

The copyright © of this thesis belongs to its rightful author and/or other copyright owner. Copies can be accessed and downloaded for non-commercial or learning purposes without any charge and permission. The thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted as a whole without the permission from its rightful owner. No alteration or changes in format is allowed without permission from its rightful owner.



**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES AT THE
ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL WITHIN THE MALAYSIA
SME BUSINESS**



UUM
SAFIAH RASHID
Universiti Utara Malaysia

**DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
May 2017**

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES AT THE
ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL WITHIN THE MALAYSIA SME
BUSINESS**



By
SAFIAH RASHID

UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

**Thesis Submitted to
Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business,
Universiti Utara Malaysia,
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Doctor of Business Administration**



**OTHMAN YEOP ABDULLAH GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA**

**PERAKUAN KERJA TESIS / DISERTASI
(Certification of thesis / dissertation)**

Kami, yang bertandatangan, memperakukan bahawa
(We, the undersigned, certify that)

SAFIAH BINTI RASHID

calon untuk Ijazah **DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**
(candidate for the degree of)

telah mengemukakan tesis / disertasi yang bertajuk:
(has presented his/her thesis / dissertation of the following title):

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL
WITHIN THE MALAYSIA SME BUSINESS**

seperti yang tercatat di muka surat tajuk dan kulit tesis / disertasi.
(as it appears on the title page and front cover of the thesis / dissertation).

Bahawa tesis/disertasi tersebut boleh diterima dari segi bentuk serta kandungan dan meliputi bidang ilmu dengan memuaskan, sebagaimana yang ditunjukkan oleh calon dalam ujian lisan yang diadakan pada:
08 Mei 2017.

(That the said thesis/dissertation is acceptable in form and content and displays a satisfactory knowledge of the field of study as demonstrated by the candidate through an oral examination held on:
08 May 2017.

Pengerusi Viva : **PROF. DR. KALSOM BT. KAYAT**
(Chairman for Viva)

Tandatangan
(Signature)

Pemeriksa Luar : **ASSOC. PROF. DR. NORMALA DAUD**
(External Examiner)

Tandatangan
(Signature)

Pemeriksa Dalam : **ASSOC. PROF. DR. NORSIAH BT MAT**
(Internal Examiner)

Tandatangan
(Signature)

Tarikh: **08 May 2017**
(Date)

Nama Pelajar
(Name of Student)

: SAFIAH BINTI RASHID

Tajuk Tesis / Disertasi
(Title of the Thesis / Dissertation)

: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL
LEVEL WITHIN THE MALAYSIA SME BUSINESS

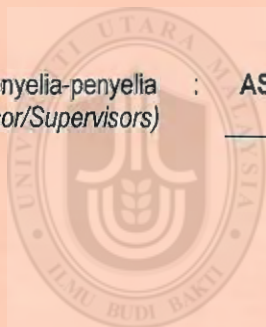
Program Pengajian
(Programme of Study)

: DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Nama Penyelia/Penyelia-penyelia
(Name of Supervisor/Supervisors)

: ASSOC. PROF. DR. MOHD. AMY AZHAR MOHD. HARIF

Tandatangan
(Signature)

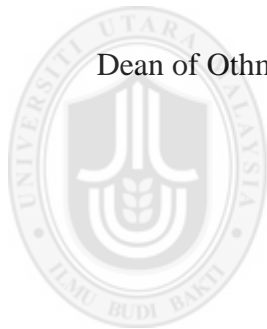


UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Post Graduate degree from the Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), I agree that the Library of this university may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying this dissertation in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by my supervisor or in their absence, by the Dean of Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business where I did my dissertation. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this dissertation parts of it for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the UUM in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my dissertation.

Request for permission to copy or to make other use of materials in this dissertation in whole or in part should be addressed to:



Dean of Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business
Universiti Utara Malaysia
06010 UUM Sintok
Kedah Darul Aman

UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Employee engagement has been acknowledged to help produce superior performance outcomes at the organizational level, but studies related to employee engagement outcomes are insufficient and there are limited investigations of this phenomenon in the context of Malaysia SME business. This gap was the impetus for the present research in identifying the factors of employee engagement at the organizational level. This research was guided by the following research problem: “how and why the factors of employee engagement outcomes at the organizational level could be established within the Malaysia SME business?” The synthesis of literature on employee engagement outcomes at the organizational level produced three research issues. In order to investigate these issues, a qualitative study was conducted and the respondents were identified using the snowballing sampling technique. 12 convergent interviews were conducted to confirm the factors of employee engagement outcomes at the organizational level. The data were then analysed using the content analysis technique. The research findings confirmed 11 factors of employee engagement, i.e. employee retention, profitability, absenteeism, customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, organizational performance, self-efficacy of manager, advocacy of organization, business growth, and satisfaction of business partner. The satisfaction of business partner is a new emerging factor which demonstrates the present research’s contribution to the body of knowledge. The results for the second and the third research issues suggested nine core factors and two non-core factors respectively. The contribution of this theory-building research is in the development and confirmation of the revised conceptual framework about the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, including the core factors and the non-core factors. Also, the present research provides methodological, theoretical, practical, and policy implications. The revised conceptual framework built from theories and empirical research provides the foundation for future research.

Keywords: employee engagement, qualitative, convergent interview, SME

ABSTRAK

Penglibatan pekerja telah diakui dapat meningkatkan kecemerlangan prestasi di peringkat organisasi. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian berkaitan dengan hasil penglibatan pekerja adalah tidak mencukupi dan kajian ke atas fenomena ini dalam konteks perniagaan Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana (PKS) di Malaysia juga terhad. Jurang yang dinyatakan tersebut adalah dorongan utama kepada penghasilan kajian ini dalam mengenalpasti faktor-faktor hasil penglibatan pekerja di peringkat organisasi. Kajian ini dijalankan berpandukan kepada permasalahan kajian berikut: “bagaimanakah dan mengapakah faktor-faktor hasil penglibatan pekerja di peringkat organisasi dapat diperkukuhkan dalam perniagaan PKS di Malaysia?” Sintesis literatur tentang hasil penglibatan pekerja di peringkat organisasi menghasilkan tiga isu kajian. Bagi mengkaji ketiga-tiga isu kajian tersebut, maka kajian kualitatif telah dijalankan dan responden kajian telah dikenalpasti dengan menggunakan teknik pensampelan bola salju. Sebanyak 12 wawancara tumpu telah dijalankan untuk mengesahkan faktor-faktor hasil penglibatan pekerja di peringkat organisasi. Data kemudiannya dianalisa dengan menggunakan teknik *content analysis*. Penemuan kajian ini mengesahkan bahawa terdapat 11 faktor bagi penglibatan pekerja iaitu pengekalan pekerja, keuntungan, ketidakhadiran, kepuasan pelanggan, produktiviti, kesetiaan pelanggan, prestasi organisasi, efikasi sendiri pengurus, sokongan organisasi, pertumbuhan perniagaan, dan kepuasan rakan kongsi perniagaan. Faktor-faktor yang dinyatakan ini juga adalah jawapan kepada isu kajian yang pertama. Faktor kepuasan rakan kongsi perniagaan adalah penemuan baharu yang juga merupakan sumbangan utama kajian ini kepada badan pengetahuan. Manakala bagi isu kajian kedua dan ketiga pula penemuan kajian mendapati terdapat sembilan faktor utama dan dua faktor bukan teras. Sumbangan kajian dari segi pembinaan teori adalah dalam pengukuhan dan pengesahan rangka kerja konseptual yang telah disemak semula tentang faktor-faktor hasil penglibatan pekerja di peringkat organisasi, termasuklah faktor-faktor utama dan faktor-faktor bukan teras. Kajian ini juga menyediakan implikasi metodologi, teori, praktikal, dan dasar. Rangka kerja konseptual yang disemak semula ini dibina berasaskan teori dan kajian empirikal telah menyediakan asas untuk kajian masa hadapan.

Kata kunci: penglibatan pekerja, kualitatif, wawancara tumpu, PKS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to Allah SWT for the gifts of strength, patience, perseverance, and endurance to complete this challenging yet rewarding journey.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Associate Prof Dr Mohd Amy Azhar Haji Mohd Harif for his remarkable guidance and professional supervision throughout the 20 months journey in the effort to complete this dissertation. His profound insight and intellectual advice helped sharpen my ideas and developed a good thinking process in regard to this chosen subject matter.

Upon the demanding processes of publishing this dissertation, next, I would like to exhibit deepest gratefulness to my family, especially my husband, Abdul Razak Hamid, and my four precious children, Ikhwan, Sarah, Iman, and Hasya for their unconditional love, understanding, continuous prayers, and never-ending support. Their priceless sacrifices had greatly helped me throughout the struggle of completing this dissertation.

Moreover, I am indebted to the respondents who participated in this research for their valuable time, and also for sharing their countless experience and knowledge.

In addition, I must thank several people, particularly my colleagues and researchers around the world who physically and virtually assisted me by providing treasured literature and inputs, opinions, feedbacks, and constructive comments in the pursuit of a doctorate degree.

Finally, an utmost appreciation is dedicated to all above for the sincere support and love I received since the first day I started this meaningful journey of seeking and enhancing knowledge.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE PAGE	i
CERTIFICATION OF THESIS WORK	ii
PERMISSION TO USE	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ABSTRAK	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvi
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	xvii
LIST OF PAPER IN CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS	xviii
LIST OF CONFERENCE ATTENDED AND PAPER PRESENTED	xix
LIST OF ONE-TO-ONE DISCUSSION WITH EXPERTS	xx
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background of Research	2
1.2 Research Problem	8
1.3 Justifications of Research	11
1.4 A Glimpse on the Research Issues and the Research Objectives	13
1.5 Research Methodology	16
1.6 Delimitations of Research and their Justifications	18
1.7 Outlines of Dissertation	19
1.8 Conclusion	22

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	Page
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	23
2.0 Introduction	23
2.1 Evolution of Employee Engagement Research	24
2.2 Definition of Employee Engagement	29
2.3 Related Theories of Employee Engagement	38
2.3.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)	39
2.3.2 Job-Demand Resources Model (JD-R)	41
2.3.3 Synthesis of SET and JD-R Model	43
2.4 Employee Engagement Outcome	44
2.5 Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level in Business	46
2.6 An Overview of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia	57
2.7 Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level in SMEs	63
2.8 Preliminary Conceptual Framework	65
2.9 Research Issues	68
2.10 Conclusion	70
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	72
3.0 Introduction	72
3.1 Research Approach	73
3.2 Justifications of Qualitative Approach for this Research	74
3.3 Nature of Convergent Interviewing	77
3.3.1 Process of Convergent Interviewing	78
3.3.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of Convergent Interviewing	80
3.3.3 Validity and Reliability of Convergent Interviewing Findings	84

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	Page
3.4 Implementations of Convergent Interviewing Technique	87
3.4.1 Population and Sample Selection	88
3.4.2 Sample Size	91
3.4.3 Interview Protocol	92
3.4.4 Labelling Convention for Respondents	94
3.5 Data Analysis Technique	95
3.5.1 Preparation Phase	97
3.5.2 Organizing Phase	97
3.5.3 Research Findings Phase	98
3.5.4 Reporting Phase	100
3.6 Ethical Considerations	101
3.7 Conclusion	102
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS	103
4.0 Introduction	103
4.1 Research Setting	104
4.1.1 Snowballing of Respondents for the Research	104
4.1.2 Profiles of the Respondents	107
4.2 Data Analysis Process	114
4.3 Findings on Research Issues	116
4.3.1 Research Issue 1: What are the Factors of Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level within the Malaysia SME Business?	116
4.3.2 Research Issue 2: What are the Core Factors of Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level within the Malaysia SME Business?	125

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	Page
4.3.3 Research Issue 3: What are the Non-Core Factors of Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level within the Malaysia SME Business?	133
4.4 Summary and Conclusion	141
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS	143
5.0 Introduction	143
5.1 Conclusions on the Three Research Issues	146
5.1.1 Research Issue 1: What are the Factors of Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level within the Malaysia SME Business?	148
5.1.2 Research Issue 2: What are the Core Factors of Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level within the Malaysia SME Business?	159
5.1.3 Research Issue 3: What are the Non-Core Factors of Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level within the Malaysia SME Business?	170
5.2 Conclusions on the Research Problem	173
5.3 Research Implications	179
5.3.1 Implications for Methodology	180
5.3.2 Implications for Theory	181
5.3.3 Implications for Practice	181
5.3.4 Implications for Policy	184
5.4 Limitations	187
5.5 Directions for Further Research	188
5.6 Conclusion	189

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	Page
REFERENCES	192
APPENDICES	221
Appendix 1 Interview Invitation Letter	221
Appendix 2 Interview Protocol	223
Appendix 3 Modified Interview Protocol	227
Appendix 4 Consent to Participate in a Research Project	232
Appendix 5 Seven Steps to Facilitate Effective Communication	234
Appendix 6 Results of the Convergent Interviews	235



UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1.1 : SMEs contribution to Malaysia economy 2005-2020	4
Table 1.2 : SMEs contribution to GDP, employment and exports in Asia, 2011	5
Table 2.1 : Analysis of the articles on employment engagement and author's background	31
Table 2.2 : Synthesis of definitions of employee engagement by academics and practitioners	35
Table 2.3 : Analysis of the articles on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level	47
Table 2.4 : Synthesis of factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level	50
Table 2.5 : SMEs definition in Malaysia	58
Table 2.6 : Number of establishments by sector and percentage share to the total SMEs and establishments	60
Table 2.7 : Number of establishments and percentage share of SMEs by firm size	61
Table 2.8 : Percentage share of SMEs by state in 2003 vis-à-vis 2010, per cent	62
Table 2.9 : List of research issue for this research	71
Table 3.1 : Four validity and reliability measures for evaluating the quality of qualitative research	87
Table 3.2 : Summary of the data collection technique, population, sample selection and sampling technique	92
Table 4.1 : Summary of respondents' profiles	108
Table 4.2 : Analysis of the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within Malaysia SME business	117
Table 4.3 : Analysis of the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within Malaysia SME business	126

LIST OF TABLES (continued)

	Page
Table 4.4 : Analysis of the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within Malaysia SME business	134
Table 5.1 : Conclusions for each research issue of this research	147



LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1 : Flow of Chapter 1	1
Figure 1.2 : Formation process of research issues	15
Figure 1.3 : Organization structure of dissertation	21
Figure 2.1 : Flow of Chapter 2	23
Figure 2.2 : Milestones of literature review, Box A	25
Figure 2.3 : Evolution of employee engagement research	26
Figure 2.4 : Milestones of literature review, Box B	29
Figure 2.5 : Three components of employee engagement and its combination	38
Figure 2.6 : Social Exchange Theory (SET) of employee engagement	41
Figure 2.7 : Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model of employee engagement	42
Figure 2.8 : Related theories of employee engagement and its outcome	43
Figure 2.9 : Milestones of literature review, Box C	44
Figure 2.10 : Two-window employee engagement outcome, Box D	45
Figure 2.11 : Funnel approach for the preliminary conceptual framework construction	66
Figure 2.12 : Preliminary conceptual framework of this research	67
Figure 3.1 : Flow of Chapter 3	72
Figure 3.2 : Flow diagram of research plan and convergent interviewing	74
Figure 3.3 : Three stages of convergent interviewing process	80
Figure 3.4 : Convergent interviewing process	82
Figure 3.5 : Snowball sampling process for this research	90
Figure 3.6 : Flow of interview protocol	93
Figure 3.7 : Labelling convention for taped recording of the interview	94
Figure 3.8 : Labelling convention for respondents	95

LIST OF FIGURES (continued)

	Page
Figure 3.9 : Four phases of data analysis	96
Figure 4.1 : Flow of Chapter 4	103
Figure 4.2 : Snowballing of respondents for this research	106
Figure 4.3 : Data analysis process	115
Figure 4.4 : Summary of the data analysis to answer the three research issues of this research	142
Figure 5.1 : Flow of Chapter 5	145
Figure 5.2 : Preliminary conceptual framework versus findings of this research	175
Figure 5.3 : Revised conceptual framework based on findings of this research	179



UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASTD	:	The American Society for Training and Development
BNM	:	Bank Negara Malaysia
ETP	:	Economic Transformation Programme
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
CLC	:	The Corporate Leadership Council
HDC	:	Human Development Capital
HRDF	:	Human Resources Development Fund
HRM	:	Human Resource Management
IES	:	Institute for Employment Studies
PKS	:	Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana
MECD	:	Ministry of Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development
MIDA	:	Malaysia Industrial Development Authority
MIDF	:	Malaysia Industrial Development Finance Berhad
NSDC	:	National SME Development Council
NTP	:	National Transformation Programme
OECD	:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PNS	:	Perbadanan Nasional Berhad
R&D	:	Research and Development
SMEs	:	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMECorp.	:	Small and Medium Enterprises Corporation Malaysia
SME OJT	:	SME “On-the-Job”
SMETNA	:	SME Training Needs Analysis

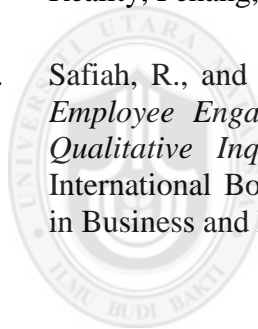
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. Safiah, R., and Mohd Amy, AM.H. (2015). Exploring the Vital Factors Influenced by Outcomes of Employee Engagement: A Qualitative Study among CEO in Malaysia's SME. *International Journal of Operations and Logistics Management*, 4(4), 242-252. Available at www.absronline.org/journals
2. Safiah, R., and Mohd Amy, AM.H. (2016). Influential Financial Factors of Employee Engagement Outcomes within SMEs Business in Malaysia: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Business Management and Accounting (JBMA)*, Forthcoming Issue of JBMA.



LIST OF PAPERS IN CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

1. Safiah, R., and Mohd Amy, A.M.H. (2015). *Employee engagement: a qualitative research on critical factors within Malaysia's SME business*. Proceedings in the 2015 1st Asia Pacific Conference on Contemporary Research, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 3 – 4 October, 2015.
2. Safiah, R., and Mohd Amy, AM.H. (2015). *Exploring the Vital Factors Influenced by Outcomes of Employee Engagement: A Qualitative Study among CEO in Malaysia's SME*. Proceedings in the International Conference on New Trends in Multidisciplinary Research and Practice, Istanbul, Turkey, 4 – 5 November, 2015.
3. Safiah, R., and Mohd Amy, AM.H. (2016). *Influential Financial Factors of Employee Engagement Outcomes within SME Business in Malaysia: A Qualitative Study*. Proceedings in the 2nd Qualitative Research Conference on “Qualitative Research: Exploring the Hidden Reality, Penang, Malaysia, 24 – 26 May, 2016.
4. Safiah, R., and Mohd Amy, AM.H. (2016). *Non-Financial Factors of Employee Engagement Outcomes in SME Business in Malaysia: A Qualitative Inquiry among Top Managers*. Proceedings in the 7th International Borneo Business Conference on Conquering New Height in Business and Economic, Sabah, Malaysia, 7 – 8 September, 2016.



Universiti Utara Malaysia

LIST OF CONFERENCES ATTENDED AND PAPERS PRESENTED

1. 1st Asia Pacific Conference on Contemporary Research (APCCR-2015)
3rd & 4th October 2015
Arena Star Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Paper Title:
“Employee Engagement: A Qualitative Research on Critical Factors within Malaysia’s SME Business”
2. International Conference on “New Trends in Multidisciplinary Research and Practice 2015” (NTMRP-2015)
4th & 5th November 2015
Elite World Prestige Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey.
Paper Title:
“Exploring the Vital Factors Influenced by Outcomes of Employee Engagement: A Qualitative Study Among CEO in Malaysia’s SME”
3. Qualitative Research Conference on “Qualitative Research: Exploring the Hidden Reality” (QRC) 2016
24th & 26th May 2016
Park Royal, Penang, Malaysia.
Paper Title:
“Influential Financial Factors of Employee Engagement Outcomes within SME Business in Malaysia: A Qualitative Study”
4. International Borneo Business Conference on “Conquering New Height in Business and Economic (IBBC 2016)
7th & 8th September 2016
University Sabah Malaysia (UMS), Sabah, Malaysia
Paper Title:
“Non-Financial Factors of Employee Engagement Outcomes in SME Business in Malaysia: A Qualitative Inquiry Among Top Managers”

LIST OF ONE-TO-ONE DISCUSSIONS WITH EXPERTS

1. Assistant Prof Dr Nurita Juhdi
Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia, Gombak, Selangor, Malaysia
On 3rd March 2015, 25th May 2016, and 27th December 2016
2. Abdul Aziz Mohamed
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Business Technology and Accounting
UNITAR International University, Kelana Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia
On 7th April 2015 and 13th September 2016
3. Emy Ezura Abd. Jalil
Lecturer
College of Business,
Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia
On 3rd & 4th October 2015
4. Mostefa Abdelhadi
Lecturer
Faculty of Business, Education, Law and Arts
University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia
On 3rd & 4th October 2015
5. Nihar Amoncar
Lecturer/Postgraduate Academic Assistant
Faculty of Business and Society
University of South Wales, Wales, UK
On 3rd & 4th October 2015
6. Dr Sharina Tajul Urus
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Accountancy
Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM)
Puncak Alam, Kuala Selangor, Selangor, Malaysia
On 24th May 2016

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the overview of this research. It provides the background of research, the main problem to be addressed, and the rationale undertaking this research. It also outlines the organization of this dissertation. Figure 1.1 shows the sequence of sections of this chapter.

