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Career progression for white-collar employees: Waste management industry

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: In the era of globalization, businesses face the challenge of developing and maintaining an effective workforce. Human resource leaders should closely monitor employee discontent with career progression to prevent workplace productivity declines and employee attrition. The primary reason for job loss is often due to a lack of career progression. Career progression involves moving up the corporate ladder, accepting new responsibilities, transferring to better positions, and achieving long-term goals. It refers to the upward or downward movement of employees within an organization, from entry-level to management positions. This study aims to fill knowledge gaps on white-collar occupations, career progression, and how these factors impact salary, lifestyle, and job security.

METHODS: This study used quantitative analysis and hypothesis testing to determine the association between the variables. Data analysis was done using Statistical Software for Social Science (SPSS) software. A total of 250 questionnaires were sent out, of which 231 were returned with feedback, and 227 of those were usable, yielding a 90% response rate.

FINDINGS: Multi-collinear analysis data reveal a negative link between salary and career progression, with a beta coefficient of -0.148 and a p-value of 0.010, which is more than 0.001. Nonetheless, the p-value for job security is less than 0.001, with a beta coefficient of 0.462. The beta coefficient for lifestyle is 0.348, and its p-value is less than 0.001. Hence, the research indicates that lifestyle and job security positively correlate with career progression.

CONCLUSION: The National Solid Waste Management Policy aims to establish a sustainable, integrated waste management system, promote public awareness, and enhance infrastructure for efficient waste management. In line with the study's findings, the policy could be enhanced by incorporating measures that promote employees' lifestyles and career progression.

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INTRODUCTION

Prior generations frequently categorized employment based on the collars, shirts, or other clothes that employees typically wore. White-collar professionals, for instance, got their name from the classy white shirts they wore under their business suits (Chatterjee, 2023). Unsuitable settings can suppress natural development, so human resource leaders should monitor employee discontent with career progression to prevent workplace productivity declines and employee attrition. Research indicates that lack of career progression is the primary reason for job loss, according to various studies (Abu-tineh et al., 2023). Many managers and HR professionals mistakenly believe offering more money to employees can solve the 'lack of career progression' problem. Individuals dressed in suits and ties for desk employment, who frequently shun manual labor, are referred to as white-collar workers. Typically, they earn more wages than workers in blue-collar jobs (Khan et al., 2023). The pristine, button-down white shirts that business people wear are referred to as "white collar," a term made popular by American novelist Upton Sinclair in the 1930s. The phrase originated from the requirement that male employees in office buildings in the 19th and 20th centuries almost invariably dress professionally in white collared dress shirts (Bar et al., 2024). The work entails mental rather than physical tasks such as problem-solving, coordination, leading people, and decision-making. Over time, specialized skills and practices are generally expected of white-collar employees. Employees with white-collar jobs must also keep up with the latest advancements and changes in the industry to tailor their strategies (Forsberg et al., 2024; Hanley, 2014). White-collar workers are employed in management, administrative, and clerical positions in office environments (Popova, 2023). Companies that are hiring these personnel frequently need a bachelor's degree or more, as well as comparable industry experience (Lucas et al., 2023). White-collar jobs frequently offer higher earning potential, contingent on additional education (Lopez et al., 2019; Yavas, 2024). Typically, these individuals receive an annual wage (Popova, 2023). White-collar employees typically receive a wage and work Monday through Friday from 9 to 5. A white-collar worker who has regular working hours may make plans for weekends and holidays (Hidasi et al., 2023). Salaried pay is

often provided for white-collar occupations, and the employee's overall performance determines it. Prior studies (Bamieh et al., 2020) have acknowledged that companies involved in the services sector tend to have a higher proportion of manager and white collar positions and higher salaries. Previous research has focused on the structured nature of white-collar jobs and how they affect lifestyle choices. This study goes beyond this by investigating the possible advantages of flexible work schedules and the significance of organizational support in improving the health and well-being of white-collar workers. To improve the general well-being of white-collar workers, the study seeks to provide useful insights for both individuals and businesses (Senthanaar et al., 2020). Studies repeatedly demonstrate that white-collar positions are linked to higher salaries, especially for more experienced professionals and in large organizations (Morton, 1986). The link between salary and profession emphasizes the financial advantages associated with these careers (Ranta et al., 2024). Demerouti and Bakker (2023) stated that relevant tangible resources include information and communication technology (ICT) tools, sufficient rewards as well as career opportunities, and increased job security. In later phases of lifespan perspective, career and job performance may decrease, even while job security, job engagement, and job satisfaction may grow as people advance in their professions owing to developments inside an organization (Alessandri and Borgogni, 2015; Cronin, 2024; Fasbender et al., 2017). Job security is expected to be higher for those with upward mobility, as it is often associated with reduced job insecurity (Green, 2003). Existing literature (Obrenovic et al., 2021) focuses on white jobs and its link with job security. The interplay between career progression and job security is a complex and dynamic process influenced by both individual and organizational factors. White-collar jobs' structured character has been shown to have a major influence on lifestyle; a regular work schedule and professional setting are important contributing aspects (Lee, Kwon, and Paek, 2014). Lifestyle improvements, including healthy living and personal development, are crucial for sustaining work ability and cognitive functioning, particularly as individuals age (Aalbers and Lange, 2015). Because they increase job performance and potential, these enhancements can also result in career progression (McDade, 1990).

