. In other words, the influence of perceived organisational prestige on employee engagement is channelled through the enrichment of psychological capital. The results of this study confirm and build upon previous literature, reinforcing the notion that psychological capital significantly contributes to positive outcomes within the workplace (Alessandri et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2014; Simon & Buitendach, 2013). This explanation is corroborated by Tian et al. (2020), who highlighted psychological capital as a protective factor against negative outcomes. In this context, the enhancement of employees' positive psychological states empowers them to respond adaptively and resiliently to challenges related to perceived organisational prestige. Consequently, academics are able to sustain their level of engagement despite potential fluctuations in their universities' prestige. This dynamic is aligned with the Job Demand-Resources theory which underscores that those personal resources, such as psychological capital, are not only crucial in enhancing engagement but also serve as buffers against job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

The psychological capital developed through the perception of organisational prestige acts as a mediator, resulting in heightened employee engagement due to goal-oriented thinking, enhanced self-belief, and increased adaptability (Avey et al., 2008; Rodríguez-Cifuentes et al., 2020). This phenomenon can be further elucidated through the lens of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory specifically using the resource caravan principle. According to the COR theory, resources do not exist in isolation but rather travel in caravans, reinforcing one another (Hobfoll et al., 2018). In this case, psychological capital forms part of a resource caravan that not only protects

individuals from resource depletion but also strengthens their capacity to engage with their work. By perceiving their institution as prestigious, academics are more likely to develop and accumulate psychological capital, which enhances their resilience and adaptability to stress. As the COR theory suggests, resources attract additional resources, creating a self-reinforcing cycle where employees continue to protect, build, and invest in their psychological capital. Once established, this caravan effect signifies that psychological capital serves as a continuous resource that bolsters engagement and mitigates the detrimental impacts of job demands.

Recent empirical findings further support this explanation. Studies by Bishop et al. (2021) and Zacher et al. (2022) demonstrate that employees who perceive themselves as working in prestigious environments report lower levels of burnout and emotional exhaustion, further validating the protective and reinforcing nature of psychological capital within the workplace. Therefore, the mediating role of psychological capital is a key element in understanding how perceived organisational prestige can lead to sustained employee engagement.

5.2.5 Moderating Effect of Career Expectations

The current study sought to explore the potential moderating effect of career expectations on the established relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement as well as the moderating effect of career expectations in predicting the mediating relationship of psychological capital. The present study found that career expectation does demonstrate a significant moderating effect on the relationships between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics

in Malaysian private universities. In other words, career expectations serve as an important moderating factor, shaping the nature of the relationship between perceived organizational prestige and employee engagement. This aligns with the findings of previous research (Saks, 2019; Sharma, 2021; Ugwu et al., 2017).

Based on the statistical analysis, the observed negative moderating effect (β = - .80) suggests that higher levels of career expectations weaken the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. The results are contrary to the anticipated enhancing effect described in Chapter 2. Despite the initial expectation that higher career expectations would lead to increased motivation, job performance, and positive job outcomes contributing to overall employee engagement (Knight et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2020), this study's empirical findings indicate otherwise. This suggests that employees with higher career aspirations may be less influenced by the perceived prestige of their organisation when it comes to their level of engagement. In other words, even if they perceive their organisation as prestigious, their engagement levels may not be as high as expected based on organisational prestige alone. In such scenarios, the perception that one's organisation holds a prestigious position in society can compensate for lower future career prospects by instilling a sense of pride and belonging. This finding is in line with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, where POP can be seen as a valuable job resource that compensates for lower personal resources (i.e., low career expectations), thus boosting employee engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

The discrepancy between the anticipated and observed outcomes may stem from various factors, including individual differences in interpreting organisational prestige, personal career goals, or motivations. Following the justification connoted by Liu et al. (2019), individual differences specifically personal goals, values, and beliefs does alter the outcomes. Each unique individuals have diverse goals and values that guide their decision-making (Garg, 2014). Employees with high career expectations may prioritise opportunities for meaningful work life, learning or advancement (Dousin et al., 2021) over mere organisational prestige. Consequently, these individuals are less susceptible to the influence of organisational reputation. Riyanto et al. (2021) highlights the significance of individual goals within the context of employee engagement, emphasising the role of focused energy and adaptability in achieving better performance and persistence. According to their framework, individuals may demonstrate varying motivational factors, with some prioritising opportunities that align with their personal growth objectives over organisational prestige when assessing their level of engagement. This suggests that employees are not homogenous in their motivations, and organisations should consider catering to individual goals and aspirations to enhance overall engagement and productivity.