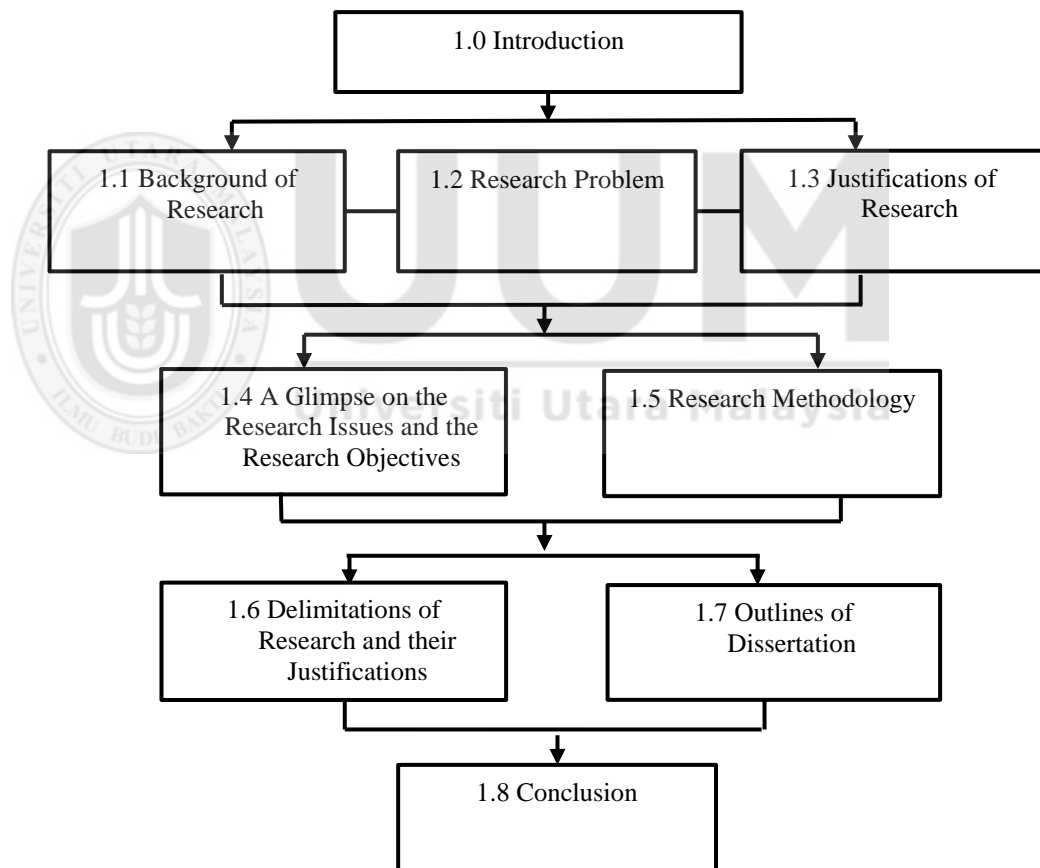


Figure 1.1
Flow of Chapter 1

Source: developed for this research

Chapter 1 consists of nine sections. Section 1.0 is the outline of this chapter and Section 1.1 explains the background of research, followed by the discussion on research problem and justifications in the Section 1.2 and Section 1.3 respectively. Research issues are then introduced in the Section 1.4 and subsequently Section 1.5 provides a brief explanation on the research methodology. Next, the delimitations of research and their justifications are explained in the Section 1.6. Finally, Section 1.7 shows the outline of this dissertation and Section 1.8 concludes this chapter.

1.1 Background of Research

Nowadays, all organizations, irrespective of their size in the global business environment encounter a dynamic and highly competitive environment. This business environment continues to change at a radical and accelerated pace, mainly due to globalization, competition, economic liberalization and uncertainties, rapid development in information technology, and cross-border capital flow (Koh, Lee, & Boo, 2009). As these changes occur, firms particularly SMEs are forced to compete among each other in the domestic economy and with their foreign counterparts.

Besides having to face this competitive environment, SMEs are also facing issues of their own such as financial difficulty, shortage of experts, challenge in managing technology, marketing of products, intense competition, and increasing cost factor (Wafa, Noordin, & Kim-Man, 2005; Salleh & Ndubisi, 2006; Samad, 2007; Muhammad, Char, Yaso', & Hassan, 2010; Shah & Ali,

2011). Hence, it is crucial for SMEs to find ways and measures to survive, compete, and maintain their financial sustainability. The utilization of SMEs human resource is viewed to be one of the keys for better performance (Barney, 1991; Huselid, 1995; Delery & Doty, 1996; Marchington & Grugulis, 2000), long term survival, and sustainability (Marimuthu, Arokiasamy, & Ismail, 2009).

In the face of these challenges, SMEs play significant contribution in several facets of the country. They contribute in the area of economic development, particularly Gross Domestic Products (GDP), export earnings, social uplifting, and political stability (Khalique, Isa, Shaari, & Ageel, 2011). SMEs have also become an effective instrument for creating employment opportunities and increasing households income, providing support to big companies (Hashim & Wafa, 2002), serving as suppliers, dispersing economic activities in the rural areas, and encouraging entrepreneurial skills among the population (Habaradas, 2008). Acs (1999) argued that SMEs are important because they are the backbone of national economy (Radam, Abu, & Abdullah, 2008) and the source of industrial development (Normah, 2007).

Since the early 1970's, the Malaysian government has started to pay attention towards developing SMEs through the establishment of various agencies, ministries, and the launch of SMEs Masterplan 2012-2020 in July 2012 (refer Section 2.6 of Chapter 2). These measures signify government's desire to develop the SMEs comprehensively and achieve better overall performance towards meeting the Vision 2020. It is clear that the country's future progress

appears to be concentrated on the growth and the performance of SMEs (Omar, Arokiasamy, & Ismail, 2009) because SMEs constitute 99.2% of the entire business formation in Malaysia (refer Section 2.6 of Chapter 2).

Although the performance of SMEs is vital for the future economic growth of a country, their performance in Malaysia, with relation to the country's GDP contribution, employment generation, total export share, and value-added growth since the past years is marginal and still has not reached its full potential. For instance, as illustrated in the Table 1.1, the contribution of SMEs to GDP showed an increment of only 4.5% from 2005 until 2015, and the employment share showed a growth of only 0.6% in the same period. The growth of export share was stagnant at 19.0% from 2005 until 2011 and was dropped slightly to 17.6% in 2015.

Table 1.1
SMEs Contribution to Malaysia Economy (2005-2020)

Key Indicator (%)	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2020*
Contribution of SMEs to GDP	29.0	29.4	30.4	31.5	31.5	31.9	32.5	32.7	33.1	32.3	36.3	41.0
Employment share	56.8	56.9	58.4	58.9	59.2	59.5	59.0	57.3	57.4	65.0	65.5	61.0
Export share	19.0	19.0	19.0	19.0	19.0	22.0	19.0	17.5	17.8	17.8	17.6	25.0
Value added growth of SMEs	6.9	7.4	10.0	6.4	-0.4	8.4	6.5	6.6	7.2	7.9	6.1	NA

* Projection NA: Not Available

Source: adapted from the National SME Development Council (2010) and the Small and Medium Enterprises Corporation Malaysia, Profiles of SMEs (Economic Census 2011)

Furthermore, the contribution made to the country's GDP by SMEs in Malaysia is far lower compared to the contribution of SMEs in other countries. The contribution of SMEs to GDP in countries such as Indonesia, Singapore, and China are 57%, 50%, and 59% respectively (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013) compared to SMEs in Malaysia which is only about 33% as shown in the Table 1.2. Similarly, in terms of employment and exports, the contribution of SMEs in Malaysia compared to SMEs in other countries are not encouraging. Hence, in order for SMEs in Malaysia to be more significant to the economy, their performance should be increased to a higher level.

Table 1.2
SMEs Contribution to GDP, Employment and Exports in Asia (2011)

Country	Key Indicator (%)		
	GDP	Employment	Exports
China	59	80	68
Indonesia	57	97	16
Malaysia	33	57	19
Singapore	50	70	20
Thailand	37	77	30

Source: adapted from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2013)

Huselid (1995) stated that the performance of SME business is linked to how productive is the human resource. Mullins (2013) expressed the necessity for organizations to mull over approaches to make full use of their organizations' human capital as a way of increasing organizational efficiency. Others are convinced that human capital in an organization is a non-replaceable resource, which when being utilized, can provide the firms a competitive advantage (Guest, Michie, Sheehan, Conway, & Methochi, 2000; Sarwar & Abugre, 2013). Correspondingly, the ability to leverage human resource is a key

differentiator of successful companies in today's economy (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008) because it yields positive organizational level performance outcomes (Crook, Todd, Combs, & Woehr, 2011). Thus, the ability of SMEs to propel the organizations forward and to increase their contribution depend on their human asset. This is specifically referred to their "engaged employees" who bring their full capacity and potential to their work (Leiter & Bakker, 2010). In addition, engaged employees are also emotionally aligned with the corporate goals and interests (Kapoor & Meachem, 2012) because engaged employees have a high level of job satisfaction (Gu & Chi, 2009; Shmailan, 2016) that influences their positive work outcomes (Kaplan, Ogut, Kaplan, & Aksay, 2012; Al-Shuaibi, Subramaniam, & Mohd Shamsuddin, 2014) and performance (Ram, 2013; Platis, Reklitis, & Zimeras, 2015).

Employee engagement has been acknowledged as a vital factor contributing to organizational desirable performance (Saks, 2006) and can bring positive implications in all aspects of any firms (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). In a similar vein, Macey and Schneider (2008) stated that the employee engagement outcome is valuable to ensure organizational effectiveness. Also, employee engagement leads to positive implications for organizations. In this case, employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is what most organizations are pursuing for. Organizations that do not acknowledge the strong impact that employee engagement outcome at the organizational level are missing out the opportunity to deliver stellar organizational success through a highly engaged workforce and well-executed strategies (Harter, Schmidt &

Hayes 2002; Bates, 2004; Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006) including SMEs (Kishore, Majumdar, & Kiran, 2012).

Employee engagement is defined as an individual's cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes (refer Section 2.2 of Chapter 2). Employee engagement outcomes refers to the consequences of employee engagement in which an engaged workforce tend to produce desirable positive business results such as profitability and productivity. The relationship between employee engagement outcomes is supported by the SET and the JD-R model (refer Section 2.4 of Chapter 2). The ultimate employee engagement outcome is the outcome at the organizational level. However, a greater focus was given by scholars to the individual level outcome instead of to the organizational level outcome. It is crucial to extend the understanding on the outcome at the organizational level because it is the barometer of any business economics' viability.

Organizations with a highly engaged workforce tend to produce desirable business results in a more efficient manner (Zigarmi, Nimon, Houson, Witt, & Dierh, 2009; Shucks, Reio, & Rocco, 2011). Hence, employee engagement is regarded as an excellent practice and is viewed to be crucial for SMEs to perform well. In conclusion, in confronting with internal constraints and external challenges to achieve superior performance and organizational success, SMEs must leverage their human resource through engaged employees and specifically focus on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

1.2 Research Problem

Section 1.1 presents the background of this research that explains the importance of SMEs contribution to the economy. The ability of SMEs to bring organizations to the highest level depend on employee engagement due to its positive implications to the organizations. This section proceeds with an explanation about the research problem. As mentioned earlier, the performance of SMEs in Malaysia in terms of their contribution to the economy still leaves much to be desired despite numerous incentives and massive support that had been taken and offered by the government. Furthermore, various studies reported that SMEs in Malaysia are generally low in productivity. For instance, the result of Census of Establishment and Enterprises 2005 by the Department of Statistics Malaysia 2011 indicated that SMEs productivity in Malaysia was way lower than large enterprises with value added of only RM0.3 million per establishment, compared to RM41 million per establishment for large enterprises. Similar report also documented that in terms of labour productivity, SMEs generated only RM0.13 million output per employee compared to RM0.32 million output per employees in large enterprises. A significant amount of low budget allocated by SMEs for training and employee development programs for their employees affect employee productivity (Yahya, Othman, & Shamsuri, 2012). In this case, the statistic showed that 43% of SMEs in

Malaysia did not provide training to their employees (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2005).

Other than low productivity, low motivation (Hill & Steward, 2000; Omar et al., 2009) and failure to retain employees in SMEs had also been reported (Beaver & Hutchings, 2005; Chan, 2009; Fauzi, Ahmad & Gelaidan, 2013; Tee, 2013). In the Global Workforce Study 2014 conducted by Towers Watson, employee retention was regarded as the key challenge to employers in Malaysia. It was discovered that 36% of the workforce are likely to leave their organization within two years compared to 29% in 2012. Next, a recent survey report 2015/2016 by Hewitt documented that employee voluntary turnover rate in Malaysia is 9.5%, which is currently the third highest in South East Asia region. This phenomenon assumes that employee engagement is the contributing issue in SMEs. Thus, a study on employee engagement in SMEs is necessary to understand the aforementioned phenomenon. By specifically concentrating on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, SMEs and policy makers are able to understand which factors are important for them to design appropriate strategies towards achieving a better performance.

Despite the vital role of employee engagement for SMEs to perform well, the existing studies on employee engagement outcome had only focused on general business setting (Harter et al., 2002; Heger, 2007; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009; Ram, Bhargavi & Prabhakar, 2011; Jauhari, Sehgal & Sehgal, 2013; Alias, Mohd Noor & Hassan, 2014; Gorgievski, Moriano & Bakker, 2014). Due to different constraints found in SMEs and their

uniqueness in term of size and type of employees which require special definition for them, the employee engagement outcome in SMEs is perhaps slightly different than that of in the general business setting.

In the past, scholars collectively agreed that employee engagement outcome is a two-level process which consists of the individual level and the organizational level. In order to produce a positive employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, it must first be impactful at the individual level (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008; Saks, 2006; Swetha & Kumar, 2014). Outcome at the organizational level is the ultimate employee engagement outcome and serves as an indicator of the viability of business economics. Nevertheless, very few studies had investigated the linkage between “employee engagement” and “employee engagement outcome” at the organizational level.

Greater emphasize was also given by scholars on the individual level outcome (Ghafoor, Qureshi, Khan, & Hijazi, 2011; Slatten & Mehmetoglu, 2011; Karatepe, 2012; Alfes, Truss, Soane, Rees, & Gatenby, 2013; Nadim & Khan, 2013; Rubel & Mui, 2013; Agarwal; 2014; Nawaz, Hassan, Hassan, Shaukat, & Asadullah, 2014; Wang, Lu, & Siu, 2014). From an empirical perspective, the topic on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level had been neglected in the research.

Therefore, to address the mentioned gap, this research focuses on discovering the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within

the Malaysia SME business with a view to suggest measures of improving to a better performance. This is due to the fact that the organizational level outcome is the ultimate employee engagement outcome and an indicator of the viability of business economics. Thus, this research is guided by the following research problem: “how and why the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level could be established within the Malaysia SME business?”

1.3 Justifications of Research

In the preceding section, the research problem has been identified and explained. In this section, the justifications of conducting this research are provided based on four grounds: (i) the importance of SMEs contribution and performance; (ii) the importance of human resource in SMEs; (iii) the gaps in academic research; and (iv) the usefulness of potential applications of the research findings to SMEs top managers, HR practitioners and policymakers.

The first justification is in terms of the importance of SMEs contribution and performance. SMEs contribution to the country’s economy is crucial as discussed in the Section 1.1 of Chapter 1 and in the Section 2.6 of Chapter 2. However, this is yet to be achieved due to SMEs lower productivity, poor employee motivation, and inability to retain employees. In addition, SMEs have their own internal constraints and external challenge, hence limiting them to employ resources unlike large-scale organizations (Cardon & Stevens, 2004). Thus, this research is needed to assist managers holding top positions in SME

business, human resource practitioners and policymakers to improve the performance, success, and survival of Malaysia SME business.

Next justification is in terms of the importance of leveraging human resource in SME business. The exhibited literature review depicts that there are reasonably strong evidences indicating that leveraging the human resource by focusing on employee engagement promotes superior firm performance (Marimuthu et al., 2009; Leiter & Bakker, 2010; Crook, Todd, Combs, & Woehr, 2011; Mullin, 2013). A focus given on the service sector of Malaysia SMEs as stated in the Section 2.6 of Chapter 2 found a higher percentage of employment, indicating a necessity to embark on the present research in order to develop a framework that guides SMEs to boost their performance through employee engagement outcome.

Moreover, there is lack of academic research in this area as discussed in the Section 2.5 and Section 2.7 of Chapter 2 respectively. While numerous studies had addressed the employee engagement outcome, however only a handful focused on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (refer Section 2.5 of Chapter 2). The empirical research examining the core factors and the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level are also limited. Other than that, previous studies exploring employee engagement outcome at the organizational level were conducted in different contexts than SMEs (Bhatnagar, 2007; Jauhari et al., 2013; Kataria, Rastogi, & Garg, 2013; Merrill et al., 2013; Alias et al., 2014). As a result, there is a limitation in the empirical studies exploring employee engagement outcome at

the organizational level, particularly in SMEs as discussed in the Section 2.7 of Chapter 2.

Finally, the present research was conducted to identify the potential applications of the research findings to human resource practitioners and policymakers as discussed in the Section 5.3.3 and Section 5.3.4 of Chapter 5 respectively. This research has practical implications for human resource practitioners to increase the organizational success via effective employee engagement intervention and strategies as well as to recognize the relevance of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the field of human resource management. In addition, policymakers are able to establish guidelines and design governmental and/or non-governmental support programs and strategies in regard to the performance of SMEs.

In summary, there are four justifications of the present research: (i) the vital contribution and performance of SMEs; (ii) the importance of human resource management in SMEs; (iii) the gaps in academic research; and (iv) the potential applications of the research findings to human resource practitioners and policymakers.

1.4 A Glimpse on the Research Issues and the Research Objectives

In the previous sections, the research problem and justifications of this research has already been explained. Next, this section is to highlight the research issues and the research objectives of this research. The formation process of the

research issues and detailed explanation are presented in the Section 2.9 of Chapter 2. The summary of the formation process of research issues is illustrated in the Figure 1.2. Three research issues proposed for this research are investigated using the employed preliminary conceptual framework, hence providing a platform for data collection and data analysis. Subsequently, research findings provide answers following the identification of research problem.

The first research issue is centred on the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

RI 1: What are the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

The second research issue concentrates on the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

RI 2: What are the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

The third research issue within the conceptual framework focuses on the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

RI 3: What are the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

In short, the formation process of the three research issues identified in this research were influenced by the literature review in Chapter 2, and were

investigated within the preliminary conceptual framework of this research discussed in the Section 2.8 of Chapter 2.

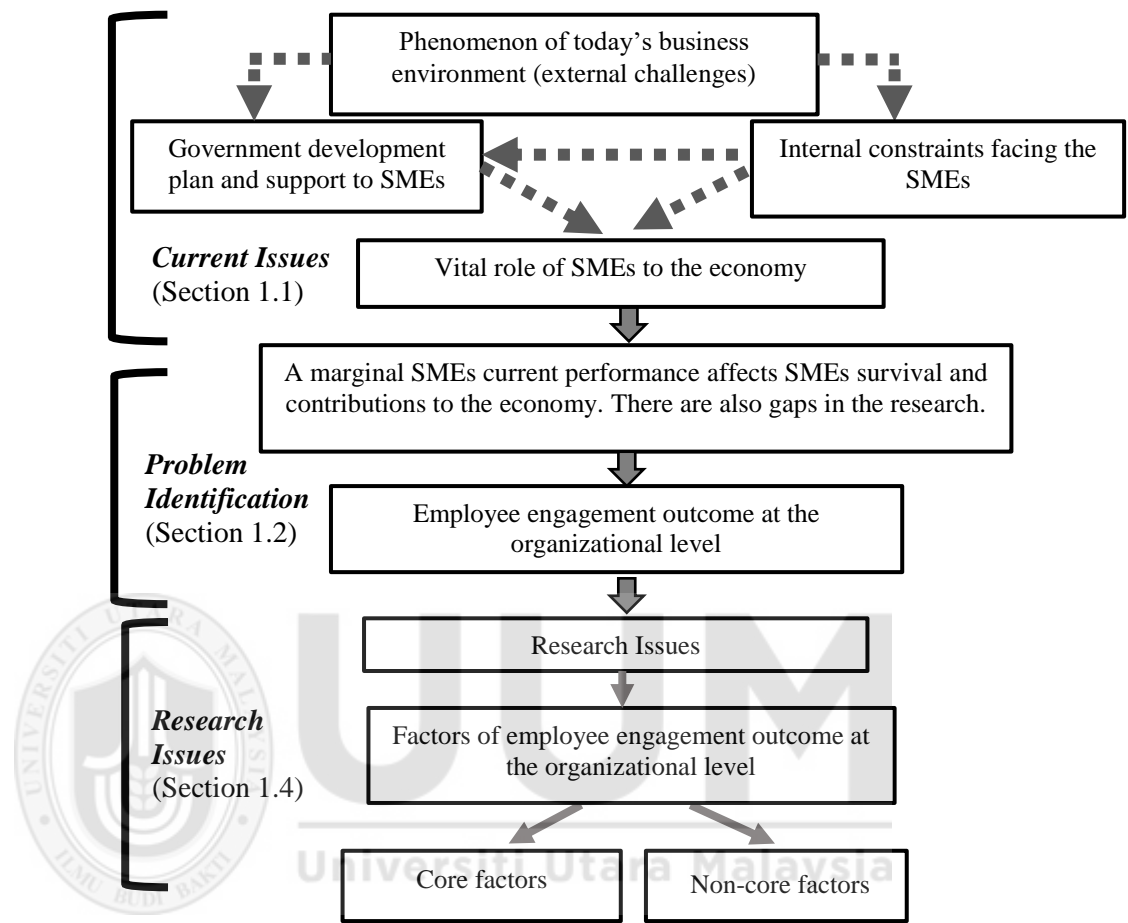


Figure 1.2
Formation Process of Research Issues

Source: developed for this research

Subsequently, this research is aimed at exploring the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Specifically, the purpose of this research is as follows:

1. To identify the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

2. To identify the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.
3. To identify the non-core factors employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The succeeding section introduces the research methodology used in the data collection and data analysis of this research.

1.5 Research Methodology

Thus far, the background of research, research problem, justifications of research, research issues, and research objectives had been presented in the earlier sections. In this section, the research methodology is explained its greater details are elaborated in Chapter 3. The summary of research design is also available in this section, followed by the justifications of qualitative research and finally the data analysis.