Career progression is the movement of employees upward within an organization when progressing from an entry-level position to a management position or moving downward when moving from a management position to an entry-level position (Baral *et al.*, 2024). Although everyone's definition of career progression is different, it all starts with setting long-term goals that are subdivided into short-term objectives (Judge, 2023). A few instances of career progression include moving up the corporate ladder, accepting new responsibilities, changing to better positions, and realizing your long-term goals. It is equivalent to developing one's career. The terms of career progression however, might differ from person to person (Bazine *et al.*, 2023; Steindórsdóttir *et al.*, 2023). In the dynamic world of work, the traditional dress-code classification has evolved into a crucial differentiation between white-collar and blue-collar positions. This research determines the impacts of working in white-collar jobs, with a special emphasis on how career progression in these positions affects salary, lifestyle, and job security (Chiarini *et al.*, 2023; Liu *et al.*, 2024). Career progression within white-collar employment emerges as a critical dependent variable. Studies repeatedly demonstrate a strong relationship between salary and career progression, especially as people move up the corporate ladder (Ikhenoba *et al.*, 2023). Hence, the identified gaps in the literature regarding salary, job security, and lifestyle within white-collar employment serve as focal points. The research aims to strategically improve knowledge by addressing gaps that have been found in white-collar work, notably about salary, job security, and lifestyle (Sumanth *et al.*, 2014). Sorting previous research results by year, the research starts by acknowledging the historical context of white-collar classifications, with a focus on the 1930s and the impact of Upton Sinclair. This places the term's evolution and significance with professionals in office environments in context. The importance of white-collar workers as assets to companies is emphasized by recognizing the traits of these positions, which include mental duties, specialized skills, and the need to keep updated. The literature analysis then identifies research gaps, emphasizing the necessity for a comprehensive knowledge of salary, job security, and lifestyle in white-collar jobs. This comprehensive overview strategically aligns the study's objectives with identified gaps, ensuring the

research contributes significantly to the evolving body of knowledge in white-collar employment dynamics (Sumanth *et al.*, 2014). This study aims to fill knowledge gaps on white-collar occupations, career progression, and how these factors impact salary, lifestyle, and job security in the year 2024.

Literature review

The literature review is a crucial part of the research, examining the dynamics of white-collar workers, their career progression, salary, job security, and lifestyle. The study explores the global and Western connections between white-collar workers' salary, job security, lifestyle, and career progression, highlighting gaps in current knowledge and enhancing understanding for academic discourse and practical organizational settings. Research suggests that higher salaries can positively impact career progression in the waste management industry (Suedekum and Blien, 2007; Kwon, 2006; Bryson *et al.*, 2011; Prince, 2003). Suedekum (2007) found that higher wages can stimulate employment growth, indicating a potentially positive impact on career progression. Kwon (2006) and Bryson (2011) both support the idea that financial incentives, including higher salaries, can motivate workers to excel in their roles and seek promotions. Nevertheless, white-collar professionals engaged in mentally demanding tasks often commit significant time and effort to their roles (Senthanar *et al.*, 2020). This is supported by research showing that salaries can improve worker performance, potentially due to career concerns, higher income, and off-the-job training (Bryson *et al.*, 2011). Prince (2003) further emphasizes the importance of perceived role enhancement opportunities, which could be facilitated by higher salaries, in fostering a positive career trajectory. Similarly, Njoku *et al.*, (2023) claim that as individuals ascend the corporate hierarchy, salary becomes not only a compensation measure but also a symbol of recognition, competence, and achievement within the organizational structure. In the waste management sector, competitive salaries may serve as a motivating factor, attracting and retaining skilled professionals. For example, if white-collar workers in waste management are offered higher salaries, they may be more motivated to excel in their roles, seek promotions, and actively contribute to their career advancement. Therefore, salary plays a significant role in fostering a positive

career trajectory among white-collar professionals in this industry. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: There is a positive relationship between salary and career progression among white-collar workers in the waste management industry.