Furthermore, the findings can be explained by Baroudi et al. (2018), who highlight the importance of clear expectations in fostering positive organisational outcomes and collaborative behaviour. Individuals with high career expectations are more inclined to exhibit proactive behaviours, take initiative, and collaborate effectively with colleagues to achieve shared goals. Consequently, in the presence of perceived organisational prestige, these

individuals may be particularly motivated to leverage their aspirations to drive engagement and contribute positively to the organisation's success. Supporting this perspective of the COR theory, when individuals lack certain personal resources, they become more reliant on external resources to prevent further resource loss and maintain their well-being (Hobfoll et al., 2018). In this case, POP serves as a critical external resource that compensates for the shortfall in career expectations, thus promoting higher engagement among employees who may otherwise feel less secure about their future career prospects. Therefore, when considering the moderated effect of career expectations on the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement, it is conceivable that higher levels of career expectations may attenuate the influence of perceived organisational prestige on engagement levels. This is because individuals with high career aspirations may rely less on external factors, such as organisational reputation, and more on internal motivations and aspirations when engaging with their work (Fredrickson, 2001). Thus, their engagement may be driven more by intrinsic factors related to personal career goals rather than extrinsic factors, such as organisational prestige.

On top of that, the current study also found that career expectations served as a significant moderated effect on the mediating relationship of psychological capital. In other words, high levels of career expectations attenuate the mediation effect, reducing the reliance on psychological capital and subsequent employee engagement levels. Conversely, low levels of career expectations amplify the mediation effect, resulting in stronger associations between perceived organisational prestige, psychological capital, and employee

engagement. This unexpected finding aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that personal resources, such as psychological capital, serve as critical buffers against job demands and enhance engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). When career expectations are low, employees may perceive a heightened reliance on psychological capital to navigate their work environment, thereby intensifying its mediating role. In this context, psychological capital empowers individuals to leverage their hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism to counteract the potential negative impacts of diminished career expectations.

A recent study by Talib and Abdirahman (2022), elucidated the integration of Conservation of Resources theory within the Job Demand-Resource framework. They displayed the sophistication of the integration by highlighting how the presence of abundant job resources can alter the role of specific resources, thereby mitigating job demands and enhancing overall employee engagement and well-being. Consequently, when psychological capital is incorporated into this equation, the concepts of caravan passageways and resource caravans from the Conservation of Resource theory provides a theoretical lens to explain this phenomenon. Hobfoll et al. (2018) suggests that resources like career expectations and psychological capital do not exist in isolation, but form interconnected networks or caravans that individuals use to buffer against resource loss. When career expectations are low, individuals face a resource-deficient situation, leading them to rely more heavily on other personal resources, in this case, psychological capital, to maintain their engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Luthans et al., 2007).

Psychological capital thus compensates for the lack of career-driven motivation, enhancing its mediating role between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. This is consistent with the Conservation of Resource theory' principle, whereby when key resources are diminished, individuals are more likely to invest in and protect their remaining resources (Hobfoll, 2011). This situation can create a loss spiral, where the lack of key resources diminishes engagement and overall well-being, hence reinforcing negative perceptions of their work environment (Hobfoll, 2001; Halbesleben, 2006; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Talib & Abdirahman, 2022). In contrast, when career expectation is high, the reliance on psychological capital diminishes as career expectations themselves serve as a direct motivational resource. Employees with strong career expectations may view their future goals as a more prominent source of engagement, which reduces the role of psychological capital as a compensatory mechanism, rather than as a substitution. In this context, career expectation serves as a passageway that redirects the individual's resource investment away from psychological capital and directly toward career-focused aspirations, thus weakening psychological capital's mediating effect. This aligns with the gain spiral concept, where the presence of strong career expectations enhances both motivation and engagement, leading to a more positive work experience (Hobfoll, 2001; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Talib & Abdirahman, 2022).

Based on the past studies by Maden et al. (2016) and Zhang et al. (2018), career expectations have been identified as buffering effects in various workplace contexts. This aligns with the buffering effect of career expectations in reducing reliance on psychological capital as a mediator, particularly when

career expectations are high. Researchers have claimed that career expectations acted as current motivators and self-regulators for employees' affective reactions, particularly towards unmet job expectations, emotional exhaustion and other workplace challenges (Bandura, 1991; Maden et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). Individuals are likely to regulate their behaviour and emotions based on their expectations of future outcomes. The study by Zhang et al. (2018) provides additional support for the idea that career expectations serve as a buffering system, enhancing individuals' psychological states. Moreover, the claims made by Kong et al. (2015) and Liu et al. (2019) regarding the essential contribution of career expectations to individuals' psychological capital further strengthens this argument. It supports the notion that career expectations can shape how individuals leverage their psychological resources.