Research Approach: This research addressed the new field of enquiry in employee engagement by adopting realism paradigm to uncover the “reality” of the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. This is a theory-building research that constitutes a qualitative approach. Data collection using qualitative convergent interview was utilized and explained in the Section 3.4 of Chapter 3, involving a series of in-depth interviews. Data were collected during each interview and were thoroughly analysed to refine the focus of the subsequent interviews. An interview protocol had been prepared beforehand (refer Appendix 2). This

investigation adhered to strategies that manage the validity and reliability of convergent interviews (Healy & Perry, 2000). The research methodology is described in details in Chapter 3.

Justifications of Qualitative Research: In this research, qualitative research methodology was used based on four reasons as thoroughly explained in the Section 3.2 of Chapter 3. The first reason is associated with the realism paradigm adopted in this research. Realism paradigm is appropriate because the research problem is associated with the need to explore the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. The second reason is linked to the main research objective, which seeks to investigate the limited research area of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The third reason is like other fields of social science enquiry, in which employee engagement is dominated by quantitative methodologies. Thus, there is an apparent gap in the employee engagement literature for qualitative data. The final reason for adopting qualitative research methodology is due to the type of information needed by this research. The depth and detailed qualitative data are required to understand the complex phenomenon investigated by researcher. As a result, interview was used for the purpose of data collection in the present research.

Data Analysis: The data collected for the purpose of this research were systematically analysed using content analysis technique as explained in the Section 3.5 of Chapter 3. The data analysis process consists of four phases: (i)

data analysis preparation phase; (ii) data analysis organizing phase; (iii) research findings phase; and (iv) reporting phase.

In summary, the research design adopted for this research was exploratory research through qualitative methods. Four reasons had been stated to justify the qualitative research methodology used in this research. Finally, brief explanations about the data that were collected using convergent interview technique and analysed using content analysis method were provided.

1.6 Delimitations of Research and Their Justifications

The previous section provided the summary of the research methodology while this section seeks to explain the delimitations of the research and their justifications. There are five delimitations of this research.

This research focused on employee engagement outcome that specifically explored the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The core factors and the non-core factors were also included. The first delimitation of this research was it only confined to the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level but did not attempt to identify the factors of employee engagement outcome at the individual level. Limiting itself to only studying the Malaysia SMEs, the second delimitation involved the research setting where the present research did not cover big enterprises and public sector.

Next, the third delimitation was the research approach and the research methodology of this research only employed qualitative approach using convergent interviewing technique. The fourth delimitation of this research was in terms of the selection of respondents in which managers holding top positions in Malaysia SME business were selected for the interviews and did not include other managerial level or non-managerial employees. The final delimitation of this research was it only focused on tangible matters such as productivity, customer satisfaction, profitability, absenteeism, employee retention, and business growth although employee engagement is a subtle matter.

In brief, there are five delimitations of this research. In conjunction to this delimitations, this research mainly focused on the factors of employee engagement outcome at organizational-level which that is limited to only SME business and was confined to qualitative approach using convergent interviewing technique. The other delimitations of this research are the inclusion of only top managers as the respondents and the direct focused of this research on tangible matters related to employee engagement outcome at the organizational-level.

1.7 Outlines of Dissertation

The delimitations of this research and their justifications had been explained in the preceding section. In this section, the organization of dissertation is presented. Figure 1.3 shows the summary of the organization of chapters. This

dissertation has five chapters. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the dissertation and its background, research problem and the justifications of research, the research issues, the research objectives, and methodology, as well as the delimitations of research and their justifications.

Chapter 2 provides a critical review of literature on employee engagement. It begins by exploring the evolution of employee engagement literature and definitions of concepts. Next, it reviews the employee engagement outcome, as well as the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in general business setting and in SMEs. A preliminary conceptual framework of this research is then constructed as shown in the Figure 2.12 of Chapter 2 from which the three research issues were formed.

Next, Chapter 3 elaborates in details about the research methodology approach employed for this research. It begins with the justifications of the qualitative approach, followed by the nature of convergent interviewing technique and its implementation, as well as the data analysis method and the process involved in it.

The subsequent Chapter 4 discusses the findings of this research. It begins with the research setting, data analysis process, and finally each research issue is thoroughly addressed.

The final Chapter 5 provides the conclusion to each research issue raised in Chapter 2 and embedded into the literature. Conclusions are also drawn about

the research problem and the contributions made towards the methodology, theory, practice, and policy. Lastly, the directions for future research are briefly discussed.



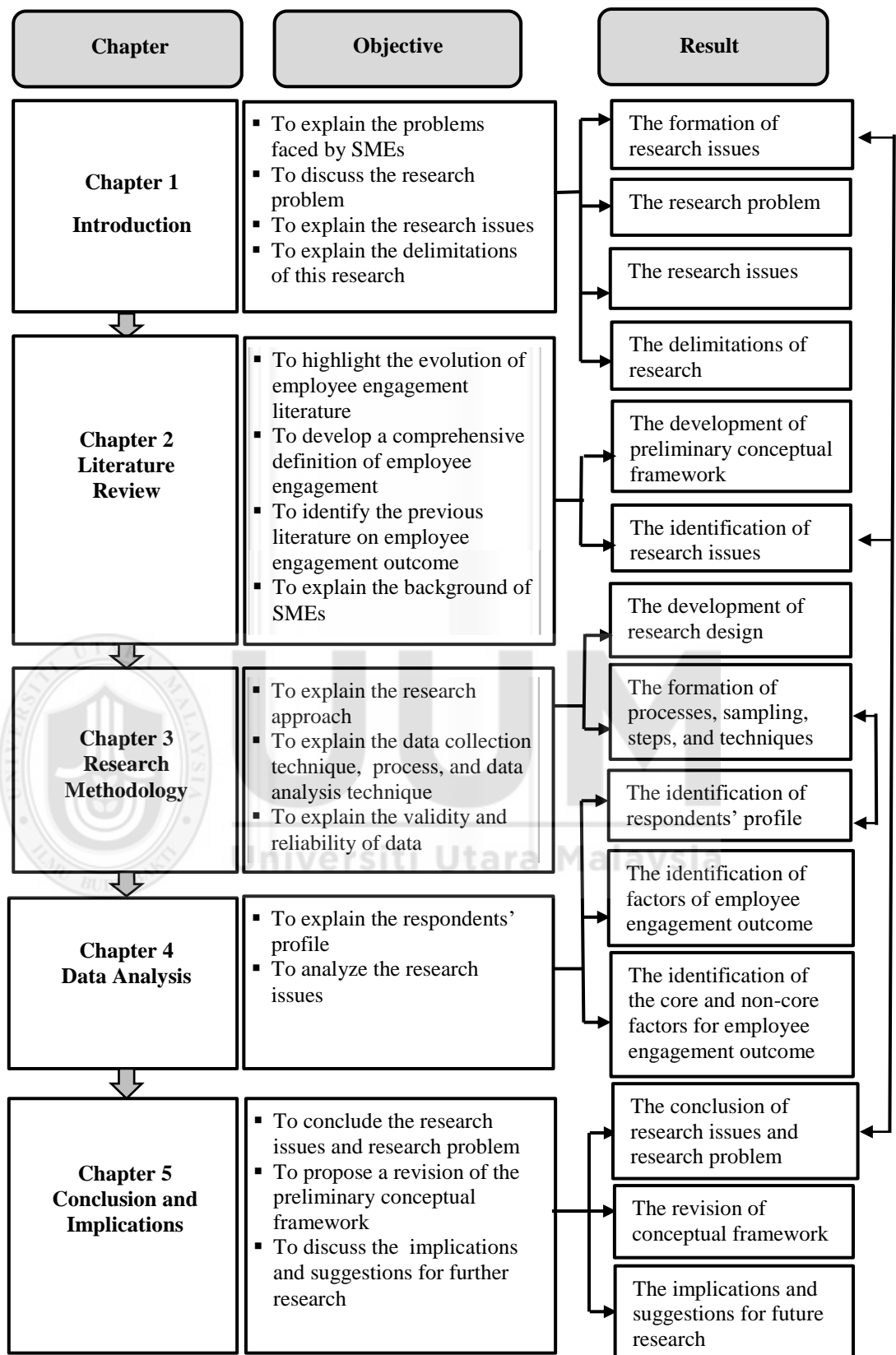


Figure 1.3
Organization Structure of Dissertation

Source: developed for this research

1.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the foundation of the present research is presented in Chapter 1. The research background indicates the research problem. This chapter had also presented the justification of research, research issues, research objectives, methodology, delimitations, and research outlines. The subsequent Chapter 2 presents a detailed review of pertinent literature on the employee engagement in order to highlight issues within the literature and provide the basis for data collection.



CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter deliberated the background and the importance of research in relation to employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The research problem and its justifications are presented in the Section 1.2 and Section 1.3 of Chapter 1 respectively. This chapter aims to review and highlight the issues within the literature linked to the research problem which underpins the research issues and provides the foci of subsequent data collection. The outline of this chapter is shown in Figure 2.1.

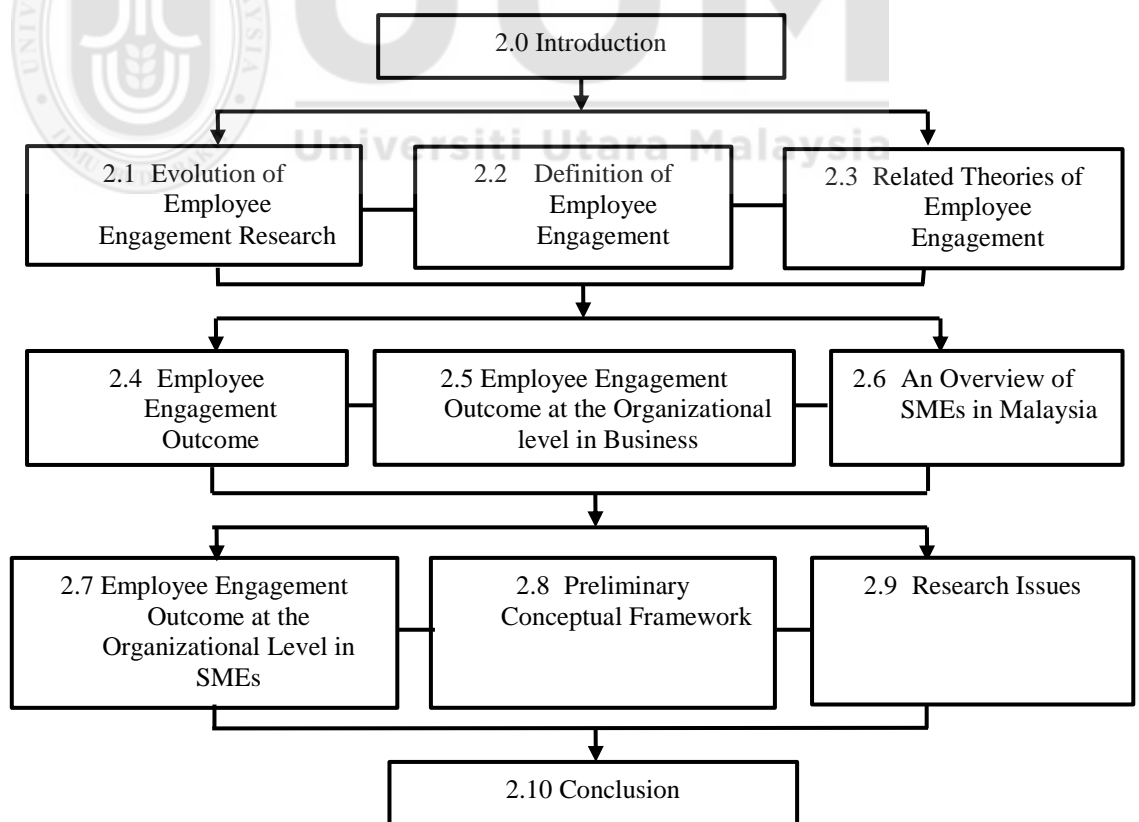


Figure 2.1
Flow of Chapter 2

Source: developed for this research

Chapter 2 consists of 11 sections. Section 2.0 provides the outlines of this chapter and Section 2.1 provides an overview of the evolution of employee engagement research. Section 2.2 then examines the definition of employee engagement particularly its components, while Section 2.3 continues with explanations on the related theories of employee engagement. Subsequently, Section 2.4 elaborates on the employee engagement outcome, followed by Section 2.5 that explains about employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in business. Section 2.6 proceeds with an overview of SMEs in Malaysia and then discusses the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SME business. In Section 2.8, the preliminary conceptual framework of this research founded from the literature review is presented, and in Section 2.9, discussion on the research issues is raised. Finally, Section 2.10 concludes this chapter.

2.1 Evolution of Employee Engagement Research

In this section, the review of pertinent literature begins by exploring the evolution of employee engagement research (Box A of Figure 2.2). In the later sections as shown in Figure 2.2, the review of literature is then followed by the discussion on the definitions of employee engagement (Box B of Figure 2.2) and employee engagement outcome (Box C of Figure 2.2).

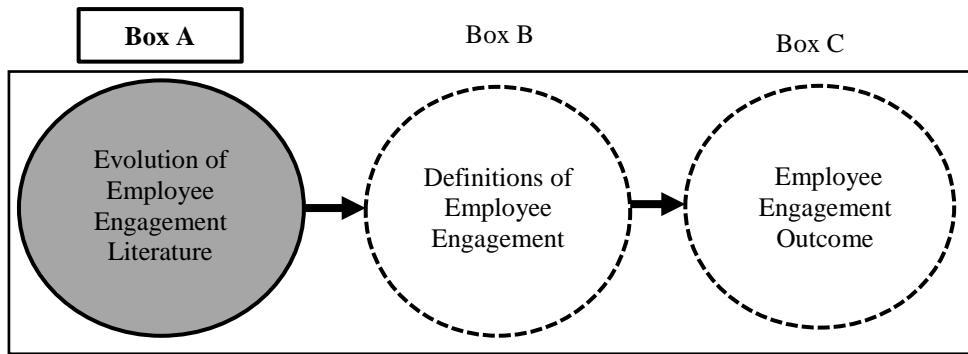


Figure 2.2
Milestones of Literature Review, Box A

Source: developed for this research

The term “employee engagement” may appear as a relatively recent concept but it travels back over 20 years when the term began appearing in an academic journal in 1990 (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008; Welch, 2011). Figure 2.3 shows the evolution of employee engagement research. The evolution of employee engagement research can be separated into four phases. First, the evolution of employee engagement research is regarded as “personal engagement” (first box in the second row of Figure 2.3) that was introduced by Kahn (1990). In order to fully understand why individuals get deeply engaged in their work, Kahn (1990) posited that it is important for researchers to look closely into three aspects, namely meaningfulness, safety, and availability. First, “meaningfulness” is a positive sense of return on the investment of self in role performance, while “safety” is the ability to show others our fear or negative consequences to self-image, status, or career. Finally, “availability” is regarded as the sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resource necessary for the fulfilment of work (Kahn, 1990).

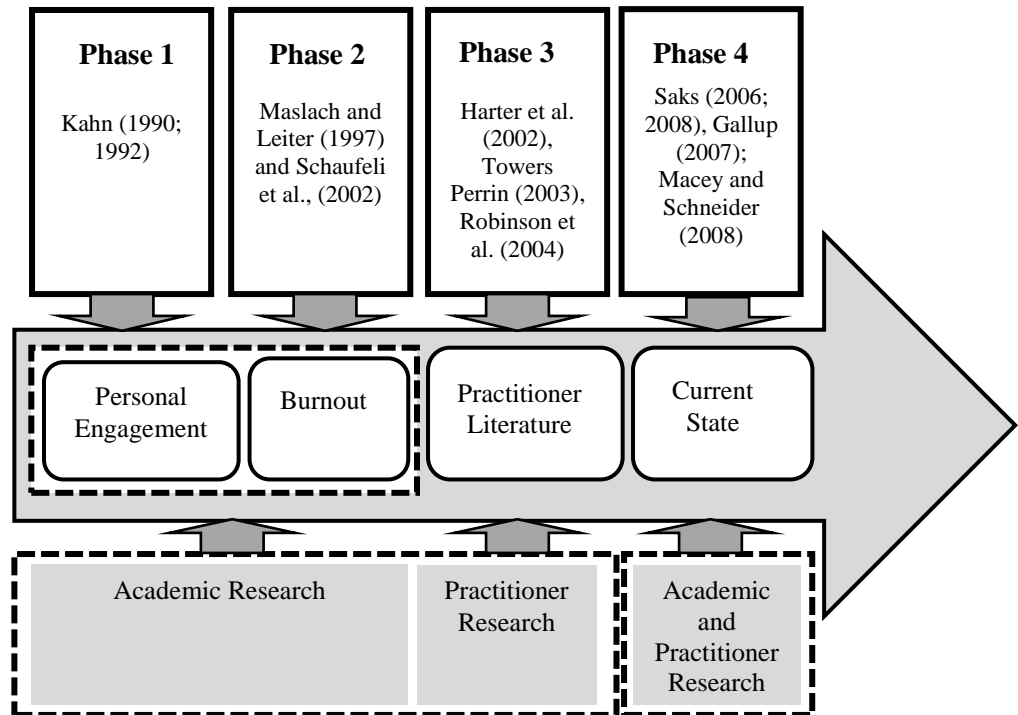


Figure 2.3
Evolution of Employee Engagement Research

Source: developed for this research

Next, the second phase of the evolution of employee engagement research is burnout (second box in the second row of Figure 2.3). Engagement is conceptualized as the antithesis of psychological burnout by Maslach and Leiter (1997). Burnout refers to a psychological syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficiency due to chronic organizational conditions, compared to three sub-dimensions of employee engagement, namely energy, involvement, and efficacy. Based on this initial proposition, Schaufeli, Martínez, Pinto, Salanova, and Bakker (2002) then developed three domains of employee engagement, namely vigour, absorption, and dedication. They specifically defined “vigour” as a high level of energy and mental resilience while working and willingness to invest effort in a particular work. Meanwhile, “absorption” is a sense of

significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge, and “dedication” is being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in a particular work (Schaufeli et al. 2002, p.465). According to them, engagement is not a momentary and specific state as suggested by Leiter and Maslach (1998), but rather a more persistent and pervasive effective-cognitive state, thus must be operationalized in its own right.

The third phase of the evolution of employee engagement research is practitioner literature (third box in the second row of Figure 2.3). Practitioner literature mainly refers to publications by professional societies such as The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), and consulting firms, The Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) and Towers Perrin that conduct and disseminate empirical evidence of engagement, conceptualization of the concept, and its various drivers and outcomes from practitioners’ perspectives. Their works on employee engagement focused on various variables such as profit (CLC, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Towers Perrin, 2003; 2007), the role of learning (Czarnowsky, 2008), and business performance (Harter et al., 2002).

Finally, the fourth phase of the evolution is the current state of employee engagement research (fourth box in the second row of Figure 2.3). This phase is progressively built according to two dominant families of employee engagement literature, namely academic and the practitioner literature. In this phase, employee engagement literature contributed not only from psychology discipline, but also from workplace behaviour and human resource discipline (Kular et al., 2008; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Saks (2006) produced the first

academic research to specifically conceptualize and test the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Also, it is important to coin the differences between job engagement and organizational engagement. Macey and Schneider (2008) pioneered the conceptual research in employee engagement area derived from the works of multiple scholars and had proposed three types of engagement, namely trait engagement, state engagement, and behavioural engagement.

On the practitioners circle, Gallup, CLC, Tower Perrin, and ASTD continued to publish numerous research findings on employee engagement. To date, empirical research on employee engagement is growing (Choo, Mat & Kandayah, 2011; Othman & Nasurdin, 2011; Xu & Thomas, 2011; Juhdi, Pa'wan, & Hansaram, 2012; Sulea et al., 2012; Freeney & Fellenz, 2013; Hussain, Yunus, Ishak, & Daud, 2013; Muthuveloo, Teoh, & Choi, 2013; Poon, 2013; Yong, Suhaimi, Abdullah, Abdul, & Nik Mat, 2013; Handa & Gulati, 2014; Matin, Razavi, Azimy, & Emangholizadeh, 2014; Popil & Rizvi, 2015; Shuck, Zigarmi, & Owen, 2015; Tladinyane & van der Merve, 2016; Mozammel & Haan, 2016).

In conclusion, the evolution of employee engagement research has four phases, comprising two main categories of literature, namely academic literature and practitioner literature. This two categories of literature are used as the article selection criterion for this research. Next, the existing definitions of employee engagement are explored and the definition to be adopted by this research is proposed in the following section.

2.2 Definition of Employee Engagement

Previously, Section 2.1 presented an overview of the evolution of employee engagement research as shown in the Box A of Figure 2.2 and it has been concluded that employee engagement is the combination of academic literature and practitioner literature. In this section, the existing definitions of employee engagement derived from the academics and the practitioner researchers were reviewed and the definition adopted by this research was constructed, as illustrated in the Box B of Figure 2.4.