According to Demerouti and Bakker (2023), the structured nature of white-collar jobs, with clearly defined roles and career paths, is linked to enhanced job security. This predictability and stability can lead to increased organizational commitment and reduced job insecurity (Furåker and Berglund, 2014). Accordingly, research suggests that job security can have a positive impact on the career progression of white-collar workers in the waste management sector (Jiang, 2017). This is supported by the finding that job security can enhance job satisfaction, reduce stress, and provide employees with the confidence to invest in their professional development (Loi et al., 2012). In addition, job security may lead to a focus on long-term career goals, leadership roles, and progression opportunities within the industry (Berntson et al., 2010). Trust in management can also play a crucial role in mitigating the negative consequences of job insecurity (Anand et al., 2023; Shoss et al., 2023). In the context of waste management, where stability and continuity are crucial, white-collar workers who perceive their jobs as secure may be more likely to focus on long-term career goals, take on leadership roles, and pursue opportunities for career progression within the industry. This is particularly important in the context of sustainable human resource management and the sustainability of careers, where continuity is crucial (De Vos and Van der Heijden, 2017). Furthermore, white-collar workers in this industry are interested in ongoing education and training, indicating a desire for career progression (Dymock et al., 2012). Hence, job security plays a significant role in fostering a positive career trajectory among white-collar professionals in this industry. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: There is a positive relationship between job security and career progression among white-collar workers in the waste management industry.

A range of studies supports the hypothesis that a favorable lifestyle, including work-life balance, flexible arrangements, and well-being initiatives (Nishi et al., 2016; Bjärntoft et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2014) can positively impact the career progression of white-

collar workers in the waste management industry. Nishi et al., (2016) found that personal lifestyle factors such as diet, exercise, and sleep can enhance work engagement. Bjärntoft et al., (2020) identified specific occupational and individual factors, such as over-commitment and boundary management, that can influence work-life balance, with perceived flexibility at work playing a key role. Lee et al., (2014) further emphasized the importance of lifestyle, particularly leisure activity and regular exercise, in improving the mental health of white-collar workers. Lastly, Hayman (2010) highlighted the positive impact of flexible work schedules, such as flextime, on job satisfaction and work-life balance. These findings collectively suggest that a conducive lifestyle can indeed contribute to the career progression of white-collar workers in the waste management industry. For example, if white-collar workers in waste management are provided with opportunities for a balanced lifestyle, they may be more likely to invest in their careers, demonstrate increased commitment to their roles, and pursue career progression within the industry. Hence, lifestyle plays a significant role in fostering a positive career trajectory among white-collar professionals in this industry. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: There is a positive relationship between lifestyle and career progression among white-collar workers in the waste management industry.

Materials and Methods

Survey design and data collection

This study applied non-probability sampling methods, like convenience sampling, which might not have reflected the whole demographic context and might have been used for specific populations rather than generalizability (Setia, 2016). This method was often used in descriptive studies because of its quick turnaround times and inexpensive cost, which enabled researchers to collect large amounts of data in a short length of time and easily reachable (Vindrola-Padros and Johnson, 2020). Since this study uses convenience sampling, which is non-probability and involves selecting samples from those that are easily accessible while being fully aware that the samples may not accurately represent the entire population. The sample size for this study was determined by Gill et al., (2010) using a desired accuracy and a 95% confidence level. Out of 50,794 workers in Malaysia's

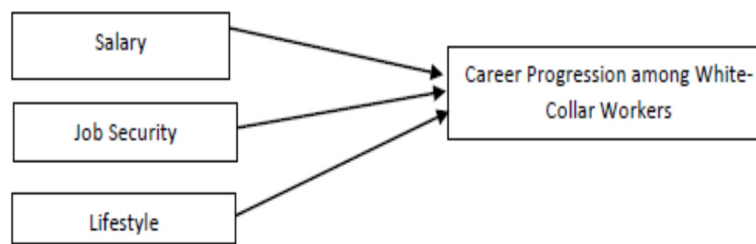


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework of salary, job security, and lifestyle on career progression among white-collar workers

waste management sector overall. Consequently, 217 was the sample size that was employed. This could have been used to identify white-collar workers who were employed by Malaysia's waste management industry. Since the study's focus was on white-collar workers in Malaysia's waste management industry and its population was primarily made up of white-collar employees, the study's unit of analysis was individuals (Cyr, 2016). The Department of Statistics Malaysia reported that as of 2021, there were 50,794 workers in Malaysia's waste management sector. Primary sources related to social groups whose opinions on the themes could be preferred, such as questionnaires and focus groups, were one way to collect data; secondary sources could be found in publications, reports, and other sources (Baye *et al.*, 2020). Considering that questionnaires were the most reliable and efficient quantitative method for this study, questionnaires were sent to the intended respondents (Aithal and Aithal, 2020). Furthermore, this study utilized self-administered online surveys, wherein participants were provided with browser access to complete the survey at their convenience and without any disruption. The questionnaire's overall structure is straightforward and engaging, featuring guidelines, an appropriate introduction, and a well-structured questionnaire (Boparai *et al.*, 2019). A five-point Likert scale with the following scales,