Therefore, individuals with low career expectations, supported by their enhanced psychological capital, are better equipped to process and cope with the potentially negative impact of perceived organisational prestige. In turn, by recognising the interplay between career expectations, psychological capital, and perceived organisational prestige, organisations can cultivate a work environment that promotes sustained employee engagement and overall well-being, thereby perpetuating a sustainable cycle of employee engagement.

Table 5.2

Summary of research findings

	Hypotheses	Results
H1	Perceived organisational prestige positively predicts employee engagement among academics in Malaysia private universities.	Supported
H2	Perceived organisational prestige positively predicts psychological capital among academics in Malaysian private universities.	Supported
H3	Psychological capital positively predicts employee engagement among academics in Malaysia private universities.	Supported
H4	Psychological capital mediates the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysia private universities.	Supported
H5	Career expectations moderate the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysia private universities.	Supported
H6	Career expectations moderate the mediating relationship effect of psychological capital in predicting between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement among academics in Malaysian Private universities.	Supported

5.3 Implications

The following section delves into two implications of the study, addressing both theoretical and practical perspectives. The theoretical implications underscore the significance of the research findings in advancing existing knowledge. On the other hand, the practical implications highlight the relevance for PHEIs.

5.3.1 Theoretical Implications

Academically, the findings of this research contribute to the existing literature by exploring the mediating role of psychological capital and the moderating role of career expectations in the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. The research framework is

based on the integration of the Job Demand-Resource model and the Conservation of Resources theory to uncover the underlying processes of perceived organisational prestige that leads to employee engagement.

This study showed that perceived organisational prestige directly predicts employee engagement among academics in Malaysian private universities. The results offered contemporary insights and emerging patterns in the Malaysian private universities context and thus, was able to close the population gap. This also signifies that; university staff are increasingly susceptible to public scrutiny that will influence their perceptual dynamics. As mentioned in Chapter 1, private universities experience intense competition and cannot escape the pressures of the marker, operating as business entities (Manogharan & Thivaharan, 2018; Mintz, 2020: Musselin, 2018). The results provide a comprehensive overview within the private universities in current landscape of academia that is continually being challenged both locally and globally.

Furthermore, the study also showed that perceived organisational prestige indirectly predicts employee engagement through psychological capital among academics in Malaysian private universities. As a result, this broadens the nomological network surrounding employee engagement and introduces an additional layer of complexity to these dynamics. The important role of psychological capital in the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement enriches the understanding of the 'how' and 'why' behind the observed relationship. The components of psychological capital (i.e., self-efficacy, optimism, resilience and hope) may act as a bridge that translates the perceived organisational prestige into a tangible

psychological state. The translation occurs through a process in which an employee perceives their organisation as prestigious, leading to heightened levels of hope, resilience, optimism and self-efficacy. Then, these transformations influence their overall mindset and emotional states, culminating to actively engage in their jobs and further nurtures and reinforces psychological capital. These sequences suggest a potential positive feedback loop between these variables. Hence, the 'bridge' is not merely a physical connection, but rather an attitudinal and behavioural linkage that serves as a catalyst for their enhancing engagement levels. Overtime, these sequences unfold when their temporal clarity deepens. Therefore, the intricacies of these mechanisms shed light on the underlying mechanisms of the observed relationship.

Moreover, by integrating the mediating role of psychological capital and the moderating role of career expectation through the Conservation of Resources Theory, it provides a substantial theoretical contribution to the dynamics of employee engagement within the organisational context. Through this, it enables the study to comprehend how the mediating role of psychological capital works in different circumstances of career expectations through the concept of dual pathway. The results of this study further confirm that this theory can be employed to explain how psychological capital functions as a critical resource that amplifies the impact of perceived organisational prestige on employee engagement. By also elucidating how career expectations influence the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement, the study provides valuable insights into the motivational dynamics at play within academic environments. This finding

contributes to our understanding of why some academics may choose to remain in their positions despite potential dissatisfaction, highlighting the role of personal career aspirations in shaping engagement levels. The study enhances the theoretical landscape by illuminating how the interconnected resource caravan could foster a greater engagement. As such, engagement theories may benefit from incorporating psychological capital and career expectations as significant factors that modulate the effectiveness of both job and personal resources on engagement. By the guidance of the theory, it also hints the versality of the theory on its application beyond the domain.