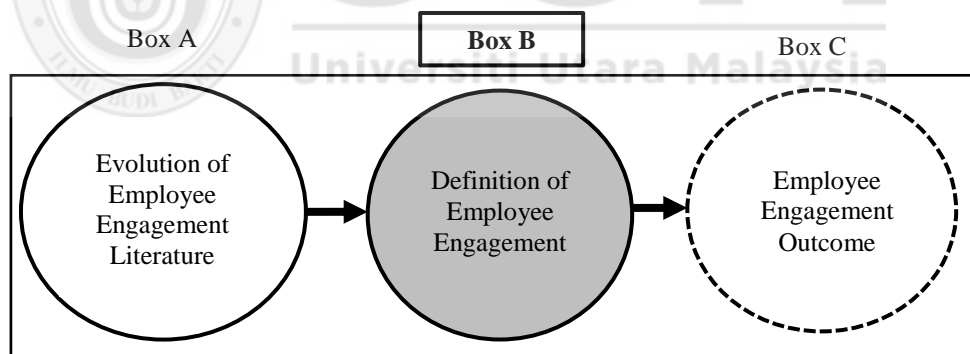


Figure 2.4
Milestones of Literature Review, Box B

Source: developed for this research

The analysis of related literature on employee engagement had been carried out based on several criteria: (i) the year of publication; (ii) the refereed journal status, such as journals published in ISI, Scopus, and Impact Factor Journal

found on databases such as Proquest Direct, Emerald Management Plus, EBSCOhost, and Jstor Art & Science; (iii) two categories of literature, namely academic and practitioner (refer Section 2.1); (iv) clear definition of employee engagement; and (v) authors' education and professional background. Having fully analysed the related articles, a total of 21 articles consisting of 13 articles by the academics and eight articles by the practitioners were selected as shown in Table 2.1. All of the 21 articles selected were published in the year 2000 and above, except for Kahn (1990) (column 1, row 1 in foci A of Table 2.1) and Leiter and Maslach (1998) (column 1, row 2 in foci A of Table 2.1).

Twelve articles were published in refereed journals (column 2, row 1, row 3-8 and row 10-14 in foci A of Table 2.1), two articles were from books (column 3, row 2, and row 9 in foci A of Table 2.1). Although these two articles from books were not published in refereed journals, the authors are professors in renowned universities and well-known academicians in the area of employee engagement research. The remaining seven articles were published as practitioner literature (column 5, row 15-21 in foci A of Table 2.1). These publications, although were not published in refereed journals, their studies however were heavily cited by articles published in various refereed journals (Jones & Harter, 2005; Little & Little, 2006; Heger, 2007; Zhu, Avolio, & Walumba, 2009; Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Welch, 2011; Chat-Uthai, 2013; Jauhari et al., 2013; Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014; Ahlowalia, Tiwary, & Jha, 2014).

Table 2.1
Analysis of the Articles on Employee Engagement and Authors' Background

Author(s)	Articles' Background (FOCI A)					Authors' Background (FOCI B)			
	1 Year of Publication	2 Refereed Journal	3 Academic Literature	4 Practitioner Literature	5 Articles Representing Consulting Firm	6 PhD	7 ED.D	8 Practitioners	9 Academics
1 Kahn (1990)	1990	√	√			√			√
2 Leiter & Maslach (1998)	1998		√ (Book)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leiter ▪ Maslach 						√			√
3 Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter (2001)	2001	√	√						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maslach (refer to Leiter & Maslach, 1998) ▪ Schaufeli ▪ Leiter (refer to Leiter & Maslach, 1998) 						√			√
4 Harter et al. (2002)	2002	√		√					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Harter ▪ Schmidt ▪ Hayes 						√		√	√
5 Schaufeli et al. (2002)	2002	√	√						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schaufeli (refer to Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001) ▪ Salanova ▪ Gonzalez-Roma ▪ Bakker 						√			√
5 Jones & Harter (2005)	2005	√	√						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jones ▪ Harter 	-					√			√
7 Saks (2006)	2006	√	√			√		√	√

Table 2.1 (continued)

Analysis of the Articles on Employee Engagement and Authors' Background

	Author(s)	Articles' Background (FOCI A)					Authors' Background (FOCI B)			
		1 Year of Publication	2 Refereed Journal	3 Academic Literature	4 Practitioner Literature	5 Article Representing Consulting Firm	6 PhD	7 ED.D	8 Practitioners	9 Academics
8	Macey & Schneider (2008) ▪ Macey ▪ Schneider	2008	√	√				√ √	√ √	√
9	Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young (2009) ▪ Macey (refer to Macey & Schneider, 2008) ▪ Schneider (refer to Macey & Schneider, 2008) ▪ Barbera ▪ Young	2009		√ (Book)				√	√	
10	Zigarmi et al. (2009) ▪ Zigarmi ▪ Nimon ▪ Houson ▪ Witt ▪ Diehl	2009	√	√			√	√ √ √ √ √	√	√
11	Albrecht (2010)	2010	√	√		√		√		
12	Bakker & Leiter (2010) ▪ Bakker (refer to Schaufeli et al., 2002) ▪ Leiter (refer to Leiter & Maslach, 1998)	2010	√	√						
13	Shuck & Wollard (2010) ▪ Shuck ▪ Wollard	2010	√	√			√	√		
14	Robertson & Cooper (2010) ▪ Robertson ▪ Cooper	2010	√	√		√ √		√ √		√

Table 2.1 (continued)

Analysis of the Articles on Employee Engagement and Authors' Background

Author(s)	Articles' Background (FOCI A)					Authors' Background (FOCI B)			
	1 Year of Publication	2 Refereed Journal	3 Academic Literature	4 Practitioner Literature	5 Article Representing Consulting Firm	6 PhD	7 ED.D	8 Practitioners	9 Academics
15 Towers Perrin (2003)	2003			√ (Report)	Tower Perrin				
16 Hewitt Associates LLC (2004)	2004			√ (Report)	Aon Hewitt				
17 Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday (2004) – IES	2004			√ (Report)	Institute for Employment Studies (IES)				
18 CLC (2004)	2004			√ (Report)	Corporate Leadership Council (CLC)				
19 Flemming & Asplund (2007) – Gallup	2007			√ (Report)	Gallup				
20 Czarnowsky (2008) – ASTD	2008			√ (Report)	The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD)				
21 Towers Watson (2012)	2012			√ (Report)	Towers Watson				
Total	21	12	13	8	7	18	2	15	13

Source: developed for this research

Furthermore, the assessment regarding the authors' background found that 18 out of 27 (67%) were PhD holders (column 6 in foci B of Table 2.1) and two out of 27 (7.4%) were education doctorate (ED.D) holders (column 7 in foci B of Table 2.1). Next, 15 out of 27 (56%) of the authors were practitioners (column 8 in foci B of Table 2.1), 13 out of 27 (48%) were academicians (column 9 in foci B of Table 2.1). Four out of 27 (15%) of the authors were both academicians and practitioners (column 8-9, row 8, row 10, and row 14 in foci B of Table 2.1).

In summary, based on the assessment on the background of the selected articles and the author's background, it can be concluded that these 21 articles are relevant for the analysis of the definition of employee engagement on the basis of the credibility of the articles and the authors of those articles themselves.

Next, for an assessment of the definition of employee engagement, the working definition of employee engagement from those 21 selected articles were extracted. Each definition was analysed in accordance with the three components of employee engagement, namely cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. These three components were chosen according to the notion that employee engagement is a multidimensional construct (Saks, 2006; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Newman & Harrison, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

The 21 articles were chronologically listed following the year of publication, category of literature, and components of employee engagement. The synthesis of employee engagement definition is depicted in Table 2.2.

Table 2. 2
Synthesis on the Definitions of Employee Engagement by Academics and Practitioners

(FOCI A)					(FOCI B)				
Definition of Employee Engagement by Academics					Definition of Employee Engagement by Practitioners				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Source	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioural	Total	Source	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioural	Total
1 Kahn (1990)	√	√	√	3	1 Harter et al. (2002)	x	√	√	2
2 Leiter & Maslach (1998)	√	√	X	2	2 Towers Perrin (2003)	x	x	√	1
3 Maslach et al. (2001)	x	x	√	1	3 Hewitt Associates LLC (2004)	x	x	√	1
4 Schaufeli et al. (2002)	√	√	√	3	4 CLC (2004)	x	x	√	1
5 Jones & Harter (2005)	x	√	√	2	5 Robinson et al. (2004) – IES	√	√	√	3
6 Saks (2006)	√	√	√	3	6 Flemming & Asplund (2007)	√	√	√	3
7 Macey & Schneider (2008)	√	√	√	3	7 Czarnowsky (2008) – ASTD	√	√	x	2
8 Macey et al. (2009)	x	√	√	2	8 Towers Watson (2012)	x	x	√	1
9 Zigarmi et al. (2009)	√	√	X	2					
10 Albrecht (2010)	√	√	X	2					
11 Bakker & Leiter (2010)	√	√	√	3					
12 Shuck & Wollard (2010)	√	√	√	3					
13 Robertson & Cooper (2010)	√	√	√	3					
Total	10	12	10		Total	3	4	7	

Source: developed for this research

The first component to be considered in the definition of employee engagement is cognitive. Well-engaged employees have a cognitive process that is thoroughly absorbed to give focus and full attention on their tasks at hand (Rothbard, 2001; Rich, 2006). Out of the 21 articles in this research, 10 articles are academic literature (column 2 in foci A of Table 2.2) and three articles are practitioner literature (column 2 in foci B of Table 2.2) that mention about cognitive component. Thus, cognitive component is included in the definition of employee engagement in this research.

The second component to be considered in the definition of employee engagement is emotional. Emotional engagement refers to the experience of feeling or affective connection to an organization, or something, or someone within it (Kahn, 1990). When employees are emotionally engaged with their work, they invest personal resources such as pride, trust, and knowledge toward task completion (Shuck & Reio, 2013). Out of the 21 articles, 12 articles are academic literature (column 3 in foci A of Table 2.2) and four articles are practitioner literature (column 3 in foci B of Table 2.2) that mention about emotional component. Thus, emotional component is also included in the definition of employee engagement in this research.

Finally, the third component to be considered in the definition of employee engagement is behavioural. Behaviour measures an employee's willingness to act in certain ways (Towers Perrin, 2003). The behavioural component of engagement is seen as directly observable behaviour in the work context. Also, Kahn (1990) argued that behavioural component is how well employees express

themselves vigilantly and competently within their roles. Out of the 21 articles, 10 articles are academic literature (column 4 in foci A of Table 2.2) and seven articles are practitioner literature (column 4 in foci B of Table 2.2) that mention about behavioural component in the definition of employee engagement. Thus, this research includes behavioural component as part of the employee engagement definition.

Although two third of the articles had mentioned about the three components (column 5 in foci A of Table 2.2), but from the perspective of the majority of practitioners, the behavioural component is viewed as a vital component (column 4 in foci B of Table 2.2). Nevertheless, some have put the importance on the emotional component. For instance, 12 out of 13 articles (more than 90%) in academics literature (column 3 in foci A of Table 2.2) and four out of eight articles (50%) in practitioner literature (column 3 in foci B of Table 2.2) had mentioned about this component in the employee engagement definition. There are also authors who stressed on having only two components, namely cognitive component and emotional component (column 2 and column 3, row 2, row 9, and row 10 in foci A of Table 2.2; column 2 and column 3, row 7 in foci B of Table 2.2), or only emotional component and behavioural component (column 3 and column 4, row 5 and row 8 in foci A of Table 2.2; column 3 and column 4, row 1 in foci B of Table 2.2). This indicates that employee engagement does not necessarily contain all those three components.

In conclusion, there are three components of employee engagement, namely cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. However, the authors in the selected

articles either incorporated the cognitive component with the emotional component, and/or behavioural component, or any combinations of those three components. Thus, it can be concluded that for the purpose of this research, the definition of employee engagement must incorporate at least two or more components as shown in Figure 2.5. Hence, the term employee engagement is defined as an individual's cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes.

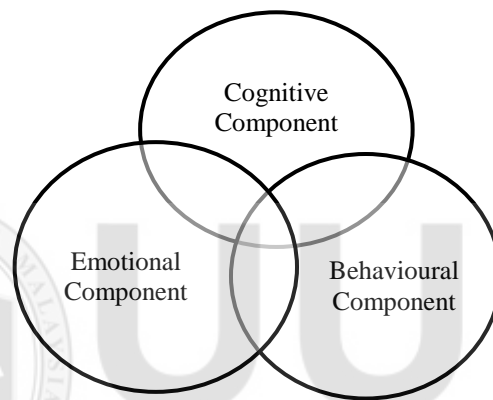


Figure 2.5
Three Components of Employee Engagement and its Combinations

Source: developed for this research

2.3 Related Theories of Employee Engagement

The discussion on the evolution of employee engagement literature in the previous section showed the emergence and the research development in employee engagement by both the practitioners and the academics. In the subsequent section, a discussion on the definitions of employee engagement revealed that the employee engagement is a multidimensional construct

encompassing any combinations of cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioural components.

The next step is to examine employee engagement and its theoretical approach. A broad range of theoretical approaches were invoked to explain employee engagement construct and its relationship with other variables. Among the invoked theoretical approaches in explaining the employee engagement are as follows: (a) social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964); (b) job characteristics theory (JCT) (Hackman & Oldham, 1980); (c) circumplex model of affect (Russel, 1980; 2003); (d) social determining theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000); (e) social cognitive theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1986); (f) conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989); (g) role theory (Kahn, 1990); (h) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotion (Fredrickson, 2001); (i) job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; 2008). Of the nine theoretical approaches mentioned, only two of them, the SET and the JD-R model had received the empirical support in relation to the topic of employee engagement and its outcomes (Schaufeli, 2013). In addition, the JD-R model is the most widely cited and had been widely used in the theoretical model of employee engagement literature (Albrecht, 2012). In view of this research, these two theories are more relevant for this research because the focus is on the employee engagement outcome. Hence, these two theories are progressively discussed in the following sections.

2.3.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

The first theory related to employee engagement and its outcome is the social exchange theory (SET). SET is one the most dominant theoretical paradigms towards understanding workplace relationship (Cropanzo & Mitchell, 2005) and employee attitude (DeConinck, 2010). Developed by Blau (1964), SET stipulates that there is a series of interactions that generates obligations between individuals or groups involved in an exchange who are in the state of reciprocal interdependence. As in the study of employee engagement, when employees receive economic and socio-emotional resources from their organization (Cropanzo & Mitchell, 2005), they feel obligated to respond and repay the organization. According to Saks (2006), employees perform their obligations to the organization depending on their level of engagement. In other words, employees opt to engage themselves at work in response to the resources and benefits received from their organization. Kahn (1990) proposed that employee engagement determines the individual-level and the organizational level outcomes at work. Based on this proposition and some empirical research reporting the relationship between employee engagement and its outcomes, Saks (2006) tested the antecedent and the consequences of employee engagement. He investigated the relationship between employee engagement and its outcomes using SET as the underpinning theory based on his argument that SET provides a sturdier theoretical rationale for explaining employee engagement. Besides Saks (2006), other empirical research on employee engagement and its outcomes using SET were Heger (2007), Dollard and Bakker (2010), Ram et al. (2011), Hoon, Kolb, Hee, and Kyoung (2012), and Albdour and Altarawneh (2014). The relationship between employee

engagement and employee engagement outcomes using SET is illustrated in Figure 2.6.

In conclusion, SET provides a theoretical explanation regarding the relationship between employee engagement and employee engagement outcome. This is aligned with the focus of this research which further expanded on the employee engagement outcome as mentioned by SET.

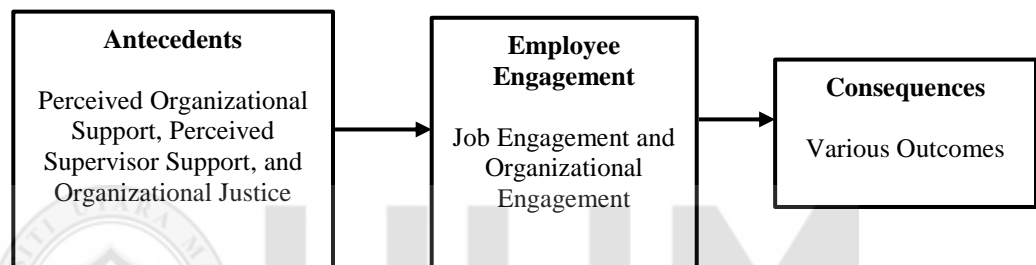


Figure 2.6
Social Exchange Theory (SET) of Employee Engagement

Source: Saks (2006)

2.3.2 Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R)

The preceding section had explained the relationship between employee engagement and employee engagement outcomes using the social exchange theory (SET). This section continues to explain the relationship between employee engagement and employee engagement outcomes using the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. Initially, the JD-R model was proposed to study the link between job components and burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). In order to form an inclusive model, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) improved the JD-R model to include the measurement of

employee engagement as an outcome. They hypothesized that job demands can lead to burnout through the energetic process, while job resources stimulate the motivational process, leading to employee engagement and subsequently creating positive outcomes.

Job resources particularly influence motivation or employee engagement when job demands are high. This is based on the premises of the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). Hence, the JD-R model helps to understand, explain, and make predictions on employee burnout, employee engagement, and employee engagement outcome. Among studies that had used the JD-R model to test employee engagement and its outcomes were Llorens, Bakker, Schaufeli, and Salanova (2006), Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2006), Xanthopoulou et al. (2009), and Albrecht (2012). The relationship between employee engagement and employee engagement outcome using the JD-R model is illustrated in Figure 2.7.

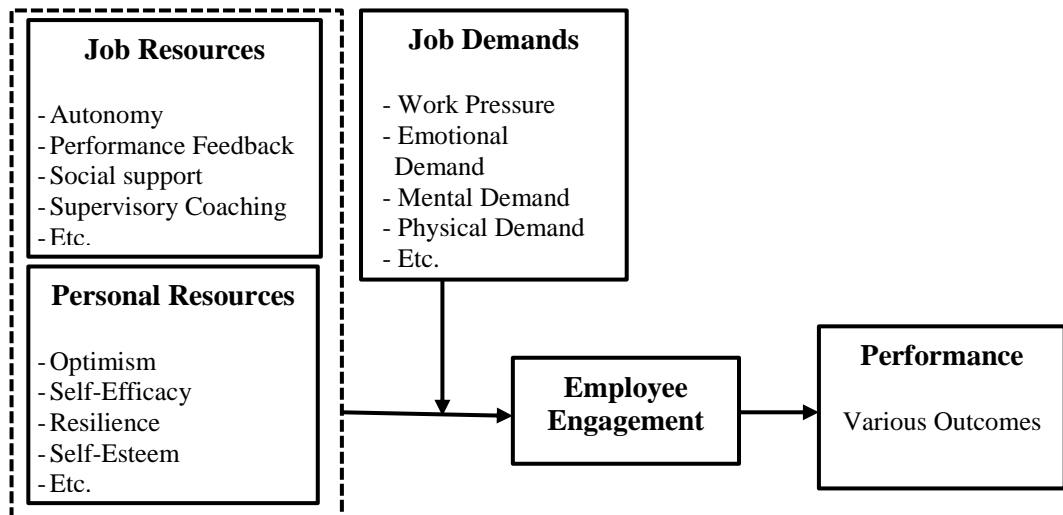


Figure 2.7
Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model of Employee Engagement

Source: Bakker and Demerouti (2007; 2008)

In conclusion, the JD-R model provides a theoretical explanation on the relationship between employee engagement and employee engagement outcome. This is aligned with the focus of this research which further expanded on the employee engagement outcome as mentioned by the JD-R model.

2.3.3 The Synthesis of SET and JD-R model

In the previous sections, the SET and the JD-R model were explained in which they provide a theoretical explanation on the relationship between employee engagement and employee engagement outcome. The connection between SET and JD-R model is illustrated in Figure 2.8. It can be concluded that the SET and the JD-R model are closely related and aligned with the focus of this

research that explores the employee engagement and employee engagement outcome.

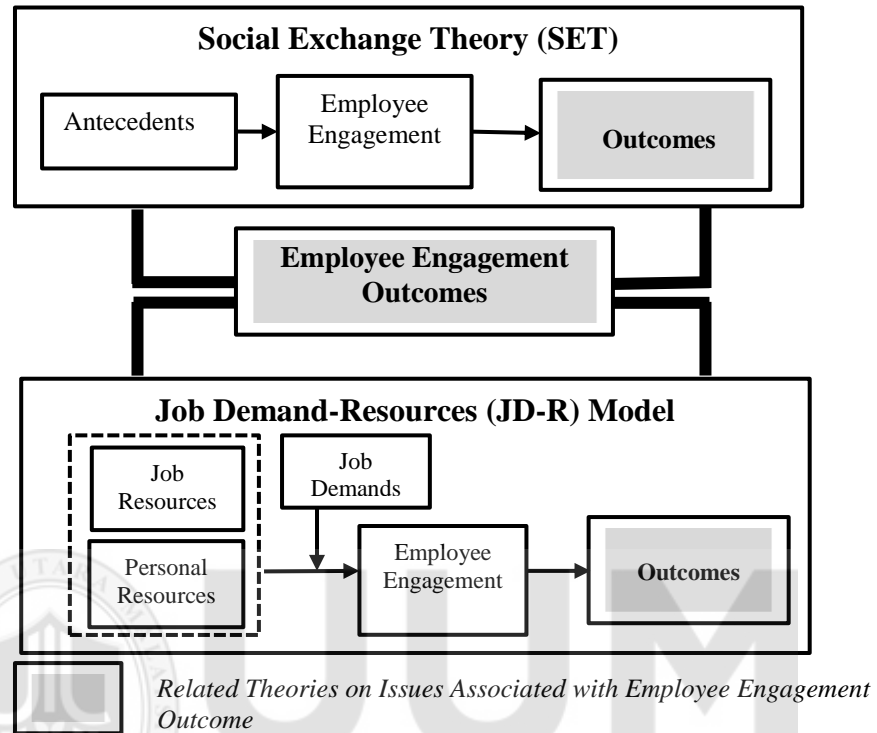


Figure 2.8
Related Theories of Employee Engagement and its Outcome

Source: developed for this research

Both theories, the SET and the JD-R model provides a theoretical explanation regarding employee engagement outcome. This is closely related and aligned with the focus of this research. However, these two theories do not expand on the detailed employee engagement outcome. Therefore, this research investigated further on this aspect of employee engagement.

2.4 Employee Engagement Outcome

In the earlier section, it was concluded that employee engagement is a multidimensional construct consisting of at least two or more components. In the subsequent section, descriptions about the existing theories of employee engagement, the SET and the JD-R model, were provided. The relationship between employee engagement and employee engagement outcomes was explained using the SET and the JD-R model, and the way these two are aligned with the focus of this research was also explained. This section then continues to discuss on employee engagement outcomes as shown in Box C of Figure 2.9.