- 1- strongly disagree,
- 2- disagree,
- 3- average,
- 4- agree,
- 5- strongly agree

was used to design the questionnaires (Cooper and Schindler, 2018). Every element of the questionnaire was carefully examined in the context of the research on the Malaysian waste management sector. The

data analysis technique uses Statistical Software for Social Science (SPSS). Primary sources related to social groups whose opinions on the themes could be preferred, such as questionnaires and focus groups, were one way to collect data; secondary sources could be found in publications, reports, and other sources (Baye *et al.*, 2020). Considering that questionnaires were the most reliable and efficient quantitative method for this study, questionnaires were sent to the intended respondents (Aithal and Aithal, 2020). Furthermore, this study utilized self-administered online surveys, wherein participants were provided with browser access to complete the survey at their convenience and without any disruption (Manuilskaya and Vyrskaya, 2019). The measurement items are indicated in Table 1.

Analytical framework

Fig. 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study. The conceptual framework of this study delves into the intricate dynamics between salary, job security, lifestyle, and career progression among white-collar workers. The literature review offers theoretical foundations and empirical insights, unveiling existing gaps and forming the groundwork for the conceptual framework. The study categorizes salary, job security, and lifestyle as independent variables influencing the dependent variable, career progression. The framework acknowledges the complexity of these variables, considering various elements that may impact each independent variable. The study suggests linkages, emphasizing the interconnectedness of salary, job security, lifestyle, and career progression. The final demonstration of the conceptual framework aligns the identified variables with the study's objectives. The proposed model draws upon established theories like Expectancy Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Life-

Table 1: Measurement items

Variable	Items	Source	Likert Scale
Salary	S1: I believe my salary is fair given my responsibilities and the nature of my work. S2: I feel that my salary is appropriate for my skills and contributions S3: I am satisfied with the amount of salary I receive for the work I do. S4: I feel that my salary adequately reflects the efforts I put into my job. S5: I feel my salary is competitive compared to others with similar jobs.	OJO and OLAJUMOKE (2023)	5-Likert Scale
Job Security	J1: I feel confident about the security of my job. J2: I believe I will keep my job shortly. J3: I will be employed for a long time in my present workplace. J4: I view my workplace as secure in every respect.	Rao and Shailashri (2023)	5-Likert Scale
Lifestyle	L1: I experience fulfilment in my work L2: I maintain a healthy balance between work and non-work life. L3: I successfully prioritize between work and family responsibilities. L4: I effectively cope with stressors related to work. L5: I experience a supportive and fair work environment.	Clarke et al., (2008)	5-Likert Scale
Career Progression	C1: I am goal-oriented for continuous career growth. C2: I am confident in my skills for my career goals. C3: I seek advice from mentors to navigate my career path. C4: I prioritize tasks to achieve progress in my career. C5: I understand my career interests C6: I demonstrate leadership qualities to lead my career.	Smismans et al., (2021)	5-Likert Scale

Span Theory, and Career Development Theory (Eerde, and Thierry, 1996; Savickas, 1994). These theories offer a theoretical foundation for understanding the relationships among salary, job security, lifestyle, and career progression (Reinhardt and Wahba, 1975; Walumbwa, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2011; Höchli, Brügger, and Messner, 2018). Expectancy Theory provides insights into the motivational aspects of salary and career progression (Wabba and House, 1974). In the context of this study, salary serves as a crucial factor influencing career progression, as employees may perceive a direct correlation between their performance, financial rewards, and career progression opportunities (Hemamalini and Washington, 2014). Social Exchange Theory illuminates the reciprocal relationships between job security and career progression, emphasizing the dynamics of give-and-take (Jepsen and Rodwell, 2010). Job security becomes a resource provided by the organization in exchange for the employee's commitment and contribution (Hur et al., 2020). Life-Span Theory contributes by elucidating the evolving

nature of individuals' lifestyles and career trajectories over their entire lifespan (Morrison, 2012). Career Development Theory explores the multifaceted process of career choice and progression, considering internal and external factors that shape individuals' vocational journeys (Murugami and Nel, 2012). This comprehensive framework aims to contribute to a nuanced exploration of the factors influencing career progression among white-collar workers, aligning with the comprehensive nature of the study.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics and analysis for variables entering the analysis

The age range is divided into four groups: 18–30, 31–40, 41–50, and 50 years and older. Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents (63.0%, $n = 143$) were between the ages of 18 and 30. Next in line were those between the ages of 31 and 40 (26.4%, $n = 60$), 41 to 50 (4.8%, $n = 11$), and 5.3% ($n = 12$) who were 50 and above. The three categories of high school, undergraduate, and graduate education make up the