Additionally, the results of the study address the call for a research outline by Hamzah et al. (2021), Tuan and Anh (2021) and Schaufeli and Tafis (2014). Hamzah et al.'s call emphasised the need for empirical investigation into the factors influencing employee engagement within the context of Malaysian private universities. The results of the study shown a direct relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement, aligning precisely with and fulfilling the gap identified in Hamzah et al.'s call. Moreover, by identifying psychological capital as a mediating variable in the study, it deeply aligns with the call for research by Tuan and Anh (2021) who advocated for a deeper investigation in the mediating mechanism that links factors to employee engagement. Equally important, the results of the study extend Schaufeli and Tafis' (2014) call to investigate the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Therefore, this present study addressed their research priorities by providing a growing body of knowledge and empirical insights into the dynamics of employee engagement within the context.

The findings of this research significantly contribute to our understanding of employee engagement. By highlighting the role of career expectations as a significant moderator and psychological capital as a mediator in the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement, this study sheds light on the motivational and psychological factors that influence academics' decisions to remain in their positions despite potential dissatisfaction. The results suggest that academics with higher career aspirations may rely more on intrinsic motivations related to their career goals rather than external factors such as organisational reputation, offering a nuanced understanding of the motivational drivers behind employee retention. This finding underscores the distinct motivational drivers behind engagement, indicating that employees may become more self-reliant on their long-term career goals when their aspirations are high, thereby rely less on external job resources (e.g., perceived organisational prestige). Additionally, the amplifying effect of career expectations on the mediating role of psychological capital underscores the importance of resilience and coping mechanisms in mitigating the negative impact of organisational factors on engagement levels. Through this lens, the study offers insights into the complex process of career decision-making among academics and suggests implications for organisational support and intervention strategies aimed to sustain engagement. By providing tailored resources, growth opportunities, and development pathways aligned with diverse career expectations, organisations can create an environment that not only enhances engagement but also mitigates the potential for disengagement among academics.

5.3.2 Practical Implications

The findings of the research also contribute to the managerial perspective. First and foremost, the findings contribute to human resource agencies by suggesting the formulation of a holistic intervention. The finding indicates that investing in psychological capital and career expectations could enhance the wellbeing of employees and in turn result in more profitable business. Organisations should consider implementing training programs that enhance employee's hope, resiliency, self- efficacy and optimism. For example, giving a tailored developmental program, wellbeing initiatives (i.e., stress management), and designing recognition and reward systems could contribute to developing crucial psychological resources. This underscores the significance of psychological capital as a key mechanism in strengthening the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and engagement. Additionally, it highlights the role of career expectations in sustaining employees' motivation and perseverance, emphasising their true potential to drive positive outcomes regardless of individual career expectations.

The findings further underscore the importance for private universities in Malaysia to enhance perceived organisational prestige by focusing on two key strategies: building a strong employer brand and leveraging employee advocacy. To enhance the employer brand, it is crucial for universities to craft a clear and consistent image that reflects their goals, values, and accomplishments. By promoting achievements such as research breakthroughs, academic excellence, and community engagement, universities can strengthen their public reputation. This proactive approach not only elevates the organisation's external prestige but also positively influences employees'

internal perception, fostering a sense of pride and belonging that directly enhances engagement levels. Managers should also encourage transparency and consistency in their communication strategies, ensuring that both internal and external stakeholders are aligned with the university's values and objectives. In addition to building an employer brand, leveraging employee advocacy can play a significant role in amplifying the university's prestige. Encouraging employees to actively promote the university through word of mouth or social media can strengthen the institution's reputation externally while simultaneously enhancing employees' identification with the university. This dual strategy of fostering pride through public recognition and employee-led advocacy can create a reinforcing cycle of increased engagement and perceived prestige. Ultimately, both employer branding and employee advocacy are essential for sustaining a long-term organisational reputation and ensuring continued employee engagement.

Furthermore, the findings also give impact to Malaysian private university, as the empirical insights imply that these universities should develop strategic crisis management plans to address their susceptibility of public scrutiny. Additionally, to highlight the nature of perceived organisational prestige, which involves making comparisons between internal and external information, managers should proactively address all crises with transparency and provide support to the employees. Effective crisis management may help enhance perceived organisational prestige and reduce the delinquent impact on psychological capital and engagement levels. As the result also shows a positive upward spiral leading to engagement, it is also recommended that managers implement holistic strategies involving communication, wellbeing initiatives

and crisis management programs with continued efforts to ensure long-term sustainability. Managers should design a communication strategy to enhance or maintain the organisation's reputation. For instance, being clear and consistent on the universities' goals, values, achievement, and contribution may have positive impacts on employee's perception and directly enhance their engagement levels.