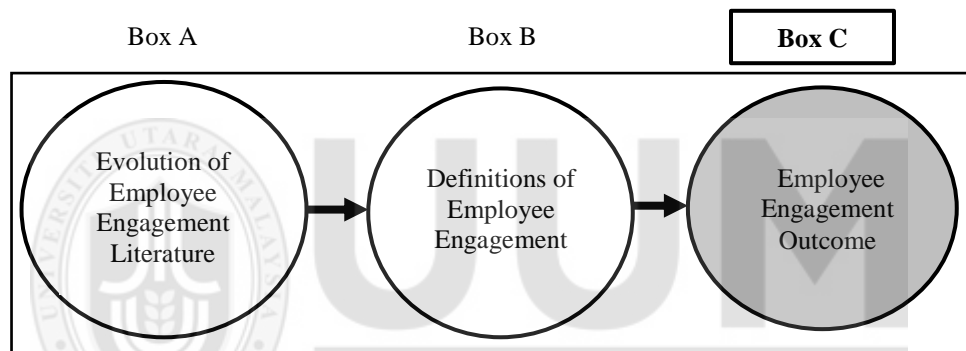


Figure 2.9
Milestones of Literature Review, Box C

Source: developed for this research

It is viewed necessary to discuss on the level of employee engagement outcome prior to discussion on the employee engagement outcomes in business setting.

The employee engagement outcome has two levels, namely the individual level and the organizational level (Jose & Mampilly, 2012; Kahn, 1990). Numerous scholars agree that the employee engagement outcome must first impact individual level to create impact on the organizational level (Saks, 2006; Kular et al., 2008; Swetha & Kumar, 2014). This view is supported by Gruman and Saks (2011), where they claimed that the linkage between employee

engagement and its outcomes at the individual level and at the organizational level is consistent with engagement model, theory, and research. This notion is also confirmed by Ahlowalia et al. (2014), Jones and Harter (2005), Robertson-Smith and Markwick (2009), and Swarnalatha and Prasanna (2012). Box D of Figure 2.10 shows the relationship between engagement outcomes at the individual level and at the organizational level.

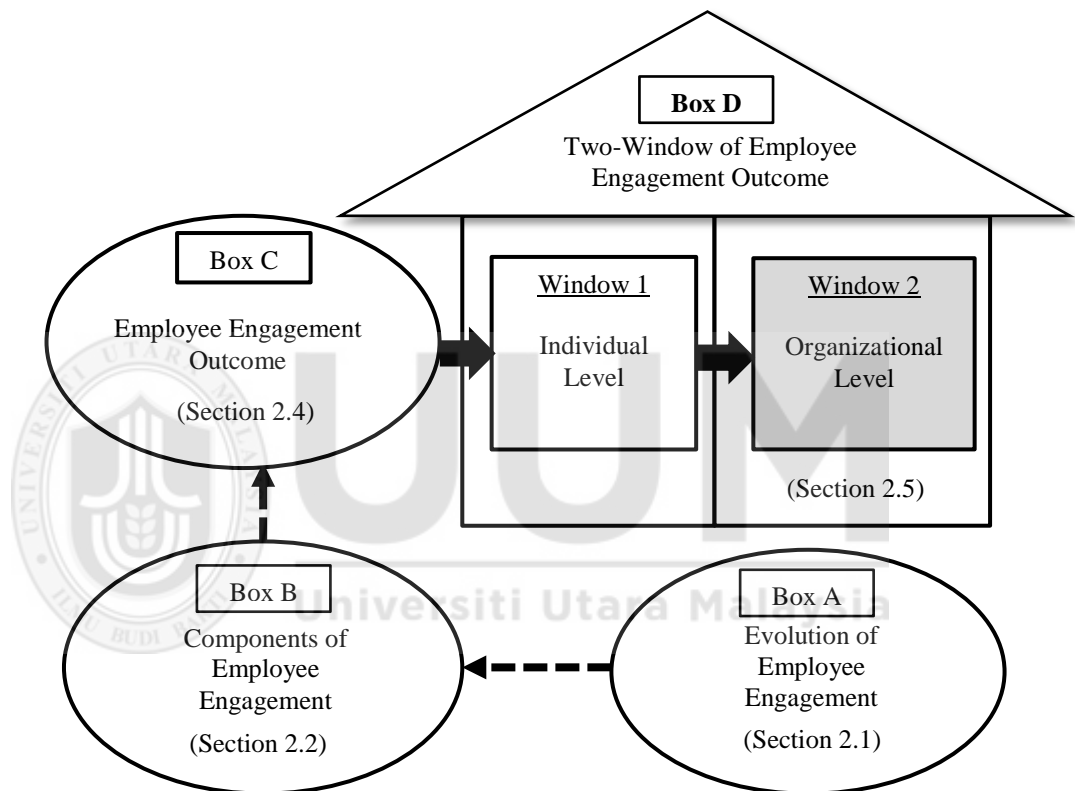


Figure 2.10
Two-Window Employee Engagement Outcome, Box D

Source: developed for this research

Organizational level refers to any meaningful unit above the individual level. It is the ultimate focus of employee engagement outcome in this research and consequently is further explored. The detail discussion on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is presented in the following section.

2.5 Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level in Business

In the Section 2.4, it was concluded that the employee engagement outcome is divided into the individual level and the organizational level. This research is to augment the body of research for employee engagement area by exploring the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. It is based on three premises: (i) the organizational level outcome is the final employee engagement outcome; (ii) the organizational level outcome is the barometers of a business economics' viability; and (iii) the practical utility of studying the organizational level outcome. It is often viewed as a more important indicator for success than the performance of individuals (Pugh & Dietz, 2008). For the purpose of identifying the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, the examination of related literature was performed and 19 articles investigating employee engagement outcome at the organizational level had been selected. These selected articles satisfy the employee engagement definition for this research as discussed in the Section 2.2. The assessment results of the selected articles are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

Analysis of Articles on the Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational level

1 Author(s)	Article's Background						
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Year of Publication	Refereed Journal	Research Method			Context	
		Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed Method	General Business Setting		
1 Luthans & Peterson (2002)	2002	√	√	x	x	√	√
2 Harter et al. (2002)	2002	√	√	x	x	√	√
3 Salanova, Agut, & Peiró (2005)	2005	√	√	x	x	√	√
4 Bhatnagar (2007)	2007	√	x	x	√	√	√
5 Heger (2007)	2007	√	√	x	x	√	√
6 Xanthopoulou et al. (2009)	2009	√	√	x	x	√	√
7 Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen (2009)	2009	√	√	x	x	√	√
8 Ram et al. (2011)	2011	√	√	x	x	√	√
9 Wang (2011)	2011	√	√	x	x	√	√
10 Heriyati & Ramadhan (2012)	2012	√	√	x	x	√	√
11 Suharti & Suliyanto (2012)	2012	√	√	x	x	√	√
12 Balakrishnan, Mashtan, & Chandra (2013)	2013	√	x	x	√	√	√
13 Chat-Uthai (2013)	2013	√	√	x	x	√	√
14 Jauhari et al. (2013)	2013	√	x	√	x	√	√
15 Kataria et al. (2013)	2013	√	√	x	x	√	√
16 Merrill et al. (2013)	2013	√	√	x	x	√	√
17 Soane et al. (2013)	2013	√	√	x	x	√	√
18 Alias et al. (2014)	2014	√	√	x	x	√	√
19 Gorgievski et al. (2014)	2014	√	√	x	x	√	√
Total		19	16	1	2	19	19

Source: developed for this research

All of the 19 selected articles were published in refereed journals (column 3 of Table 2.3), after year 2000 (column 2 of Table 2.3), and investigating about employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (column 8 of Table 2.3). More than 80% of these articles, which is the sum of 16 out of 19 articles, used the quantitative research method (column 4 of Table 2.3), and only one article used the qualitative research method (column 5 of Table 2.3). Meanwhile, the remaining two articles utilized mixed research method (column 6 of Table 2.3). All of these studies were all conducted in a general business setting (column 7 of Table 2.3).

In summary, all of the articles were published in refereed journals, were conducted in a general business setting, and they examined the relationship between employee engagement and employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. In short, the selected articles are relevant and valid to be further examined to identify factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Based on the assessment of the selected articles, the limitations in conducting those studies were discovered and related with two areas: (i) the majority of the articles employed quantitative method instead of qualitative method; and (ii) the selected studies only examined employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in a general business setting.

In this case, only literature published up to 2014 was reviewed in this chapter to develop the preliminary conceptual framework of this research and research issues. More recent literature that examined the employee engagement outcome were not selected for this investigation because they did not satisfy the selection

criteria set for this research (e.g. Cheema, Akram, & Javed, 2015) and beyond the scope of this research (e.g. Malik & Khalid, 2016).

Next, the assessment of the 19 articles had produced 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, namely employee retention, profitability, absenteeism, customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, organizational performance, manager self-efficacy, organizational advocacy, and business growth. The synthesis of the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is illustrated in Table 2.4.

The first factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is employee retention (column 1 of Table 2.4). Employee retention is viewed not as the opposite of turnover, but it is applied to determine what is wanted rather than what is not wanted (Waldman & Arora, 2004). This view is supported by Browell (2003) and Frank, Finnegan, and Taylor (2004) of which all of them had agreed that employee retention involves keeping desirable employees. Organization does not want to lose good employees in order to meet its business objectives. For this reason, this factor is considered in the present research for further investigation.

Table 2.4

Synthesis on the Factors of Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level

		Factors of Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Source		Employee Retention	Profitability	Absenteeism	Customer Satisfaction	Productivity	Customer Loyalty	Organizational Performance	Manager Self-Efficacy	Advocacy of an Organization	Business Growth	Total
1	Luthans & Peterson (2002)	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	√	x	x	1
2	Harter et al. (2002)	√	√	x	√	√	X	x	x	x	x	4
3	Salanova et al. (2005)	x	x	x	x	x	√	x	x	x	x	1
4	Bhatnagar (2007)	√	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
5	Heger (2007)	√	√	x	x	√	X	x	x	x	x	3
6	Xanthopoulou et al. (2009)	x	√	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
7	Schaufeli et al. (2009)	x	x	√	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
8	Ram et al. (2011)	x	x	x	√	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
9	Wang (2011)	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	√	x	1
10	Heriyati & Ramadhan (2012)	√	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
11	Suharti & Suliyanto (2012)	√	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
12	Balakrishnan et al. (2013)	√	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
13	Chat-Uthai (2013)	√	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
14	Jauhari et al. (2013)	x	√	x	√	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
15	Kataria et al. (2013)	x	x	x	x	x	X	√	x	x	x	1
16	Merrill et al. (2013)	x	x	√	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
17	Soane et al. (2013)	x	x	√	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
18	Alias et al. (2014)	√	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	1
19	Gorgievski et al. (2014)	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	√	1
20	Total	8	4	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	
	Selected for this study	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

Source: developed for this research

The second factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is profitability (column 2 of Table 2.4). Profitability refers to the ability to generate, sustain, and increase profits (White, Sondhi, & Fried, 2003) obtained by the enterprise from transformation and/or change activities, as well as surplus appearing in the final phase of the economic circuits (Pălălaoia, 2011). Hence, this factor is considered in this research for further investigation.

The third factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is absenteeism (column 3 of Table 2.4). Absenteeism is defined as the failure of an employee to report to work at a given location and the time when it is expected to do so (Martichhio & Jimeno, 2003; Robbins, 2003; Patton & Johns, 2007). The relationship between employee engagement and absenteeism is negative, which means the higher the level of employee engagement, the lower the incident of absenteeism by employee. Therefore, this factor is considered in this research for further investigation.

The fourth factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is customer satisfaction (column 4 of Table 2.4). Customer satisfaction is defined as a post-choice evaluative judgment response by the consumer to the purchase and the use of a product resulting from the comparison of the product results against some standards prior to purchase (Oliver, 1980; Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Tse & Peter, 1988; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991; Halstead, Hartman & Schmidt, 1994). Hence, this factor is taken into account in the present research for further investigation.

The next factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is productivity (column 5 of Table 2.4). Productivity is referred to as sales, work quality, and activities accomplished on schedule (Culnan & Blair, 1983). Productivity is also defined as a ratio depicting the volume of work completed in a given amount of time (Ricardo & Wade, 2001), as well as in reference to output (Singh & Mohanty, 2012). Based on these definitions, productivity includes both effectiveness and efficiency of the employees in performing the given tasks. Therefore, this factor is counted in this research for further investigation.

The following factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is customer loyalty (column 6 of Table 2.4). Customer loyalty refers to the feelings or attitudes of customer repurchase behaviour with the same brand, or the same-brand set purchasing despite any situational influences and marketing efforts that might cause switching of behaviour (Oliver, 1997; Homburg & Giering, 2001; John, 2011; Walsh, Evanshitzky, & Wunderlich, 2008; Cheng, Chui, Hu, & Chang, 2011). This factor is also considered in this research for further investigation.

The seventh factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is organizational performance (column 7 of Table 2.4). The term is defined as efficiency, economy, quality, consistency behaviour, and normative measures (Ricardo & Wade, 2001; Abu-Jarad, Yusof, & Nikbin, 2010). The term can be understood differently depending on the individuals involved in the assessment (Lebans & Euske, 2006). For instance, the term can be understood

through human resource outcomes related to working environment (Srivastava, 2008) and employee behaviour (Dyer & Reeves, 1995). Based on these definitions, organizational performance can be summarized as the ability of an organization to achieve its organizational efficiency through excellent working environment and positive employee behaviour. Therefore, this factor is considered in this research for further investigation.

The eighth factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is manager self-efficacy that influences manager effectiveness (column 8 of Table 2.4). Self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief that he or she is capable of performing a particular task successfully (Bandura, 1977; 1997) that helps to explain and predict work-related effectiveness such as work performance. This factor is considered in this research for further investigation.

The ninth factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is advocacy of an organization (column 9 of Table 2.4). Advocacy of an organization refers to ongoing, intention-based, and value-added activities of workplace members that are significant to expand achievement and furthering the well-being of themselves, their co-members, and their collective organization (Seiling, 2001). Accordingly, this factor is considered in this research for further investigation.

Finally, the tenth factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is business growth (column 10 of Table 2.4). Business growth can be defined in terms of revenue generation and expansion of volume of business

(Gupta, Guha, & Krishnaswami, 2013), growth of sales (Coad & Rao, 2008; Huynh & Petrunia, 2010), as well as extensive asset growth (Bigsten & Gebreeyesus, 2007; Choi, 2010). For this reason, this factor is selected in this research for further investigation.

In regard to frequency, out of the 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level that have been examined, the highest frequency is employee retention in which eight out of 19 articles studied this factor (column 1, row 20 of Table 2.4). The highest frequency of this factor can be explained by a strong link between employee retention and the increase in sales, market value, and profitability (Huselid, 1995). Employee retention is thus necessary for the success of an organization (Kamil, Abdul Hamid, Hashim, and Omar, 2013). Further, the opposite of employee retention has a detrimental impact to business because it affects the organizational performance (Abduljlil, Yazam, & Ahmid, 2011), disruption of service (Balakrishnan et al. 2013), loss of knowledge and experience (Droege & Hoobler, 2003; Martins & Hester, 2012), as well as costly for it requires recruitment, interview, and training of new employees (Mobley, 1982; Griffeth & Hom, 2001).

The second highest frequency of the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is profitability where four out of 19 articles researched this factor (column 2, row 20 of Table 2.4). The popularity of this factor among researchers is because it denotes the organization's bottom-line results that measure the organizational performance (Niresh & Velnampy, 2014;

Vaijayanthimala & Vijakumar, 2014) and affects the longevity and success of an organization (Yazdanfar, 2013).

Next, the third highest frequency of factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is absenteeism (column 3, row 20 of Table 2.4) and customer satisfaction (column 4, row 20 of Table 2.4) in which three out of 19 articles probed into these two factors respectively. Absenteeism has received attention from researchers mainly due to its direct and indirect effects to the organizations (Gangai, 2014). It is regarded as a serious problem and a costly incidence to both employees and employers (Sharma & Magotra, 2013). Among the examples of negative consequences of absenteeism are increasing statutory sick pay and expenses incurred to cover the absence (Mason & Griffin, 2003), loss of productivity (Dalton & Mesch, 1991), low morale among employees covering for those absents (Leaker, 2008), interruption of the workflow (Klein, 1986), and loss of revenue (Sharma & Magotra, 2013).

Similarly, customer satisfaction has obtained equal attention from researchers and it is perceived as the heart of marketing (Ganiyu, Uche, & Elizabeth, 2012). It is closely linked to strong customer loyalty (Bei & Chiao, 2001; Szymanski & Henard, 2001), reduces the cost of future transactions (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990), and helps to secure future revenues (Fornell, 1992) by reducing costs associated with defective goods and services (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993).

The fourth highest frequency of factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is productivity. Two out of 19 articles explored this factor

(column 5, row 20 of Table 2.4). This factor has gained attention from researchers because there is a need to attain and maintain high level of productivity (Okeye & Ezejiolor, 2013) as it provides an opportunity for increasing profits (Ramirez & Nembhard, 2004).

In respect to customer loyalty, organizational performance, manager self-efficacy, advocacy of an organization, and business growth, there is only one empirical research in business context that had explored the relationship between employee engagement and each of these factors (column 6-10, row 20 of Table 2.4). The lack of empirical research on these factors owes to the fact that their research findings were not published in refereed journals as these factors were mostly reported by consultancy firms such as Right Management, Gallup Study, and Hay Group in which if published they were limited to only as a conceptual paper or viewpoints (Thomas & MacDiarmid, 2004; Lockwood, 2007; Gonring, 2008; McBain, 2007; AbuKhalifeh & Mat Som, 2013).

In summary, the review of the 19 articles on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in business context had unveiled 10 factors. These factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level are supported by several studies (Jones & Harter, 2005; Sundaray, 2011; Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2012; Ahlowalia et al., 2014). The assessment of the frequency of these 10 factors revealed that employee retention has the highest frequency, followed by profitability, absenteeism, customer satisfaction, and productivity, while factors with the least frequency are customer loyalty, organizational performance, manager self-efficacy, organizational advocacy, and business

growth. For the purpose of this research, these 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level are considered for further investigation.

2.6 An Overview of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia

The previous Section 2.5 unveiled and defined the 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, namely employee retention, profitability, absenteeism, customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, organizational performance, manager self-efficacy, advocacy of an organization, and business growth. However, all of these factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level were examined in general business context. The earlier analysis on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in the Section 2.4 revealed that the selected studies which are available only examined employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in a general business setting. This indicates that there are lack of studies in SMEs business context. Therefore, this research proposed for these 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level to be explored further in the SME business context in order to confirm whether these factors are similar in the SME business despite the uniqueness of this category of business. Following this proposition, this section provides an overview of SME business in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, the definitions of SMEs is occasionally changing in accordance to the relevance of SMEs to the economy and stages of economic development. Prior to 2005, there was no common definition of SMEs in Malaysia (NSDC, 2005). In the beginning of 2005, SMEs was defined more specific to a particular industry in which they were operated. On November 6, 2013, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) issued a circular on the new definition of SMEs which took effect on January 1, 2014 as illustrated in Table 2.5.

The improved definition of SMEs had revised the amount of sales turnover and the number of full-time employees according to particular industry and the size of its business. Not only that, the category of SMEs had been further simplified into two main categories, namely “manufacturing” and “services and other sectors”. This new revision of the definition of SMEs enabled the inclusion of more firms, particularly those from the oil and gas category, as well as other types of services sectors to be classified as SME business.

Table 2.5
SMEs Definition in Malaysia

Year	Category	Micro enterprises	Small-sized enterprises	Medium-sized enterprises
2014 - Present	Manufacturing	Sales turnover less than RM300,000 OR less than 5 full-time employees	Sales turnover between RM300,000 to less than RM15 million OR full-time employees between 5 to 75	Sales turnover between RM15 million to RM50 million OR full-time employees between 75 to 200
	Services and Other Sectors	Sales turnover less than RM300,000 OR less than 5 full-time employees	Sales turnover between RM300,000 to less than RM3 million OR full-time employees between 5 to 30	Sales turnover between RM3 million to RM20 million OR full-time employees between 30 to 70

Source: adapted from the National SME Development Council (2013)

For the purpose of this research, the latest definition of SMEs is applied to keep abreast with the current context of SMEs in Malaysia and to ensure consistency of the standard practices among researchers and policymakers in the country.

In Malaysia, SMEs play a vital role in the economic development. Performance of SMEs is crucial to transform Malaysia into a high-income country through their contribution to the national GDP and to meet the Vision 2020. Due to their vital role, government has taken numerous progressive steps towards the development of SMEs. For instance, in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), SME development plan was designed to assist SMEs in overcoming new challenges in business. The constant drive by government to support SMEs also includes the establishment of various agencies and ministries. To name a few, there are the National SME Development Council (NSDC), SME Bank, Small and Medium Enterprises Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp), Malaysia Industrial Development Finance Berhad (MIDF), Perbadanan Nasional Berhad (PNS), Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Ministry of Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development (MECD). These ministries and agencies were established to provide assistance in terms of skills upgrading, provision of infrastructure and supporting services, promotional activities, R&D activities, advisory, tax incentives, and financial assistance. In addition, the launched of SMEs Masterplan 2012-2020 in July 2012 also signifies government's desire to comprehensively develop SMEs in meeting the Vision 2020.

SMEs in Malaysia formed 99.2% of the entire business establishment according to a report released by the SME Masterplan Malaysia 2012/2020 as depicted in column 4, row 7 of Table 2.6. The concentration of SMEs is largely found in

services sector with 580,985 establishments in 2010 (column 3, row 1 of Table 2.6) compared to 474,706 in 2003 (column 7, row 1 of Table 2.6), accounting for about 90% from the total amount of SMEs in Malaysia (column 9, row 1 of Table 2.6). Meanwhile, SMEs in the manufacturing sector accounts for 6% from the total number of SMEs (column 9, row 2 of Table 2.6), followed by the construction sector that consists of 3% (column 9, row 4 of Table 2.6). The remaining 1% of SMEs operate in the agriculture sector (column 9, row 3 of Table 2.6) and 0.1% are found in the mining and quarrying sectors (column 9, row 5 of Table 2.6).