Table 2: Result of the respondent's profile

Demographic	Categories	Frequency (n=227)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-30	143	63.0
	31-40	60	26.4
	41-50	11	4.8
	50 and above	12	5.3
Complete Background	Education		
	High School	9	4.0
	Undergraduate	140	61.7
	Graduate	77	33.9
Year of Service	Less than 1 year	47	20.7
	2-5 years	100	44.1
	6-9 years	50	22.0
	10 years and above	29	12.8
Job Position Level	Non-Executive	41	18.1
	Assistant		
	Executive & Above	227	81.9

complete educational background. Table 2 shows that 61.7% of respondents (n = 140) had an undergraduate degree, with graduate degree respondents following behind at 33.9% (n = 77) and high school respondents at 4.0% (n = 9). The duration of service is divided into four categories: less than 1 year, 2 to 5 years, 6 to 9 years, and 10 years and above. Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents (44.1%, n = 100) have had 2–5 years of service. These are followed by respondents with 6–9 years of service (22.0%, n = 50), those with less than 1 year of service (20.7%, n = 47), and 12.8% (n = 29) who have had 10 years or more of service. There are two categories for job position level classification: executive and non-executive. Table 2 shows that 18.1% of respondents (n = 41) are non-executive, while the majority of respondents (81.9%, n = 186) are executive.

Reflective measurement model results

Reliability analysis

The part on measurement model assessment contains more analysis. A reliability test was carried out to determine each variable's Cronbach's alpha to evaluate internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha has an acceptable range of 0.7 to 0.9, indicating strong reliability. Findings will be more credible if the value is greater than demonstrating how the variables were positively associated with one another (Shiau et al., 2019). In this research, Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.628 to 0.897 based on Table 3, demonstrating high dependability and adherence to the rule of thumb.

Multiple regression analysis

The study employed multiple regression analysis to ascertain the correlation between the independent factors, namely salary, job security, and Lifestyle, and the dependent variable, Career Progression. Whether to accept or reject the put-out hypotheses will be determined by the results of the multiple regression analysis. According to Copper and Schindler (2018), the independent variables in the regression model can explain the variation percentage of the dependent variable using the R² metric, which gauges the degree of fit. By taking into account the number of independent variables in the regression model, the adjusted R² avoids overestimating the impact of adding an independent variable on the quantity of variability captured by the estimated model (Plonsky et al., 2018). According to Zikmund et al., (2016), the adjusted R² is thought to offer the most accurate estimation of the degree of shared variation once a strong association between the variables has been established. Based on Table 4, with a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.675, the regression analysis results show a strong positive association between the dependent variable (career progression) and the independent variables (lifestyle, salary, and job security). Given their high R-value, it is likely that these indicators together have a major effect on career progression. These three factors account for roughly 45.6% of the variance in Career Progression, according to the coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.456. This high percentage suggests that factors such as lifestyle, salary, and job security have a significant role

Table 3: Result of the reliability analysis

Construct	No. of Item	Item	Reliability Test
CareerProgression	6	I am goal-oriented for continuous career growth.	0.852
		I am confident in my skills for my career goals.	0.816
		I seek advice from mentors to navigate my career path.	0.851
		I prioritize tasks to achieve progress in my career.	0.828
		I understand my career interests.	0.840
		I demonstrate leadership qualities to lead my career.	0.832
Salary	5	I believe my salary is fair given my responsibilities and the nature of my work.	0.855
		I feel that my salary is appropriate for my skills and contributions.	0.880
		I am satisfied with the amount of salary I receive for the work I do.	0.892
		I feel that my salary adequately reflects the efforts I put into my job.	0.884
		I feel my salary is competitive compared to others with similar jobs.	0.897
Job Security	4	I feel confident about the security of my job.	0.697
		I believe I will keep my job in the near future.	0.647
		I will be employed for a long time in my present workplace.	0.628
		I view my workplace as secure in every respect.	0.681
Lifestyle	5	I experience fulfilment in my work.	0.790
		I maintain a healthy balance between work and non-work life.	0.696
		I successfully prioritize between work and family responsibilities.	0.669
		I effectively cope with stressors related to work.	0.685
		I experienced a supportive and fair work environment.	0.690

in determining how far along a person's career will go within the study population. This model's robustness is further supported by the modified R² value of 0.448, which shows that about 44.8% of the variability in Career Progression is still explained by these factors even after considering the number of predictors. With a standard error of 0.42580, the model's predictions are, on average, 0.42580 units off from the real Career Progression values, showing a reasonable level of accuracy. The regression model's residuals are tested for autocorrelation using the Durbin-Watson statistic, which has a value of 1.471. Although there should be no autocorrelation, a value of 1.471 indicates some positive autocorrelation, however, not enough to rule out the model. The optimum value is about 2. In general, the model offers a solid and trustworthy explanation of career progression based on salary, job security, and lifestyle

Correlation matrix

The linear relationship between the variables

is shown using a correlation matrix (Ozdemir *et al.*, 2019). According to Zikmund *et al.*, (2016), a correlation value of more than 80% suggests the presence of a multicollinearity problem; strong multicollinearity reduces validity and can lead to skewed study conclusions. The correlation matrix is shown in Table 5, with a value range of 0.215 to 0.642; all of the independent variables in the questionnaire are connected. Job Security had the highest correlation, 0.615, between the independent and dependent variables.