The practical implications of this research for academia extend to curriculum development and faculty support programs, potentially sparking innovation in faculty development. Recognising the pivotal roles of psychological capital and career expectations in shaping employee engagement, academic institutions can tailor professional development initiatives to bolster faculty members' psychological resources. These initiatives might entail workshops or training sessions focused on cultivating resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy among academic staff. Furthermore, universities can introduce mentorship programs aimed at assisting early-career academics in setting and attaining their career aspirations, fostering a culture of growth and empowerment. Integrating the findings of this study into faculty evaluation and promotion criteria can incentivise the pursuit of meaningful career goals, fostering a more engaged and productive academic community. Such initiatives may inspire novel approaches in supporting faculty members' professional growth and well-being, potentially including mindfulness programs, career coaching services, and interdisciplinary collaborations to nurture innovation and creativity. By embracing innovative strategies informed by this research, academia can adapt to the evolving needs and aspirations of its workforce,

ultimately enhancing productivity, resilience, and fulfilment among faculty members.

From a policymaker's perspective, the findings of this research offer insights into strategies for enhancing organisational effectiveness and employee well-being within the higher education sector. Policymakers can use this evidence to advocate for investments in faculty development and support initiatives at the institutional level. By prioritising the promotion of psychological capital and career expectations among academic staff, policymakers can help create environments that facilitate professional growth, job satisfaction, and overall engagement. Additionally, policymakers can work with universities to develop guidelines and best practices for promoting transparent communication, crisis management, and organisational culture-building. By aligning policies with the principles of the Job Demand-Resources model and Conservation of Resources theory, policymakers can contribute to the creation of academic workplaces that nurture positive emotions, resilience, and collective efficacy, ultimately fostering a thriving academic community.

5.4 Limitations and Recommendation for Future Directions

There were a few limitations identified in the research that should be addressed along with proposed recommendations for future studies. The current study focused on a niche sample of academic respondents from Malaysian private universities. Hence, the limited sample size may affect the generalisability of the results to the populations of academics. It is important to acknowledge that the characteristics of the profession may have contributed to smaller sample size and low response rates. This is because the academic environment evolves around various responsibilities, demanding schedules,

heavy workloads and personal commitments which may impact their willingness to participate in the study. Although the response rate of the study is relatively low and may raise questions, it is worth noting that it adheres to the acceptable standard by Wu at al. (2022) and the study insights remain valuable despite the limitations. Consequently, it is recommended that future research endeavours consider employing a larger and more diverse sample size to provide a more robust result and possibly offer wider and more applicable insights.

One limitation of the current study is its reliance on a cross-sectional research design, which is inherently observational in nature and lacks manipulation of variables. This limitation restricts the study's ability to establish causal relationships between the investigated variables, as the absence of controlled variables leaves room for alternative explanations and potential confounding factors. Consequently, an alternative explanation from unobserved variables cannot be entirely ruled out. Despite the limitation, the findings rely on the strength of the real-world applicability and still contributes to valuable insights into the association between perceived organisational prestige, employee engagement and psychological capital. Subsequently, to address this limitation, it is recommended that future studies incorporate factors such as personality traits, job demand and workload to further explore the causal link of the observed variables. Future research could also adopt a longitudinal or experimental design, allowing for the examination of changes in variables over time and providing stronger evidence for causal relationships. By employing these alternative research designs, future studies can overcome the limitations

associated with cross-sectional research and enhance the validity and reliability of their findings.

5.5 Conclusion

The main objective of the current research is to investigate the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement with the external influences of psychological capital and career expectation among Malaysian private universities' academics. All hypotheses proposed in Chapter 1 are empirically supported. In general, the main finding demonstrates that academics who perceived their universities as prestigious tend to have higher engagement at work. Moreover, psychological capital emerged as a crucial mediator in the relationship between perceived organisational prestige and employee engagement. Additionally, career expectations were identified as significant moderators in these relationships. These findings offer substantial implications for practitioners and future scholars by providing a significant framework to comprehend the emotional and cognitive dynamics which shape the academic's professional experiences. In the evolving research landscape, future researchers should explore deeper into understanding the contextual factors that influence the observed variables, thus providing more refined and comprehensive insights.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Filter Questions

The following questions are important in determining the criteria of respondents in the study.

No	Questions		
1	Are you currently experiencing Covid-19 while participating in the survey study?	Yes	No
2	Are you diagnosed with any mental health issues while participating in the survey study?	Yes	No
3	Are you diagnosed with any physical illness while participating the survey study?	Yes	No

Appendix B Demographic Information

The following demographic information is important in helping us to understand the pattern.

of respondent responses.