Table 2.6
Number of Establishments by Sector and Percentage Share to the Total SMEs and Establishments

1	Census of Establishments and Enterprises 2005 (Reference Year 2003)				Economic Census 2011 (Reference Year 2010)				
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Number of establishments	Total	SMEs	Percentage of SMEs over Total	Percentage of SMEs over Total SMEs	Total	SMEs	Percentage of SMEs over Total	Percentage of SMEs over Total SMEs	
1	Services	477,525	474,706	99.4	86.6	591,883	580,985	98.2	90.0
2	Manufacturing	40,793	39,373	96.5	7.2	39,669	37,861	95.4	5.9
3	Agriculture	34,486	34,188	99.1	6.2	8,829	6,708	76.0	1.0
4	Construction	-	-	-	-	22,140	19,283	87.1	3.0
5	Mining and Quarrying	-	-	-	-	418	299	71.5	0.1
7	Total Establishments	552,804	548,267	99.2	100	662,939	645,136	97.3	100

Source: adapted from the Small and Medium Enterprises Corporation Malaysia, Profiles of SMEs

The next points are about the number of establishments and percentage share of SMEs by firm size as shown in Table 2.7. Out of the total number of SME establishments in 2010, microenterprises showed a significant decline,

constituting only 77% (column 5, row 2 of Table 2.7) from the total SMEs compared to 79.3% in 2005 (column 1, row 2 of Table 2.7). The other two, small- and medium-size firms recorded a slight increase in 2010 compared to in 2005. For instance, small enterprises constituted 20% in 2010 (column 6, row 2 of Table 2.7) compared to only 18.7% in 2005 (column 2, row 2 of Table 2.7), while medium enterprises constituted 3% in 2010 (column 7, row 2 of Table 2.7) compared to 2.3% in 2005 (column 3, row 2 of Table 2.7).

Table 2.7
Number of Establishments and Percentage Share of SMEs by Firm Size

Census of Establishments and Enterprises 2005 (Reference Year 2003)				Economic Census 2011 (Reference Year 2010)					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
	Micro	Small	Medium	Total	Micro	Small	Medium	Total	
1	Number of Establishments	434,939	100,608	12,720	548,267	496,458	128,787	19,891	645,136
2	Percentage share to total SMEs, %	79.3	18.4	2.3	100	77.0	20.0	3.0	100
3	Percentage share to total establishments, %	78.7	18.2	2.3	99.2	74.9	19.4	3.0	97.3

Source: adapted from the Small and Medium Enterprises Corporation Malaysia, Profiles of SMEs

In terms of the geographical location of SMEs in Malaysia, based on the Economic Census 2011 as illustrated in Table 2.8, Klang Valley (Selangor and Kuala Lumpur) recorded the highest number of establishments. This region constituted of 32.6% of the total SMEs (column 3, row 1, and row 2 of Table 2.8), followed by Johor with 10.7% (column 3, row 3 of Table 2.8), Perak with 9.3%, (column 3, row 4 of Table 2.8) and the least is Putrajaya with only 0.1%

(column 3, row 16 of Table 2.8). Of these percentage share of SME business, Selangor, Johor, Perak, and Putrajaya showed an increase in the number of establishments of SMEs, except for Kuala Lumpur and a few other states (row 1, 3, 4, and 16 of Table 2.8).

Table 2.8
Percentage Share of SMEs by State in 2003 vis-à-vis 2010, per cent

	State	Census of Establishments and Enterprises 2005 (Reference Year 2003)	Economic Census 2011 (Reference Year 2010)	Percentage Point increase/decrease
	1	2	3	4
1	Selangor	18.0	19.5	+1.5
2	Kuala Lumpur	17.7	13.1	-4.6
3	Johor	10.3	10.7	+0.4
4	Perak	8.0	9.3	+1.3
5	Sarawak	6.0	6.8	+0.8
6	Sabah	4.5	6.3	+1.8
7	Pulau Pinang	4.9	6.3	+1.4
8	Kelantan	6.5	5.9	-0.6
9	Kedah	6.8	5.7	-1.0
10	Pahang	5.1	4.6	-0.5
11	Negeri Sembilan	3.2	3.8	+0.6
12	Terengganu	4.3	3.5	-0.8
13	Melaka	3.6	3.4	-0.2
14	Perlis	1.1	0.8	-0.3
15	Labuan	-	0.3	+0.3
16	Putrajaya	-	0.1	+0.1
17	Total	100.0	100.00	

Source: adapted from the Small and Medium Enterprises Corporation Malaysia, Profiles of SMEs

In short, this section explained the new definition of SMEs and definition of SMEs used in this research. It also stated the statistics of the number of SME establishments in Malaysia by sector, in which service sector was found as the largest. Then, it showed the statistics on the number of SME establishments by firm size and by state allocation, in which the largest firm size is microenterprises. Meanwhile, the most contributing states are Selangor and Kuala Lumpur (Klang Valley) which have the most concentration of SMEs.

2.7 Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational Level in SMEs

Section 2.5 previously explained the 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in general business setting. It was found that the studies on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SMEs are lacking. Hence, this section discusses the available employee engagement research in SME business setting that investigated its outcome at the organizational level.

To date, the existing studies on employee engagement in SMEs are focusing on examining the antecedents of employee engagement such as “health at work” initiative (fair chance at work) (Griffin, Hall, & Watson, 2005), self-monitoring (Boz, Ayan, Eskin, & Kahraman, 2014), human resource management (Davies & Crane, 2010), healthy organizational practices (Acosta, Salanova, & Llorens, 2012), and innovative HR strategies (Kishore et al. 2012).

There are two studies available with respect to the empirical research on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SMEs. The first study was conducted by Sanda and Ntsiful (2013) on the relationship between employee engagement in SMEs and employee retention. They found significantly positive correlations between employee engagement and employee retention. This study, even though it has examined employee engagement and

its outcome, was not selected for the present research mainly due to three reasons. First, the study was not published in refereed journal. Second, the major purpose of the study was to examine the influence of HR practices on employee retention instead of employee engagement. Finally, the authors did not explain the instrument used to measure employee engagement nor its operational definition. Thus, this study did not satisfy the article selection criteria set by the present research.

The second study was conducted by Shusha (2013) examined the relationship between psychological engagement, withdrawal behaviour, and withdrawal intention in SMEs, and had adopted Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement. Shusha (2013) demonstrated that psychological engagement has a significant negative impact on both withdrawal behaviour and intention. However, the instrument that was used to measure employee engagement was derived from Young's (2011) doctoral thesis that required further validation. In addition, the operational definition of withdrawal behaviour was not offered by the author in order to identify the exact behaviours associated to this concept. Hence, this study also was not selected for the present research.

In conclusion, these two studies on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SMEs did not satisfy the article's selection criteria for this research, thus are not fully related to this research scope. Nevertheless, these two studies provide a strong platform for this research to propose that the 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in a general business setting require further investigation in SME business setting.

This proposition is because these two studies examined one out of the 10 factors that is related to employee retention. Thus, perhaps the other nine (9) factors might be also evident in SME business setting.

Next, the preliminary conceptual framework of this study is presented in the subsequent section.

2.8 Preliminary Conceptual Framework

Started out with the review on the evolution of employee engagement research (refer Figure 2.3 in the Section 2.1), two main categories of literature were identified specifically the academic literature and the practitioner literature. These two main categories of literature were then became the basis to examine the existing definitions of employee engagement (refer Table 2.2 in the Section 2.2). This research then proposed the definition of employee engagement should include two or more components of employee engagement, namely cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. Based on this proposed definition of employee engagement and other related criteria (refer Section 2.5), 19 articles in the employee engagement literature examined employee engagement outcomes at the organizational level in a general business setting were selected. Along that line, 10 factors namely employee retention, profitability, absenteeism, customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, organizational performance, manager self-efficacy, advocacy of an organization, and business growth (refer Table 2.4 in the Section 2.5) were uncovered.

From the analysis of the earlier studies on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, it was found that empirical research in SMEs is scant as compared to in general business setting as shown previously in Table 2.3. Further examination on the existing studies on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level obtained two studies that were conducted in SMEs as explained in the Section 2.7. Despite issues concerning these two articles, they however provide a strong platform for this research to propose that these 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in a general business setting to be explored in SME business setting because these two studies examined one out of the 10 factors that is related to employee retention. Thus, perhaps the other nine (9) factors might be also evident in SME business setting.



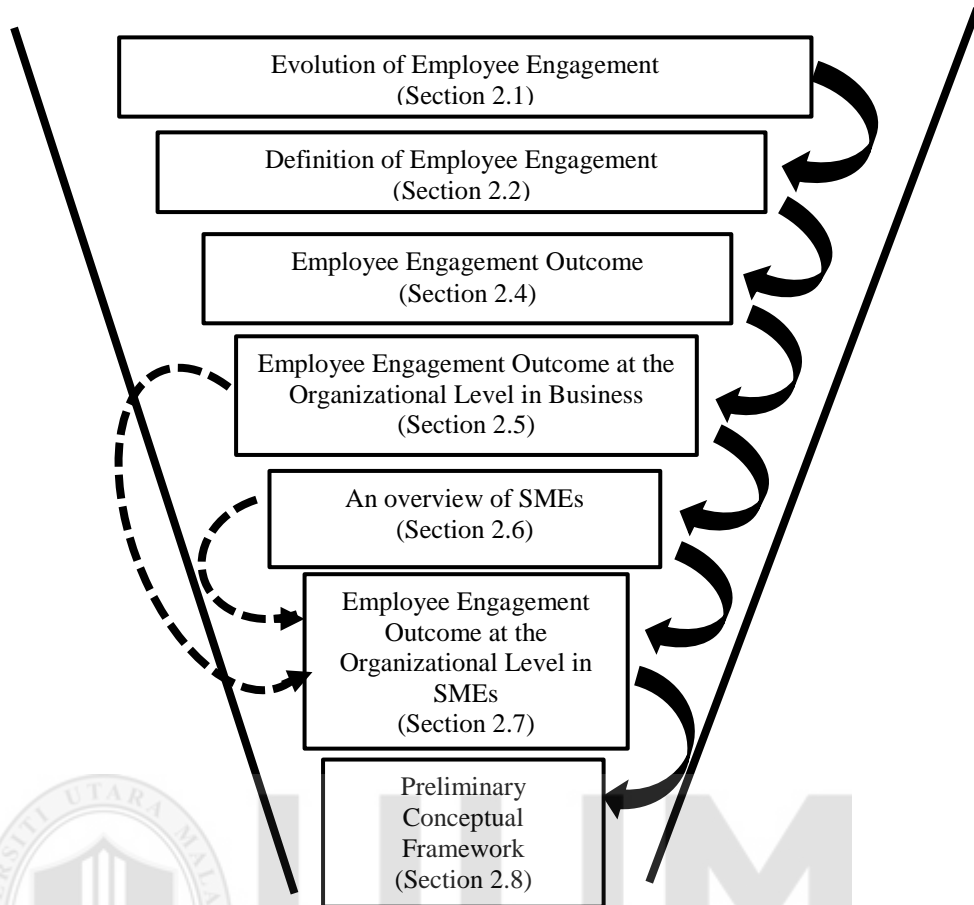


Figure 2.11
Funnel Approach for the Preliminary Conceptual Framework Construction

Source: developed for this research

The process of the preliminary conceptual framework construction of this research is based on the funnel approach as depicted in Figure 2.11. Founded on the above premises, the preliminary conceptual framework of this research proposed that the 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level to be grouped into core factors and non-core factors. This grouping was based on the frequency of each factor depicted in Table 2.4 as explained in the Section 2.5. Factors with frequency of two or more were considered to be as the core factors and factors with frequency of less than two

are considered as the non-core factors (Mohd Harif, Chee, & Md Zali, 2011; Mohd Harif, Chee, & Ahmad, 2013).

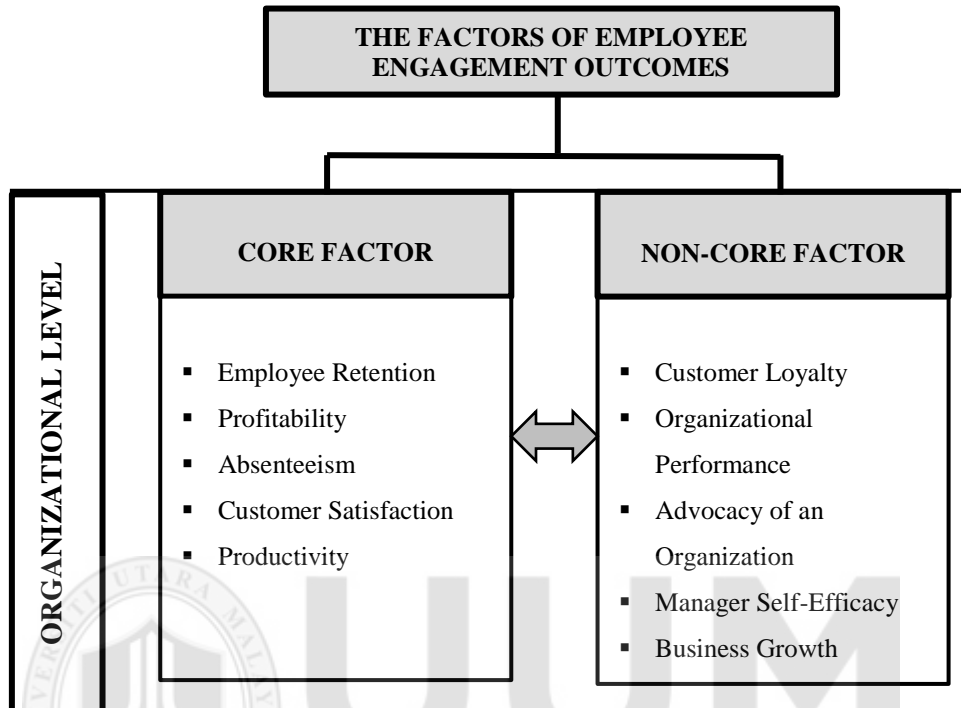


Figure 2.12
Preliminary Conceptual Framework of this Research

Source: developed for this research

In relation to this research, core factor refers to factor that is essential or most important amongst the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. On the other hand, non-core factor refers to factor that is secondary or less important amongst the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. The purpose of categorizing the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level into core factors and non-core factors is to better understand factors that are important to SME business so that well-suited approach and action could be taken by various parties for the benefit of SME business.

As shown in Figure 2.12, the categorization of the core factors comprise of employee retention, profitability, absenteeism, customer satisfaction, and productivity. The categorization of the non-core factors consists of customer loyalty, organizational performance, advocacy of an organization, manager self-efficacy, and business growth. This categorization of the core factors and the non-core factors consist of five factors for each category.

2.9 Research Issues

In the earlier section, the preliminary conceptual framework for this research is developed and presented. This section then continues by focusing on the building of the research issues to the preliminary conceptual framework of this research as presented in the Section 2.8. In order to reiterate, the aim of this research is to explore the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Previous researchers identified employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in general business setting. However, in the context of SME business, these findings perhaps might have been different due to the uniqueness of SME business itself.

In addition, these 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level were not viewed according to their importance, neither in general business setting nor in SME business setting. There was no differentiation between the core factors and the non-core factors for each of these factors of employee engagement outcome. This differentiation is viewed

crucial especially for the SMEs to align their practices and strategies towards gaining better business results through employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and for policy-makers to design sound support programs for SMEs. Overlaying this issue consolidates and further elaborates on what has already been achieved and known in the area of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and in the context of SME business especially in Malaysia. Consequently, the research issues developed for this research are:

RI 1: What are the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

RI 2: What are the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

RI 3: What are the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

In summary, after taking into consideration the deficiency of existing research on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level especially in SME business, three research issues were developed for this research to be further explored.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter began with the examination of extant literature on employee engagement. Discussion on the evolution of employee engagement research

revealed that the literature of employee engagement consists of academic literature and practitioner literature.

Next, the review on the various definitions of employee engagement from the selected academic and practitioner literature concluded that components of employee engagement must encompass at least two or more components out of the three components, namely cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. Then, the existing theory and model of employee engagement, specifically the SET and the JD-R model are explained and their relations with the present research was established.

Subsequently, the analysis on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in a general business setting revealed 10 factors. Due to the lacking of existing literature about employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SME business, 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in a general business setting, namely employee retention, profitability, absenteeism, customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, organizational performance, manager self-efficacy, advocacy of an organization, and business growth were proposed to be investigated as factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within Malaysia SME business (refer Section 2.7). Next, the overview of SMEs in Malaysia and employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SMEs were presented. Finally, the preliminary conceptual framework of the research was developed and the three research issues were identified as

shown in Table 2.9. As a result, the following Chapter 3 deliberates on the research methodology deployed in this research.

Table 2.9

List of research issues for this research

Research Issue	
RI 1	What are the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?
RI 2	What are the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?
RI 3	What are the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

Source: developed for this research



CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, pertinent literature relating to employee engagement outcome was discussed. Issues on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level were highlighted from the extant literature and the conceptual framework was presented in which three research issues were identified. The introduction to the methodology of this research was provided in the Section 1.5 of Chapter 1. In this chapter, the research approach and procedures that were adopted for the purpose of data collection and data analysis in addressing the research issues are explained in details. The sequence of this chapter is shown in Figure 3.1.

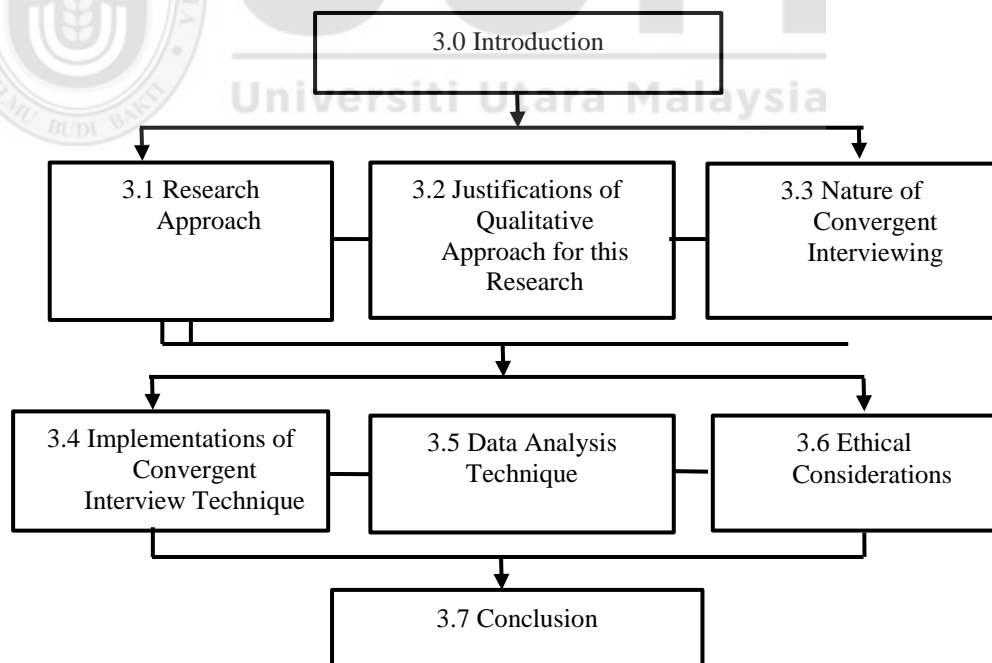


Figure 3.1
Flow of Chapter 3

Source: developed for this research

This chapter is divided into eight main sections. Section 3.0 provides the outlines of this chapter, followed by Section 3.1 that provides the description of research approach used in this research towards achieving its objectives. Next, Section 3.2 furnishes the justifications of qualitative approach for this research. Subsequently, the nature of convergent interviewing is explained in the Section 3.3 and in the Section 3.4, the implementation of convergent interviewing procedure that includes sample selection, sample size, interview protocol, and labelling convention for respondents are explained. In the Section 3.5 and Section 3.6, data analysis technique and ethical considerations are described respectively. Finally, the conclusion of this chapter is delivered in the Section 3.7.

3.1 Research Approach

The discussion on the methodology of this research begins with the research approach. Figure 3.2 depicts the flow of the research plan. An exploratory qualitative research approach had been adopted using qualitative convergent interviewing for data collection. This qualitative research sought to learn from the experiences and perceptions of the SME business respondents in Malaysia which were related to the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. This is a highly useful empirical evidence to be applied by the Malaysia SME business. Figure 3.2 shows the overall research approach used by this research including the convergent interviewing phase as indicated by the dotted area.