Regression ANOVA

According to Hair *et al.*, (2019), regression analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a statistical technique that compares the variances of two or more independent variables on a dependent variable and shows a significant association when the p-value is less than 0.05 at the 95% confidence level. If the p-value is higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis should not be disproved because the evidence against it is so weak

Table 4: Multiple regression analysis

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.675 ^a	.456	.448	.42580	1.471

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lifestyle, Salary, Job Security

b. Dependent Variable: Career Progression

Table 5: Correlation matrix

Correlations				
	Career Progression	Salary	Job Security	Lifestyle
Career Progression	Pearson Correlation 1			
Salary	Pearson Correlation .215**	1		
Job Security	Pearson Correlation .615**	.480**	1	
Lifestyle	Pearson Correlation .585**	.408**	.642**	1

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

Table 6: Regression ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.844	3	11.281	62.224	<.001 ^b
	Residual	40.430	223	.181		
	Total	74.274	226			

a. Dependent Variable: Career Progression

b. Predictors: (Constant), Lifestyle, Salary, Job Security

(Smith, 2018). The regression ANOVA results show there is a statistically significant link between the predictors (Lifestyle, Salary, and Job Security) and the dependent variable (Career Progression), as indicated by the p-value in ANOVA Table 6, which is 0.001. This indicates that at least one predictor significantly influences career progression and that the regression model fits the data well.

Multicollinearity analysis

According to Bougie *et al.*, (2019), the beta coefficient generally indicates that a number nearer 1 indicates that the independent variable will have a higher influence on the dependent variable, whilst a value of 0 indicates that the dependent variable would not significantly affect the study. According to Table 7, both standardized and unstandardized coefficients are included in the model. The constant term (intercept), which stands for the Career Progression baseline level at which all predictors are zero, is 1.987. For every unit change in each predictor, the unstandardized coefficients give the raw change

in the dependent variable. In particular, Salary's unstandardized coefficient is -0.095, meaning that when all other variables are held constant, Career Progression falls by 0.095 units for every unit increase in Salary. With a t-value of -2.608 and a p-value of 0.010, this negative association is statistically significant, indicating that salary has a small but substantial inverse link with career progression. An increase of one unit in Job Security is correlated, holding other variables constant, with an increase of 0.324 units in Career Progression, according to the unstandardized coefficient of 0.324 for Job Security. With a t-value of 6.815 and a p-value of less than 0.001, this positive connection is highly significant. With a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.462, Job Security is the predictor in the model that has the biggest effect on Career Progression in comparison to the other predictors. Similarly, the unstandardized coefficient for lifestyle is 0.276, meaning that for every unit increase in lifestyle, there is a corresponding increase in career progression of 0.276 units. With a p-value of less than 0.001 and a t-value of 5.341, this association

Table 7: Coefficients

Model	Coefficients ^a						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.987	.160		12.423	<.001		
1 Salary	-.095	.036	-.148	-2.608	.010	.753	1.328
Job Security	.324	.048	.462	6.815	<.001	.531	1.885
Lifestyle	.276	.052	.348	5.341	<.001	.574	1.741

a. Dependent Variable: Career Progression

is likewise very significant. Though much less so than Job Security, the standardized coefficient for Lifestyle is 0.348, indicating that it too has a significant impact on Career Progression. Multicollinearity among the predictors is evaluated using collinearity statistics, such as Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance. A VIF value of less than 10 and tolerance values near 1 suggest no discernible multicollinearity. Within this model, the tolerance values for salary are 0.753 and 1.328, for job security they are 0.531 and 1.885, and for lifestyle, they are 0.574 and 1.741. These figures imply that multicollinearity is not a significant issue for this model. Overall, the results of the regression analysis show that, although salary has a negative impact, lifestyle and job security both considerably and favorably affect career progression, with job security having the largest impact. The model is strong and offers insightful information about the variables influencing Career Progression in the population under study. Table 7 indicates that the previous equation can be expressed as follows:

$$y = 1.987 - 0.95 X_1 + 0.324 X_2 + 0.276 X_3$$

where:

y = Career Progression among white-collar employees

X1 = Salary,

X2 = Job Security,

X3 = Lifestyle.