No	Questions				
1	Gender:	Male	Female		
2	Race:	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Others
3	No. years in teaching field	Less than 3 years	Less than 5 years	Less than 8 years	Less than 10 years	More than 10 years
4	Education level:	Bachelor's degree	Professional Courses	Master's degree	Doctorate Degree	Others
5	Teaching field:	Medicine and related	Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, agro-industry, and veterinary	Education and teaching	Pure science and technology	Social science
		Law	Humanity, religious	Engineer	Fine arts and applied arts	others
6	Present job title:	Assistant lecturer	Lecturer	Senior lecturer	Assistant professor	Professor
		Senior professor	Others			
7	Age:				
8	Estimated income:	Less than 5K	Less than 8K	Less than 10K	More than 10K	
9	Religion:	Christianity	Buddhism	Islam	Hinduism	Others
10	Relationship status:	Single	Married	Divorced	Others	
11	Organisational tenure	Tenured	Unavailable			

Appendix C: Instruments

Perceived Organisational Prestige (Mael & Ashforth, 1992)

Please tick ONE appropriate number ranging on the scale from strongly disagree
(1) to strongly agree (5) to indicate your agreement on the statement below:

No	Items
1	People in my community think highly of my employer
2	It is considered prestigious in the religious community to be a former employee of my company.
3	My employer is considered one of the best.
4	People look down at my employer. (R)
5	Former employees of my company would be proud to have their children work here.
6	My employer does not have a good reputation in my community. (R)
7	A person seeking to advance his or her career in this area of employment should downplay his or her association with my employer. (R)
8	When other employers are recruiting, they would not want employees from my company. (R)

Psychological capital scale (Luthens et al., 2007)

Please tick ONE appropriate number ranging on the scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) to indicate your agreement on the statement below:

Self-efficacy	
1	I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management
2	I feel confident contributing to discussions about the university's strategy.
3	I feel confident presenting information to a group of colleagues.
Hope	
4	If I find myself in a jam at work, I can think of many ways to get out of it.
5	Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful at work.
6	I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals.
Resilience	
7	At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself.
8	I can be "on my own" at work if I have to.
9	I usually take stressful things at work in stride.
Optimism	
10	I can get through difficult times at work because I've experienced difficulty before.
11	I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job.
12	I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future about work.

The Employee Engagement Scale (Shuck et al., 2014)

Please tick ONE appropriate number ranging on the scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) to indicate your agreement on the statement below:

Cognitive Engagement	
1	I am really focused on my job when I am working
2	I concentrate on my job when I am at work.
3	I give my job responsibilities a lot of attention
4	At work, I am focused on my job.
Emotional Engagement	
5	Working at my current organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me.
6	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my job.
7	I believe in the mission and purpose of my company
8	I care about the future of my company.
Behavioral Engagement	
9	I really push myself to work beyond what is expected of me.
10	I am willing to put in extra effort without being asked.
11	I often go above what is expected of me to help my team be successful.
12	I work harder than expected to help my company be successful.

The Occupation Expectation Scale-Revised (Kong et al., 2015)

Please tick ONE appropriate number ranging on the scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7) to indicate your career expectation level on the statement below:

	Prestige Factor
1	I hope the university I work at is large scale
2	It is important to me that the university has a high reputation
3	I hope the university I work at is in famous cities
4	I hope the university I work at is establishing one's reputation as an authority
	Intrinsic value Factor
5	It is important to me that my career allows independence and freedom
6	It is important to me to have a challenging job
7	It is important to me that my career is my interest oriented
8	I expect to learn and to apply in my career
9	I expect my career will bring my ability into full play
10	I expect a fair opportunity in my career.
11	I expect a competition in my career.
	Extrinsic Value Factor
12	I expect a well-paid salary for my job.
13	I expect a good welfare for my job.
14	I expect to have a stable job.
15	I expect to have education opportunities for my job.
16	I expect my job to have opportunities for going abroad.
17	I expect my job gives a high social status.
18	I expect a good working environment for my job
19	I expect to have more promotion opportunities for more job.

Appendix D: Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN *DU012(A)*
Wholly owned by UTAR Education Foundation   *Co. No. 578227-M*

Re: U/SERC/249/2022

17 November 2022

Dr Tan Chi Hau
Department of Marketing
Faculty of Business and Finance
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Jalan Universiti, Bandar Baru Barat
31900 Kampar, Perak

Dear Dr Tan,

Ethical Approval For Research Project/Protocol

We refer to your application for ethical approval for your research project (Master student's project) and are pleased to inform you that your application has been approved under <u>Expedited Review</u>.

The details of your research project are as follows:

Research Title	The Relationship Between Perceived Organisational Prestige and Employee Engagement Among Academicians in Malaysian Private University: The Influence of Psychological Capital and Career Expectation
Investigator(s)	Dr Tan Chi Hau Dr Chan Ling Meng Britney Bong Sue Fun (UTAR Postgraduate Student)
Research Area	Social Sciences
Research Location	UTP; Sunway University; UNITEN; UTAR; UniKL, MMU; The University of Management and Technology
No of Participants	360 participants (Age: 18 - 70)
Research Costs	Self-funded
Approval Validity	17 November 2022 - 16 November 2023

The conduct of this research is subject to the following:

(1) The participants' informed consent be obtained prior to the commencement of the research,

(2) Confidentiality of participants' personal data must be maintained; and

(3) Compliance with procedures set out in related policies of UTAR such as the UTAR Research Ethics and Code of Conduct, Code of Practice for Research Involving Humans and other related policies/guidelines.