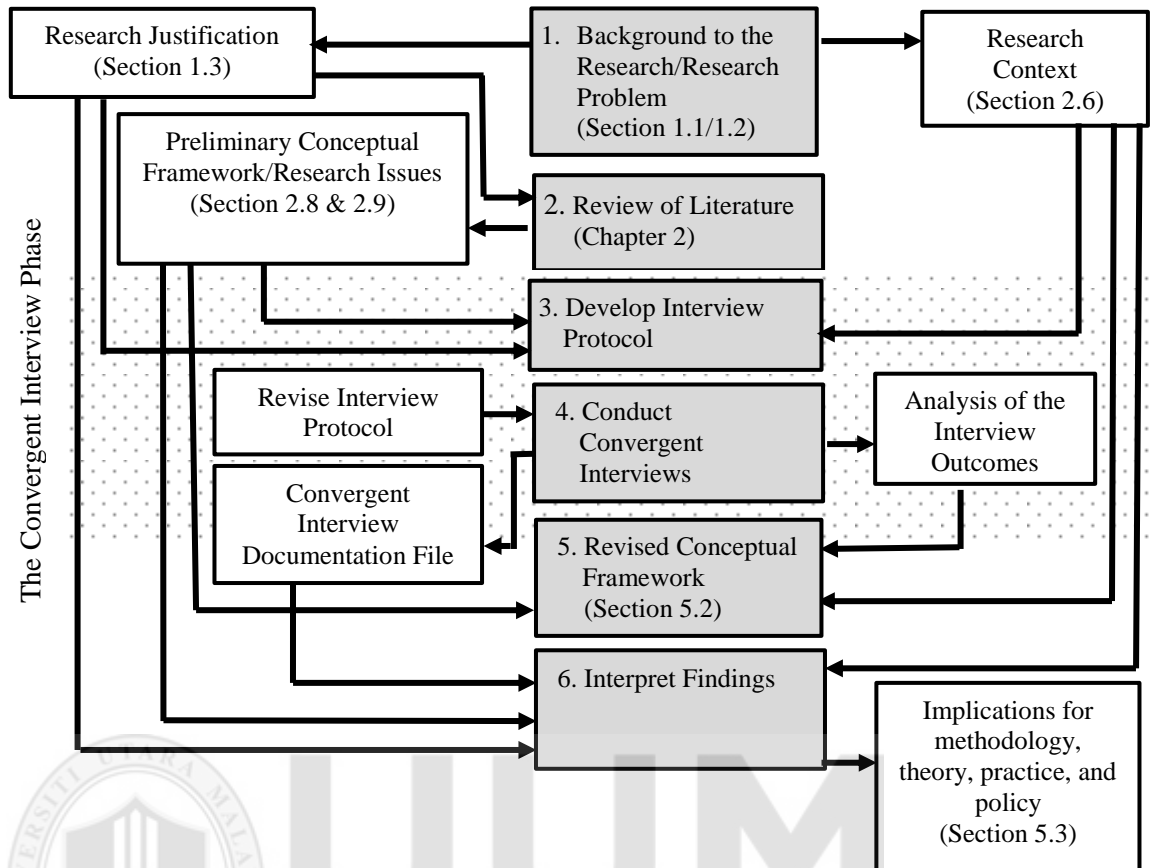


Figure 3.2
Flow Diagram of Research Plan and Convergent Interviewing

Source: developed based on Gable (1994)

3.2 Justifications of Qualitative Approach for This Research

The preceding section presented the overall research approach of this research. Subsequently, this section justifies the qualitative approach for this research. There are four main reasons for the present research employing a qualitative research methodology. The first reason is associated with the concept “realism paradigm” because the research problem of this research is derived from the need to explore and understand the factors, the core factors and the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. The

investigated phenomenon had been under-researched and there was little evidence found in regard to their applications in the context of SME business. This indicates that the reality is yet to be discovered in this field. A research relying on realism paradigm supports the development of theory (Healy & Perry, 2000). This research is theory-building in nature rather than theory-testing, thus a qualitative methodology was relevant (Bonoma, 1985; Carson, Gilmore, Gronhaug, & Perry, 2001). Most importantly, this qualitative research sought to understand the reality via focusing on the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The second reason is linked to the “research objectives” which seeks to explore this under-researched area of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SME business. The employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is a relatively new topic in employee engagement and human resource literature. There are various facets awaiting systematic reasoning and clarification. In the initial stage of theory development, where phenomena are not well comprehended, the use of quantitative research method can lead to inconclusive findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Bowen, 2005). As a result, in order to facilitate the investigation of the under-researched topic in depth and detail, a qualitative method is required (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research is useful when there is a need to get preliminary data or model development to gain better insights into the phenomenon and to offer a sounder understanding of the issues involved (Mahotra, Hall, Shaw, & Oppenheim, 2002; Riege & Nair, 2004; Hair, Bush, & Ortinau’s, 2009). In addition, unlike

quantitative approach, qualitative research permits for flexibility in the gathering of information and in-depth search with less-structured format and a smaller number of respondents (Bellenger, Bernhardt & Goldstucker, 1989; De Ruyter & Scholl, 1998).

Next, like other fields of social science enquiry, “quantitative methodology” largely dominates the area of employee engagement. There was a clear gap in the employee engagement literature which is the weakness of qualitative data (Hakeem & Gulzar, 2014), with few exceptions such as Kahn (1990). Employee engagement outcome at the organizational level represents setting in which little qualitative research is evident and the existing framework for the factors, the core factors and the non-core factors were not empirically explored as explained in the Section 2.5 of Chapter 2. In addition, the literature review conducted in Chapter 2 revealed that the sought-after research on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SMEs is also lacking as discussed in the Section 2.7. Therefore, it is appropriate for this research to utilize qualitative approach in order to investigate this phenomenon.

The final reason for adopting qualitative research methodology is the “type of information” needed by this research. The depth and detail of qualitative data were required to understand the complex phenomenon investigated by this research. As a result, this research utilized interview technique for its data collection. Interview data is the main source of information for many qualitative researchers (Carson et al. 2001). A qualitative research is distinguished as a highly contextual approach which can answer “how and why questions” rather

than giving a brief view about the phenomenon studied (Gray, 2004). For this research, the qualitative research method using convergent interviewing technique was chosen for its usefulness in aiding the researcher to understand the investigated phenomenon. Moreover, this approach had provided a deeper understanding of the phenomenon as it enabled the research issues to be answered by providing a rich, real, and deep description on the actual conditions surrounding the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

In summary, qualitative method had been employed by this research for four reasons: (i) the realism paradigm adopted by this research; (ii) the aim of this research; (iii) the lack of qualitative research in the employee engagement literature; and (iv) the type of information needed. The qualitative methodology enables the researcher to open new “door” of understanding on the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, with specific reference to the core factors and the non-core factors within the Malaysia SME business. Hence, it is appropriate for this research to utilize the qualitative methodology towards achieving its research objective.

3.3 The Nature of Convergent Interviewing

The earlier section provided the justifications on the use of a qualitative research method for this research. This section then proceeds to explain about the “convergent interviewing” as one of the methods used in qualitative methodology. It begins with an explanation on the process of the convergent

interviewing. Next, the strengths and the weaknesses of convergent interviewing are highlighted, followed by a discussion on the validity and reliability of the convergent interviews findings.

Convergent interviewing is a technique that allows for “collecting, analysing, and interpreting qualitative information about people’s attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and opinions through the use of a limited number of interviews with experts that converge on the most important research issues” (Nair & Riege, 1995, p. 498). Basically, the convergent interviewing technique consists of a series of interviews with persons who have specialized knowledge or relevant experience of the phenomenon under investigation (Nair & Riege, 1995; Dick, 1998; Rao & Perry, 2003). It is an effective technique to collect data that are used by researcher about a topic or related topics when the amount of knowledge and information known are limited (Dick, 1990; 1998). The process of the convergent interviewing is to be discussed in the following section.

3.3.1 Process of the Convergent Interviewing

The convergent interviewing process has three stages (Dick, 1990). First, it is the initial planning of interview where it involves preparing sample and getting permission to the final planning of the interview session which is developing interview questions.

Second, it is the analysis of the interview that consists of four steps. It begins with conducting an interview session and summarizes the main themes arising from the interview. This interviewing process allows the researcher to present

similar themes to a number of different experts and to decide on how the responses given by them are related to the research problem (Dick, 1990; Hastings, 2000). The next step involves comparing notes and devising probe questions to seek exceptions to agreements and to explain any disagreements. The analysis of the interview cycle has to be repeated until it reaches saturation. Convergence is achieved when different experts respond in similar way to the themes identified. As these experts often have insightful view and experience in the investigated area, the researcher is able to gain more holistic understanding of the entire problem (Carson et al. 2001).

The third stage of convergent interviewing process is where the results are generated from the interview analysis to answer the research problem and achieve the research objectives. The three-stage convergent interviewing process is depicted in Figure 3.3.

In summary, convergent interviewing is a cycle of in-depth interviews with experts from the area of research under investigation. The sequence of convergent interviewing in the process of collecting data about the area of research under investigation is made possible for the key research issues to be refined until convergence has occurred.

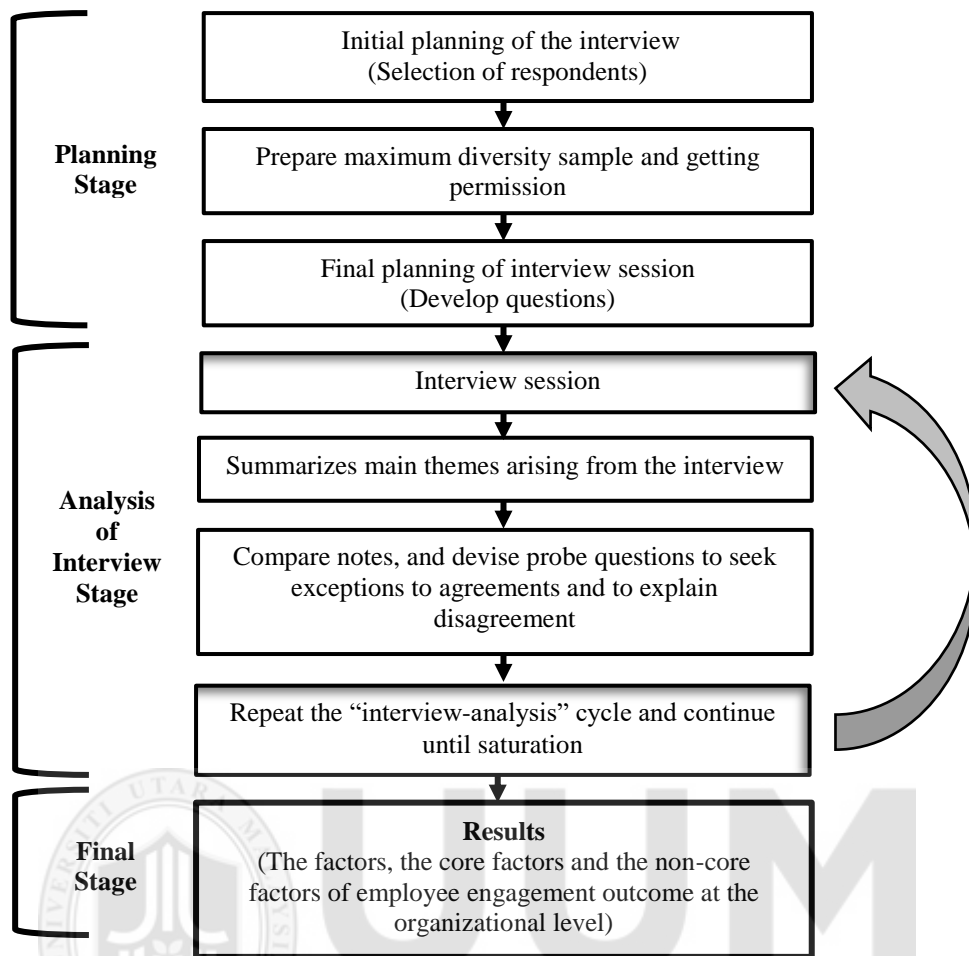


Figure 3.3
Three Stages of Convergent Interviewing Process

Source: developed based on Dick (1990)

3.3.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of Convergent Interviewing

Previously, Section 3.3.1 presented the process of convergent interviewing. Next, in this section, the strengths and the weaknesses of convergent interviewing are thoroughly discussed. Convergent interviewing was chosen for its three major strengths that complement the requirement of this research.

The first strength of convergent interviewing is “flexibility” that helps researchers who seek for continuous refinement of content and process (Rao & Perry, 2003). This method encourages researchers to conduct relatively new areas of study (Nair & Reige, 1995; Rao & Perry, 2003). The literature review performed in Chapter 2 had discovered that there was a lack of studies examining the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Hence, the flexibility of this technique allows refinement of the research issues throughout the course of the interviews lead to the consolidation of the existing body of knowledge and the research problem of this research is to be precisely defined (Dick, 1990).

The flexibility of convergent interviewing allows the researcher to use a funnelling process in which she can control the flow of the type of information being pursued (Rao & Perry, 2003) as depicted in Figure 3.4. At the interview stage 1, questions posed are relatively unstructured questions. However, at the interview stage 2, questions posed were semi-structured based on the input from the responses given during interview stage 1. While at interview stage 3 and the subsequent interview stages, questions posed were skewed towards more structured questions.

The second strength of convergent interviewing is the “structure of the technique” which offers reliability and rigorousness. The progressive nature of convergent interviewing enable the researcher to narrow down the research problem through continuous refinement of the research process and content (Dick, 1990; Nair & Reige, 1995). The subjectivity of qualitative moderated by

always trying to explain answers after each interview. The data is refined through the use of convergence and discrepancy that adds objective methods to the refining of subjective data (Dick, 1990). Furthermore, the cyclic nature of convergent interview process ensures consistency among the responses and number of times the same themes are identified (Yin, 1994; Dick, 1998; Carson et al., 2001).

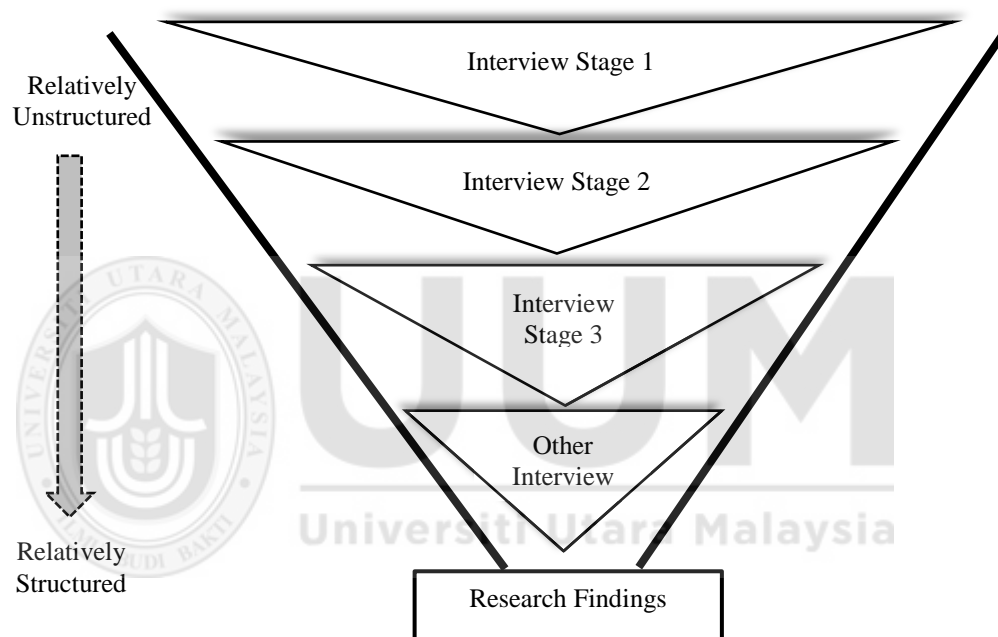


Figure 3.4
Convergent Interviewing Process

Source: developed based on Woodward (1997)

The third strength of convergent interviewing is the “combined advantage of structured and unstructured interviews and its systematic process”. This strength is useful for better comprehension of contemporary issues when the existing literature is limited or lack of standard methodology (Dick, 1990). In brief, convergent interviewing are considered more suitable for exploratory type of

research as it offers flexibility, reliability, and rigorousness as its major strengths to the research.

In summary, convergent interviewing has three strengths, namely the flexibility that arises out of the continuous refinement of content and process, the structure of the technique that offers reliability and rigorousness, and finally, the combined advantage of structured and unstructured interviews and its systematic process.

Like all other methodologies, convergent interviewing technique also contains some limitations despite their strengths as previously explained. The first limitation of convergent interview is the researcher may lack the necessary skills and experiences required to conduct the interviews (Dick, 1998), however, this is not a significant one (Armstrong, 1985).

The second limitation is convergent interviewing findings have a potential for interviewer bias as researcher may have limited understanding of the contemporary problem under investigation (Carson et al. 2001). However, to counterbalance this limitation, convergent interviewing must be recognized as a tool for data collection, rather than data verification, that the researcher attempts to determine the overall scope of the issues involved. In addition, the interviewer gained sufficient understanding of the research topic by initially read, brainstorm, and undergo mind mapping process to develop a suitable opening question.

The third limitation is the contribution of convergent interviewing to the theory-building stage, or for better comprehension of the contemporary problem, mainly depends on the previous knowledge of the context of the research topic (Nair & Reige, 1995; Rao & Perry, 2003). In order to overcome this limitation, the researcher requested each interviewee to propose more than one other experts at the end of the interview. The purpose of asking for more than one other experts was to reduce the probability of the research project being locked into a mind-set of solely one network.

Finally, convergent interviewing on its own is not sufficient (Gummerson, 2000). The results cannot be generalized to the wider population like most qualitative research, thus compromising its validity (Dick, 1998; Carson et al., 2001; Rao & Perry, 2003). However, for this research, this limitation is overcome because the purpose of this research is merely to build a theory for later testing.

To conclude, convergent interviewing technique has four limitations. The first three limitations of the technique is sourced from the shortcomings of the researcher's skills, the experience to conduct interviews and the understanding of the contemporary problem under investigation. The final limitation is convergent interviewing on its own is not sufficient. However, irrespective of these limitations, the strengths of convergent interviewing outweigh their limitations and have a lot to offer for the exploratory nature of this research. Next, the subsequent section establishes the validity and the reliability of the

convergent interviewing findings, followed by the implementations of convergent interviewing procedure.

3.3.3 Validity and Reliability of the Convergent Interviewing Findings

Validity and reliability of the data obtained are the key aspects of all research (Brink, 1993) as they determined the quality of the research design. This section, thus, explains the measures that must be taken to achieve the quality of the convergent interviewing research. In qualitative research, it is more difficult to establish validity and reliability because the data does not lend to statistical or empirical calculation, thus, is thought to be not methodologically rigorous (Brink, 1993). Both validity and reliability in the research findings are enforced by ensuring its four tests to measures outcomes from interview-based research. The four tests are: (i) construct validity; (ii) external validity; (iii) internal validity; and (iv) reliability (Yin, 1994).

Construct validity relates to the construction of proper operational measures for the concepts explored (Yin, 1994; Carson et al., 2001). This criterion is satisfied as convergent interviewing provides enough flexibility as a process to allow for the evolution of the construct. In this research, from a series of convergent interviews, a preliminary conceptual framework was developed to represent the construct of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business, hence, satisfying the construct validity criterion.

External validity concerns with the ability to generalize the research findings beyond the scope of the current research (Yin, 1994; Sekaran, 2006). In the case

of convergent interviewing, this criterion is accomplished as the respondents of the research represented a sample of industry experts who have responded to a series of questions and they were examined on giving similar responses or otherwise. In this research, the experts consisted of a number of managers holding top positions in SME business in Malaysia. From the responses given by these experts, the reasons are sufficient to accept that the external validity aspect is satisfactory. Also, the purpose of this research is to build a theory to be tested later and not for theory-testing.

Meanwhile, internal validity refers to the extent to which the findings of a research can be trusted upon in identifying and establishing causal linkages (McDaniel & Gates, 1991; Carson et al., 2001). The cyclic nature of convergent interview process, with its inherent flexibility, helps to address this criterion as it results in successive approximation, thus, refining the research process and content over a series of interviews. This process of convergent interview helps confirming the goodness of the data and its subsequent findings (Miles & Evans, 1987; Morgan & Kreugar, 1993; Morgan, 1997; Carson et al., 2001). For this research, the internal validity is achieved by the evidence of consistency of the responses and the number of times the same themes were mentioned during the sequence of convergent interview process.

Finally, reliability is concerned with the consistency of the technique employed, irrespective of the researcher, would generate similar results for the same study (Yin, 1994; Sekaran, 2006). This criterion is crucial to minimize errors and biases that could arise due to the researcher, but some variation will inevitably

occur because of the individualized nature of the process (Shipman, 1997). Nonetheless, the convergent interviewing technique itself is considered reliable due to its structured process in which it is used (Stake, 1994; Yin, 1994; Perry, 1998). In this research, the process of convergent interviewing was closely followed, the interview questions and the procedures for the purpose of data collection were standardized in the format of “convergent interview protocol”. The following Table 3.1 briefly outlines the four validity and reliability measures for this research.

Table 3.1
Four Validity and Reliability Measures for Evaluating the Quality of Qualitative Research

Measure	Tactic of Convergent Interview
Construct Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review draft of convergent interview questions by key informants ▪ Flexibility of the proposed preliminary conceptual framework
Internal Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sample selection for information richness i.e. experts who were managers holding top positions in SME business ▪ The cyclic nature of convergent interviewing process that ensure consistency
External Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sample selection for information richness i.e. experts who were top managers within SME business ▪ The purpose of this research is for theory building to be tested
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and refine convergent interview protocol ▪ Use convergent interview protocol ▪ Structured process for administration and interpretation of convergent interviewing

Source: modified based on Yin (1994) and Healy and Perry (2000)

In summary, this section detailed out on how validity and reliability are achieved through the research design for this research. Therefore, the following section discusses the implementations of the convergent interviewing procedure.

3.4 Implementations of Convergent Interviewing Technique

The preceding section described the nature of convergent interviewing technique. Consequently, this section proceeds with the discussion on the implementations of the convergent interviewing technique. The discussion begins with the explanation on the population and the sample selection, followed by description on the sample size decision, the interviews protocol and labelling convention for respondents.

3.4.1 Population and Sample Selection

The population defined for this research consisted of managers holding top positions in the Malaysia SME business. To justify, there are three reasons for selecting top managers as the key informants for this research: (i) these top managers are the decision makers in their respective firms; (ii) most of these top managers are involved in hiring and dealing with HR matters; and (iii) they are closely involved in implementing and monitoring of the business performance in their respective firms, as well as having an understanding of the entire decision-making process.

The sampling method is purposeful for a qualitative research (Patton, 1990; 2002) and it is widely used in qualitative and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon under investigation (Palinkas et al., 2013), and in this research SMEs chosen were based on number of full-time employees that is using the latest definition of SMEs as explained in the Section 2.6 of Chapter 2. The sample for this research was gathered using snowball sampling technique in which the initial sample was asked to identify the other members of the population. Although, there is a high percentage of SMEs concentration found

in the Klang Valley, however, the samples can also be derived from any other regions or states, in fact without the restrictions of specific type of industries.