Discussion of results

The research's main finding (H1) is that there is an insignificant relationship between salary and career progression among white-collar workers in the waste management industry. The analysis's findings indicated that the salary's beta coefficient is -0.148 and that its p-value is 0.010, which is more than 0.001. The salary and career progression do not exhibit a significant association because the p-value is more

than 0.001. This result directly answers the research question regarding the extent to which salary impacts career progression in this sector. Higher salaries in this industry may not always translate into better prospects for career progression (Viljoen et al., 2016). The key finding of this study is the inverse relationship between salary and career progression. This implies that, in comparison to lower-salary individuals, those with higher salaries in the waste management sector would have fewer prospects for upward mobility. (Woolston, 2016). This study raises important questions, such as the necessity of taking industry-specific factors into account when examining career progression, and also contradicts accepted knowledge (Hüttges and Fay, 2015). The findings are noteworthy because they shed light on the dynamics of careers in the waste management sector and indicate that salary is not a reliable indicator of career progression (Blundell et al., 2020). To progress in their careers, employees may need to concentrate on issues other than salary, and employers may want to take into account how salary structures affect employee motivation and career progression (Pérez and Sabelis, 2019). The research's H2 is that there is a positive relationship between job security and career progression among white-collar workers in the waste management industry. According to the analysis's findings, the job security's beta coefficient is 0.462, and its p-value is less than 0.001. There was a substantial positive correlation between job security and career progression; that is, for every unit increase in job security, career progression will increase by 0.462. Thus, H2 is supported. This implies that career progression in the waste management sector is more common among white-collar employees who believe their jobs are secure. The results make it abundantly evident that career progression is greatly aided by job security. The results corroborate the findings of

Table 8: Summary of Testing

Research Question	Hypothesis	Results
To what extent does the salary have a relationship with career progression among white-collar workers in the Malaysian environmental service industry?	There is a positive relationship between salary and career progression among white-collar workers in the waste management industry.	Not supported
To what extent does job security have a relationship with career progression among white-collar workers in the Malaysian environmental service industry?	There is a positive relationship between job security and career progression among white-collar workers in the waste management industry.	Supported
To what extent does the lifestyle have a relationship with career progression among white-collar workers in the Malaysian environmental service industry?	There is a positive relationship between lifestyle and career progression among white-collar workers in the waste management industry.	Supported

previous research studies by [Anand et al., \(2023\)](#), which also found a favorable relationship between career progression and job security in various circumstances. According to the research [Haq et al., \(2023\)](#), job security gives workers the steadiness and self-assurance they need to concentrate on their long-term professional objectives. The researcher's H3 is that there is a positive relationship between lifestyle and career progression among white-collar workers in the waste management industry. According to the analysis's findings, the lifestyle's beta coefficient is 0.348, and its p-value is less than 0.001. Career progression and lifestyle have a strongly positive association, meaning that for every unit increase in lifestyle, career progression will improve by 0.348. Thus, H3 is supported. It is suggested in the conclusion that white-collar individuals who keep a healthy and balanced lifestyle are more likely to see career growth in the waste management industry, since lifestyle has a substantial beneficial impact on career progression. The results demonstrate that lifestyle elements, including mental and physical health, have a major impact on career progression. The summary of testing has been presented in [Table 8](#)

Practical and policy recommendation

A thorough foundation for efficiently managing solid waste is provided by the National Solid Waste Management Policy (NSWMP). Expanding this strategy would be a good way to deal with the results of this study, which show that among white-collar workers in the waste management sector, lifestyle characteristics positively correlate with career advancement. These results can be incorporated into the policy to support a more comprehensive

approach to waste management that takes career development and employee well-being into account. Developing an integrated and sustainable solid waste management system, encouraging public knowledge and engagement in appropriate waste management practices, and improving infrastructure and services to enable efficient waste management are some of the main objectives of the National Solid Waste Management Policy. This policy can be improved by adding certain measures that promote employees' lifestyles and career progression in light of the study's conclusions. These actions could include offering wellness programs and mental health support services, implementing flexible work schedules to enhance work-life balance, and providing chances for ongoing learning and development to support career progression ([Kossek et al., 2017](#)). A more robust workforce and better control over career progression as a key strategic resource for the industry will be made possible by increased organizational support for work-life balance and individual well-being. Considerable progress is anticipated in the future about the sustainability of the sector. All parties, such as employers, policymakers, and employees, will receive an equitable share of these benefits.