(4) Written consent be obtained from the institution(s)/company(ies) in which the physical or/and online survey will be carried out, prior to the commencement of the research.

Should you collect personal data of participants in your study, please have the participants sign the attached Personal Data Protection Statement for your records.

The University wishes you all the best in your research.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Ts Dr Faidz bin Abd Rahman
Chairman
UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee

c.c   Dean, Faculty of Business and Finance
       Director, Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research

Appendix E: Expert Review Questionnaire

Part A

Independent variable: Perceived Organisational Prestige Scale (Mael & Ashforth, 1992)

This section is on 8 items that are associated with perceived organizational prestige.

No	Items	Relevance				Clarity				Essential				Comments
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
1	People in my community think highly of my employer													
2	It is considered prestigious in the religious community to be a former employee of my company.													
3	My employer is considered one of the best.													
4	People look down at my employer. (R)													
5	Former employees of my company would be proud to have their children work here.													
6	My employer does not have a good reputation in my community. (R)													
7	A person seeking to advance his or her career in this area of employment should downplay his or her association with my employer. (R)													
8	When other employers are recruiting, they would not want employees from my company. (R)													

Part B

Dependent Variable: The Employee Engagement Scale (Shuck et al., 2014)

This section is on 12 items that are associated with employee engagement in 3 dimensions: cognitive, emotional and behavior.

No	Items	Relevance				Clarity				Essential				Comments
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Cognitive Engagement														
1	I am really focused on my job when I am working													
2	I concentrate on my job when I am at work.													
3	I give my job responsibilities a lot of attention													
4	At work, I am focused on my job.													
Emotional Engagement														
5	Working at my current organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me.													
6	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my job.													

7	I believe in the mission and purpose of my company													
8	I care about the future of my company.													
Behavioural Engagement														
9	I really push myself to work beyond what is expected of me.													
10	I am willing to put in extra effort without being asked.													
11	I often go above what is expected of me to help my team be successful.													
12	I work harder than expected to help my company be successful.													

Part C

Mediating Variable: Psychological capital scale (Luthens et al., 2007)

This section is on 12 items that are associated with employee engagement in 4 dimensions: self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism.

No	Items	Relevance				Clarity				Essential				Comments
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Self-efficacy														
1	I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management													
2	I feel confident contributing to discussions about the university's strategy.													
3	I feel confident presenting information to a group of colleagues.													
Hope														
4	If I find myself in a jam at work, I can think of many ways to get out of it.													
5	Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful at work.													
6	I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals.													
Resilience														
7	At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself.													
8	I can be "on my own" at work if I have to.													
9	I usually take stressful things at work in stride.													

	Optimism													
10	I can get through difficult times at work because I've experienced difficulty before.													
11	I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job.													
12	I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future about work.													

Part D

Moderating Variable: The Occupation Expectation Scale-Revised (Kong et al., 2015)

This section is on 12 items that are associated with employee engagement in 3 dimensions: prestige, intrinsic value factor, and extrinsic value factor.

No	Items	Relevance				Clarity				Essential				Comments
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
	Prestige Factor													
1	I hope the university I work at is large scale													
2	It is important to me that the university has a high reputation													
3	I hope the university I work at is in famous cities													
4	I hope the university I work at is establishing one's reputation as an authority													
	Intrinsic Value Factor													
5	It is important to me that my career allows independence and freedom													
6	It is important to me to have a challenging job													
7	It is important to me that my career is my interest oriented													
8	I expect to learn and to apply in my career													
9	I expect my career will bring my ability into full play													

10	I expect a fair opportunity and competition in my career.													
Extrinsic Value Factor														
11	I expect a well-paid salary for my job.													
12	I expect a good welfare for my job.													
13	I expect to have a stable job.													
14	I expect to have education opportunities for my job.													
15	I expect my job to have opportunities for going abroad.													
16	I expect my job gives a high social status.													
17	I expect a good working environment for my job													
18	I expect to have more promotion opportunities for more job.													