Limitation and future recommendation

Even though the present study contributes to the existing body of knowledge, it also has some limitations. First, only white-collar employees in the waste management sector were included in the study due to time constraints. Lengthening the study and broadening the pool of respondents are suggested ways to improve the comprehensiveness of subsequent research. Thus, a comprehensive understanding

of the elements impacting career growth would be achieved by involving individuals from various industry sectors, such as top managers and blue-collar workers. Secondly, the present investigation utilized a quantitative research methodology. Future studies could think at using a mixed-method or qualitative approach to acquire a deeper understanding of the nuances of how lifestyle affects career progression. Compared to cross-sectional research, longitudinal studies would be useful for tracking changes and trends over time, offering a more dynamic picture of career progression. Focus groups and interviews can produce rich, comprehensive data that quantitative approaches might miss. Thirdly, SPSS was used in this study to analyze the data. Incorporating sophisticated tools such as SMART PLS3, SAS, NVIVO, and AMOS could improve the analysis's robustness in subsequent studies. A deeper understanding of the interactions between variables would be possible with the use of these tools, which would also enable the inclusion of moderating and mediating variables and more advanced econometric methodologies. By using these sophisticated methods, it may be possible to find new insights and improve the accuracy of the findings. Fourthly, extending the study's reach beyond a specific location is essential to generalizing its findings. To provide a more representative and diverse sample, data from other locations or countries should be gathered for future research. The accuracy and dependability of the data gathered would be increased by using a group of skilled enumerators to perform face-to-face interviews in various locations. Additionally, this method would aid in identifying regional and cultural variations that could impact career progression in the waste management sector.

CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this research is to determine the correlation between the dependent variable career progression and the independent variables salary, job security, and lifestyle among Malaysia's white-collar employees in the waste management sector. For the aim of achieving the goal, three objectives were created. Through the distribution of questionnaires to the 250 white-collar workers in Malaysia's waste management industry, the analysis may be used to address the goals that were achieved. The conceptual framework was built as a result of the numerous literature reviews presented.

After meeting those aims, three hypotheses were developed, which will be discussed in more detail in this study. The findings show that despite the common perception that higher salaries lead to better career progression, the data indicate otherwise for the waste management industry. The results of this analysis differ from those of research by [Smith \(2020\)](#) and Johnson and [Lee \(2018\)](#), which discovered a positive association between salary and career progression in other sectors. This disparity highlights the special characteristics of the waste management sector. The results show that high salaries are not always correlated with progression in one's profession, which adds new information to the subject. Workers who can lead healthy lifestyles typically focus on professional growth, take on greater responsibility, and perform better at work, all of which contribute to career progression ([Ryan et al., 2023](#)). The results support the notion that a well-maintained lifestyle creates an environment that is favourable for career progression. The results are in line with earlier research, which discovered that leading a healthy lifestyle helps one's career progression and that leading a healthy lifestyle has a positive impact on professional development and career success in a certain industry, specifically the waste management sector. The study's contribution and potential directions for future research were also emphasized. According to the research, career progression is significantly and favorably impacted by lifestyle and job security. The need for firms to develop encouraging work cultures that strike a balance between work and personal life is highlighted by this research. In this regard, developing and ensuring continuous growth in the manufacturing sector is among the main agendas for Malaysia. In addition, the importance of ensuring a good working environment is very necessary so that the productivity of the workforce will be better and more productive. Work environment means the processes, systems, structures, or conditions in the workplace that have a positive impact on the productivity of the workforce. The work environment also includes policies, regulations, culture, resources, work relationships, work location and internal and external factors of the work environment that influence the way employees carry out their respective tasks. Relationships with colleagues include relationships with employees who are at the same hierarchical level and do

not have authority over each other. Maintaining employer-employee relationships that contribute to satisfactory productivity, motivation, and morale among employees should be a focus for every organization. Psychosocial support in relationships between employees is capable of creating high work productivity among employees where conditions will help the work process to be carried out smoothly and more perfectly.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

N.Z. Mohamed Sabri performed the literature review and experimental design and analyzed and interpreted the data, and H. Vasudevan, P. Venugopal, and M. Mohamed Saat prepared the manuscript text and manuscript edition. N.Z. Mohamed Sabri and H. Vasudevan performed the experiments and literature review, compiled the data, and prepared the manuscript. N.Z. Mohamed Sabri performed the data analysis and findings, while H. Vasudevan compiled the data analysis and findings for the manuscript edition.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that no potential conflicts of interest in publishing this work. Furthermore, the authors have witnessed ethical issues such as plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication, double publication or submission, and redundancy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

$\bar{Y}$	Average of observed data
	Adjusted coefficient of determination
R^2_{adj}	
$\bar{Y}$	Average of observed data
AVE	Average variance extracted
R^2	Coefficient of determination
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
H	Hypothesis
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
α	Level of significance
NSWMP	National Solid Waste Management Policy
<i>p-value</i>	Probability value
<i>r</i>	Pearson correlation coefficient
<i>r-value</i>	Pearson correlation coefficient
SPSS	Statistical Software for Social Science
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

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