Comment

Appendix F

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	INS_3_1	INS_3_2	INS_3_3	INS_3_4	INS_3_5	INS_3_6	INS_3_7	INS_3_8	INS_3_9	INS_3_10	INS_3_11
INS_3_1	1.000	.829	.111	.748	.639	.576	.551	.362	.482	.745	.417
INS_3_2	.829	1.000	.170	.669	.622	.441	.460	.457	.567	.674	.475
INS_3_3	.111	.170	1.000	.062	.212	.081	.309	-.332	-.009	-.152	-.099
INS_3_4	.748	.669	.062	1.000	.882	.752	.637	.375	.433	.725	.349
INS_3_5	.639	.622	.212	.882	1.000	.767	.640	.218	.348	.664	.290
INS_3_6	.576	.441	.081	.752	.767	1.000	.702	.108	.251	.550	.333
INS_3_7	.551	.460	.309	.637	.640	.702	1.000	.188	.241	.318	.382
INS_3_8	.362	.457	-.332	.375	.218	.108	.188	1.000	.595	.508	.517
INS_3_9	.482	.567	-.009	.433	.348	.251	.241	.595	1.000	.664	.848
INS_3_10	.745	.674	-.152	.725	.664	.550	.318	.508	.664	1.000	.540
INS_3_11	.417	.475	-.099	.349	.290	.333	.382	.517	.848	.540	1.000

Appendix I: CTA-PLS Results

Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Bias	CI low	CI up	Alpha adj	z(1-alpha)	CI low adj.	CI up adj.
0.014	0.013	0.007	2.044	0.041	0	0.003	0.025	0.004	2.904	-0.005	0.033
-0.011	-0.01	0.012	0.892	0.372	0.001	-0.032	0.009	0.004	2.904	-0.047	0.024
-0.003	-0.003	0.002	1.406	0.16	0	-0.006	0	0.004	2.904	-0.009	0.003
-0.046	-0.045	0.014	3.264	0.001	0.001	-0.071	-0.024	0.004	2.904	-0.089	-0.006
-0.036	-0.036	0.012	2.995	0.003	0.001	-0.057	-0.017	0.004	2.904	-0.073	-0.002
0.005	0.005	0.005	0.982	0.326	0	-0.003	0.013	0.004	2.904	-0.009	0.018
0.003	0.003	0.005	0.62	0.535	0	-0.005	0.012	0.004	2.904	-0.012	0.019
-0.013	-0.013	0.01	1.3	0.194	0	-0.03	0.003	0.004	2.904	-0.043	0.016
-0.025	-0.025	0.011	2.217	0.027	0.001	-0.045	-0.007	0.004	2.904	-0.059	0.007
-0.011	-0.011	0.011	1.033	0.302	0	-0.029	0.006	0.004	2.904	-0.043	0.02
0.002	0.002	0.008	0.254	0.8	0	-0.011	0.015	0.004	2.904	-0.021	0.025
0	0	0.008	0.029	0.977	0	-0.013	0.013	0.004	2.904	-0.022	0.023
0.005	0.005	0.005	1.015	0.31	0	-0.003	0.013	0.004	2.904	-0.009	0.019
0.005	0.005	0.006	0.867	0.386	0	-0.004	0.014	0.004	2.904	-0.011	0.021
-0.014	-0.014	0.009	1.533	0.125	0	-0.029	0.001	0.004	2.904	-0.04	0.012
0.019	0.019	0.008	2.376	0.018	0	0.006	0.033	0.004	2.904	-0.004	0.043
0.015	0.015	0.012	1.305	0.192	0	-0.004	0.034	0.004	2.904	-0.018	0.049
-0.001	-0.001	0.008	0.099	0.921	0	-0.014	0.012	0.004	2.904	-0.024	0.022
0.004	0.004	0.008	0.559	0.576	0	-0.009	0.018	0.004	2.904	-0.019	0.028
-0.004	-0.004	0.015	0.266	0.79	0	-0.028	0.021	0.004	2.904	-0.047	0.039
0.005	0.004	0.009	0.519	0.604	0	-0.01	0.021	0.004	2.904	-0.022	0.032
0.034	0.034	0.011	3.261	0.001	-0.001	0.018	0.052	0.004	2.904	0.005	0.066
0.042	0.041	0.016	2.608	0.009	-0.001	0.016	0.069	0.004	2.904	-0.004	0.09
0.025	0.025	0.012	2.092	0.036	0	0.006	0.046	0.004	2.904	-0.009	0.061
-0.003	-0.003	0.005	0.57	0.569	0	-0.011	0.005	0.004	2.904	-0.017	0.011
-0.007	-0.006	0.006	1.07	0.285	0	-0.017	0.003	0.004	2.904	-0.024	0.011
-0.006	-0.006	0.008	0.706	0.48	0	-0.02	0.008	0.004	2.904	-0.03	0.018

Appendix J: Turnitin report

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ORIGINALITY REPORT

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PRIMARY SOURCES

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