Towers Perrin (2003) in their study concluded that in regards to employee engagement, there are no industrial differences. Therefore, the participants which were selected for this research will not be separated into sector-related categories.

As mentioned earlier, the snowball sampling technique was used in the selection of participants of this research. This sampling technique is the most effective method to seek participant from hard-to-reach population (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008; Handcock & Gile, 2011) and specialized people who are expert about the topic (Aaker & Day, 1990; Patton, 1990). This sampling technique is recommended when the study is conducted on behaviours or perceptions (Dragan & Isaac-Maniu, 2013), and it is primarily explorative, qualitative and descriptive (Hendricks, Blanken & Adriaans, 1992) which is in line with the aim of this research. The careful selection of the first interviewee was performed as the first snowball, so that he was able to direct the researcher to others who are expert and familiar with the research issues (Nair & Riege, 1995).

Meanwhile, the criterion to select the organization of the interviewee is based on the number of full-time employees instead of sales turnover. There are two reasons for choosing this criterion. First, the literature indicated that most countries use number of employees as one of the criteria for the definition of SMEs (Nakagawa, 2012; Waiyahong, 2012; Al-Ansari, Pervan, & Xu, 2013;

Henry, 2013). The second reason is that this information is easy to be obtained and to be revealed by the respondents based on the researcher experience in dealings with the respondents.

This sampling technique has enabled researcher to identify respondents who have met the research criteria of this research. First, the researcher identified a member of the population as the starting seed. Then, this initial sample was asked to identify other members of the population. This sampling technique is appropriate for this research as reasoned by Creswell (2007) that within the context of qualitative research, the researcher must choose a representative sample that helps generate sufficient information to produce a profound meaning of the phenomenon under investigation. In addition, snowball sampling is the only method that generates referrals among the members of the population that yield reliable research data (Creswell, 2007; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The snowball sampling for this research is shown in Figure 3.5. The alphabets A to O indicate the respondents.

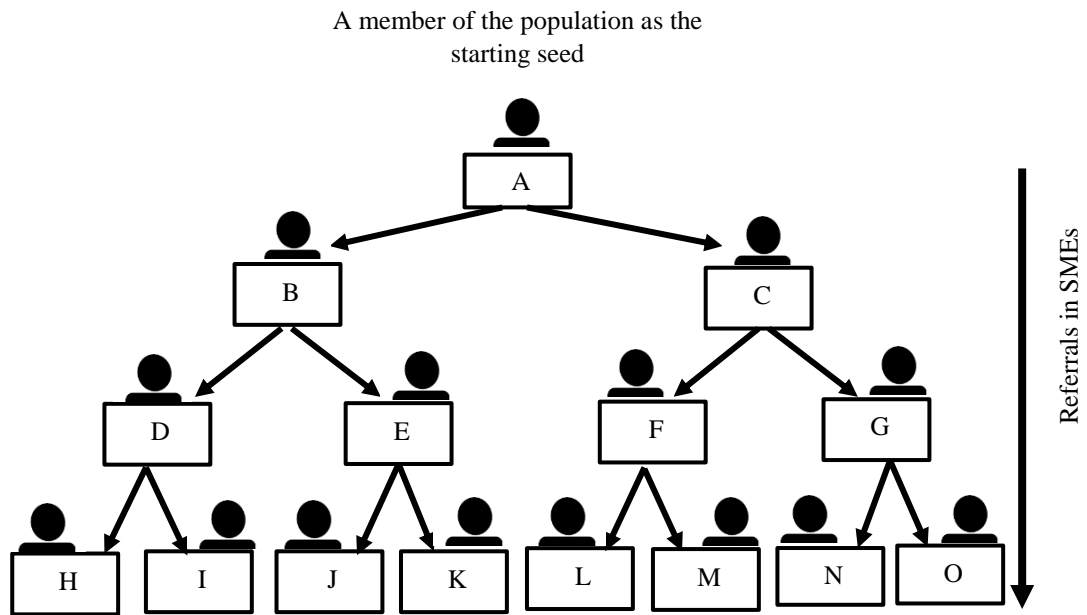


Figure 3.5
Snowball sampling process for this research

Source: developed for this research

In summary, the population for this research consisted of the managers holding top positions in the Malaysia SME business, and the purposeful snowball sampling technique was implemented in the selection of the respondents. The sample size of this research is to be discussed next.

3.4.2 Sample Size

For qualitative research, Sandelowski (1995) and Creswell (2007) pointed out that researchers must identified a large range of possibilities with regards to the number of appropriate participants, including as many as 3-325 participants. In order to generate a conclusion that is data-driven, a sample size must be sufficiently large and usually the sample contains at least 12 interviewees before

stability could occur (Dick, 1990). However, for Nair and Riege (1995), stability may occur with less than 12 interviews in most areas.

For the purpose of this research, the sample size was also determined when the stability or the saturation is reached (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990; Padgett, 2008; Liamputtong, 2013) that is until nothing new is mentioned and the story is not projected from different perspectives (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Carpentar & Suto, 2008). This step is recommended by Riege and Nair (2004) that for convergent interviewing the optimal sampling size is data-driven rather than predetermined. In other word, the optimal sample size is determined when the stability is reached, which occurs when agreement among all interviewees is achieved and disagreement between them is explained on all the issues raised. Furthermore, the emphasis is on the quality of the data collected rather than the quantity, and the purpose is not to maximized numbers but to become saturated with information on the issues under investigation (Padgett, 1998).

In summary, for this research purpose, the sample size was determined when the saturation level is reached because for convergent interview, the optimal sampling size is data-driven rather than predetermined. The summary of the population, sample selection, and technique is illustrated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Summary of the Data Collection Technique, Population, Sample Selection and Sampling Technique

Data Collection Technique	Convergent interviewing technique
Population	Top managers in Malaysia SME business
Sample Selection	Snowball sampling technique
Sample Size	The optimal sample size is determined when

stability is reached.

Source: developed for this research

3.4.3 Interview Protocol

Thus far, the sample selection and the sample size have been discussed. Now, the interview protocol and its structure is explained. An interview protocol was developed for this research to enforce the validity and reliability of the data collection process. Interview protocol represents the essential element of the data collection phase for convergent interviews. The summary of the flow of the interview protocol is illustrated in Figure 3.6.

The interview protocol of this research assisted the researcher to evaluate the questions asked during the interview sessions, and also to group the interview questions based on the three research issues namely, the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, the core factors, and the non-core factors. Furthermore, it is to facilitate the data analysis stage later (Yin, 1994; McPhail, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 2003). In addition, the interview protocol comprised of a researcher's assurance to uphold confidentiality of the respondents and the adherence to ethical behaviour throughout the interval of the research project.

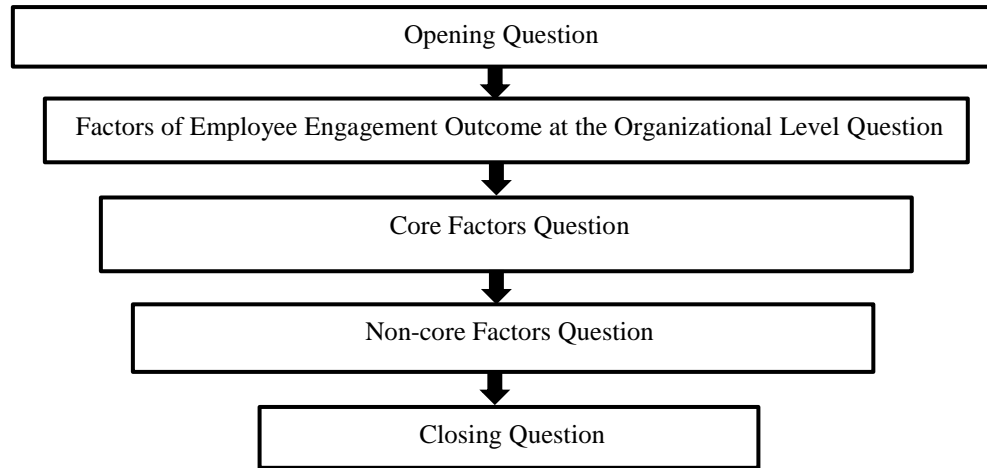


Figure 3.6
Flow of Interview Protocol

Source: developed for this research

In summary, the interview protocol of this research consists of five levels, namely (i) the opening question; (ii) the question on factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level; (iii) the question on core factors; (iv) the question on non-core factors; and (v) the closing question. The interview protocol of this research is presented in Appendix 2. During the interview, to facilitate an effective communication and to encourage the respondents to share their experiences and perception on, an outline of the seven steps recommended by Dick (1990) as cited in Rao and Perry (2003) was followed and presented in Appendix 5. Furthermore, each of the interview had been noted, audio taped, and transcribed. Recording of the interviews were done to strengthen the accuracy of the data collection process. Moreover, it had allowed the researcher to replay the recordings that helped the researcher interpreted the data, identified important themes, corrected, and expanded on the interview notes (Riege & Nair, 2004). The recorded interviews were coded as shown in Figure 3.7.

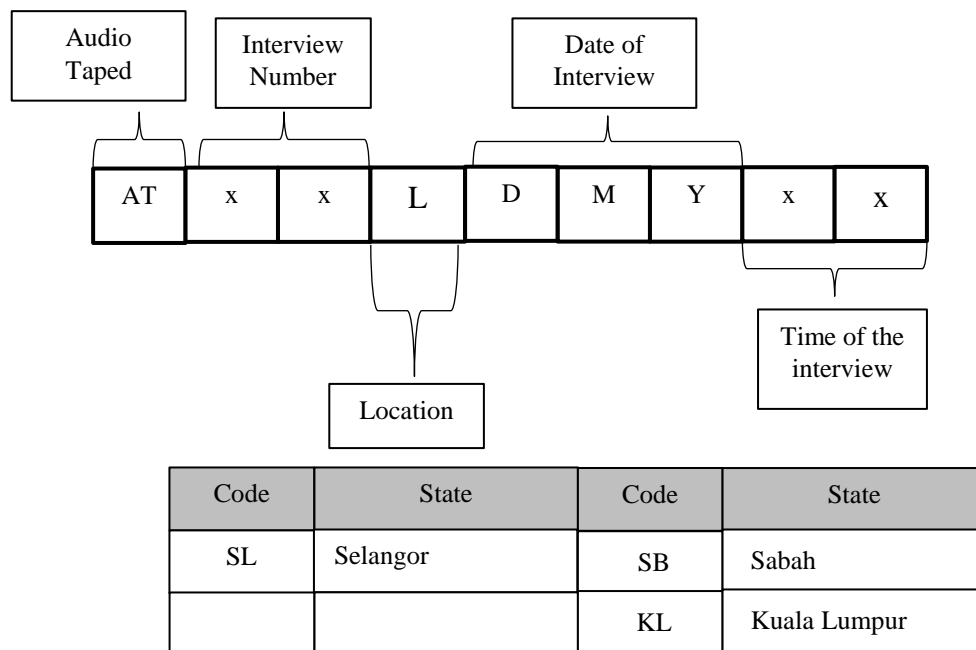


Figure 3.7
Labelling convention for taped recording of the interview

Source: developed for this research

The transcription of the interview was prepared immediately after each interview had completed and these transcribe data was then thoroughly analysed. Next is a brief explanation on the labelling convention for respondents of this research.

3.4.4 Labelling Convention for Respondents

The previous section described the interview protocol for this research and labelling convention for interview taped recording. This section briefly explains the labelling convention for respondents. The real names of the respondents were disguised in order to maintain anonymity and each was identified based on the respondent code, sector in the SMEs, and firm code. Their names were

disguised and identified according to the labelling convention shown in Figure 3.8.

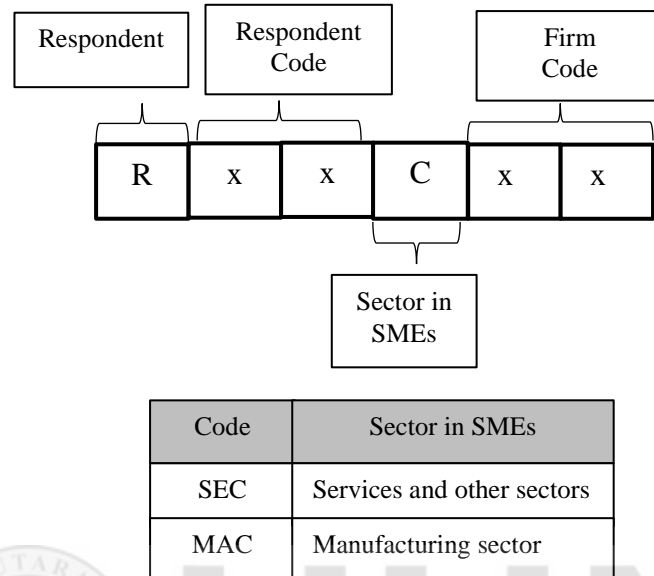


Figure 3.8
Labelling convention for respondent

Source: developed for this research

The sector of these firms follows the scope of their SME business as outlined by Bank Negara Malaysia, Ministry of Trade and Industry (MITI) Malaysia, and World Trade Organization (WTO) classification. The data analysis phase is then discussed in the following section.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

The preceding sections have described the research approach, the justifications of qualitative approach, the convergent interviewing technique, process and implementations. In turn, this section is to explain about data analysis technique

of this research. Data analysis is vital to yield credible conclusions and to remove explicit other explanations. The summary of the data analysis process is shown in Figure 3.9.

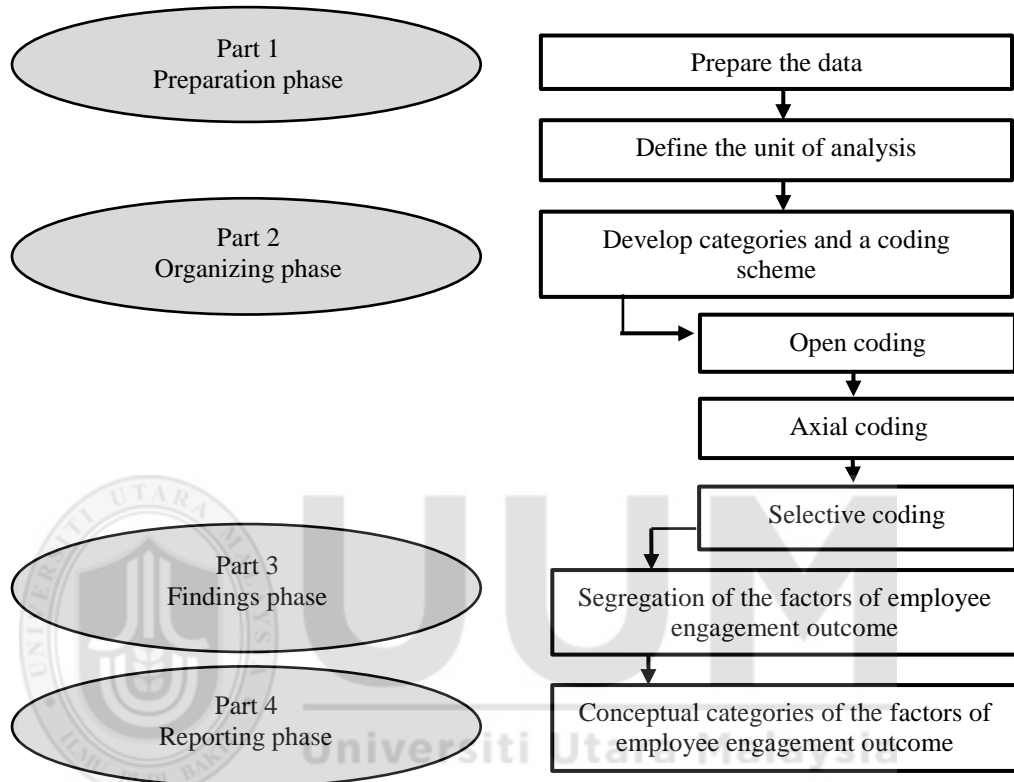


Figure 3.9
Four Phases in Data Analysis

Source: developed based on Mayring (2000) and Elo and Kyngäs (2008)

Data analysis comprises of reviewing, categorizing, tabulating, and recombining evidence in order to ascertain the meaning relevant to the research' initial aim, objective, research questions and issues (Yin, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 2002). All of the data required for this research was derived from the primary data gathered during the process of conducting convergent interviews.

For the purpose of this research, the data analysis process is divided into four parts. The first part is the data analysis preparation phase (Section 3.5.1). The second part is the data analysis organizing phase (Section 3.5.2), followed by the third part that is the research findings phase (Section 3.5.3) and finally, the fourth part is the data analysis reporting phase (Section 3.5.4).

3.5.1 Preparation Phase

The first part of data analysis process is preparation phase. Prior to this phase, all interviews were tape recorded. Notes were taken by the researcher during each interview and after each interview the collected data were transcribed. The transcription was reviewed for accuracy and it was returned to respective participant for amendment and approval. In this phase, the unit of analysis was decided (McCain, 1988; Cavanagh, 1997; Guthrie, Yongvanich, & Ricceri, 2004) including the theme, as well as the attempts to make sense of the data and to attain a sense of whole.

3.5.2 Organizing Phase

The second part of data analysis process is organizing phase. This phase involved coding process. This coding process comprises of three types of coding, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Coding process is the core element (Flick, 2002) and one of the data analysis procedures in qualitative research. The coding on data or information gathered later went through three phases as suggested by Strauss and Crobin (1990). The first stage of coding process is open coding. This coding was performed to the transcribed data. The researcher examined the data to condense them into preliminary

analytic categories or codes. This process helped to bring themes to the surface from deep inside the data (Neuman, 2006). The transcript was read through and as many headings as necessary were written down in the margins to describe all aspects of the content (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The headings were gathered from the margins to the coding sheets and at this stage categories were generated.

The second stage of coding process is axial coding. During the open coding, the actual data and the assign code labels for themes were the major focus of the researcher. In axial coding stage, the researcher had started with an organized set of initial codes or preliminary concepts (Neuman, 2006) more than on the data. During this phase, certain additional codes or new ideas have merged, however, the main task was to review and to examine the initial codes.

Finally, the third stage of coding process is the selective coding. In the second stage of the coding process the major themes of the research project have been identified and was ready for the third phase of the process. In this final stage it was important for the researcher to look selectively for cases that illustrate the themes and to make comparisons and contrasts after most or all data collection is completed (Neuman, 2006). During the selective coding, the major themes or concepts ultimately guided the search. The specific themes identified earlier was reorganized and the elaboration of more than one major theme is then required.

3.5.3 Research Findings Phase

The third part of data analysis process is the research findings phase. After research findings were coded, the data was segregated into three categories of discussion: (a) the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business; (b) the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business, and (c) the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. These steps are attentively explained next.

Step 1: To identify factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

The first step involved transferring all statements relating to the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level stated in the copy of transcriptions and placed in the prepared matrices according to respondent codes. Respondent was contacted to assemble clarification and verification of the statements on the factors for the organizational level outcomes of employee engagement, if necessary. Next, related statement from the first respondent was summarized. The researcher then compared the factors mentioned by the first respondent with the statement mentioned by the second respondent, as well as for the other interview stages. Finally, results from all respondents were arranged and were listed according to the most mentioned factor to the least mentioned factor so as to determine the frequency of each factor.

Step 2: To identify the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

In this second step, all related statements to the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level were summarized and a matrix for the core factors was formed and comparison was made for inputs from all interview stages.

Step 3: To identify the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

Similar to Step 2, at first the researcher transferred all the related statements of the non-core factors, as stated in the copy of transcriptions into the matrix according to the respondent codes. The statement verification was also sought after if needed. Next, all related statements were summarized and a matrix for the non-core factors was formed and the comparison was made for inputs from all interview stages.

3.5.4 Reporting Phase

The fourth part of data analysis process was the reporting phase that includes the reporting of the findings. The final output is the factors, the core factors and the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

In summary, the data analysis process comprises of four parts. The first part was data analysis preparation phase, followed by the data analysis organizing phase. The next phase was the research findings phase and finally, the data analysis

reporting phase. The following section then explains the ethical considerations of this research.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The discussion on the data analysis process presented in the previous section involved four phases. In conducting this research, ethical considerations have been addressed by the researcher. Hence, this section is dedicated to explain the ethical considerations utilized in this research. All respondents were fully informed of the research process and their role within it (Patton, 1990). The respondents were assured that their privacy, anonymity, safety and comfort will be respected throughout this research process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, each respondent was required to sign a consent for interview form (refer Appendix 4). A full disclosure about the purpose and the context of the research and copies of the interview's guide were provided to all of the respondents at the time of the interview (Patton, 1990). Following the data analysis, a detailed summary of findings of their inputs were provided so that any points of concern on the issues raised or confidentiality aspects were discussed and resolved prior to the final write-up of this research.

As a conclusion, ethical considerations involves the activities of informing the respondents of their roles, purpose and context of the research, as well as upholding their privacy, anonymity, safety, and comfort that were exercised in this research. Indeed, confidentiality of the information given by the respondents were highly maintained throughout this research process.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter explained the methodology of this research which includes the discussion on the research approach, and the justifications of qualitative approach of this research. The qualitative approach was used to reach the overall aim of the research because it has the ability to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon that was being investigated. Next, the explanation on the nature of the convergent interviewing and the implementations of this technique including detailing of the sample selection, sample size and issues related to validity and reliability were also discussed. Finally, the chapter explained about the interview protocol of this research and the four phases of data analysis process, as well as the ethical considerations involved in conducting this research had also been described.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

Chapter 3 described the data collection technique for the convergent interviews utilized in this research. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize and to present the results of the data analysis of the convergent interviews so as to generate the insights on the three research issues. The three research issues were discussed in the Section 2.9 of Chapter 2. In order to investigate these research issues, this chapter is divided into five main sections. The sequence is shown in

Figure 4.1.

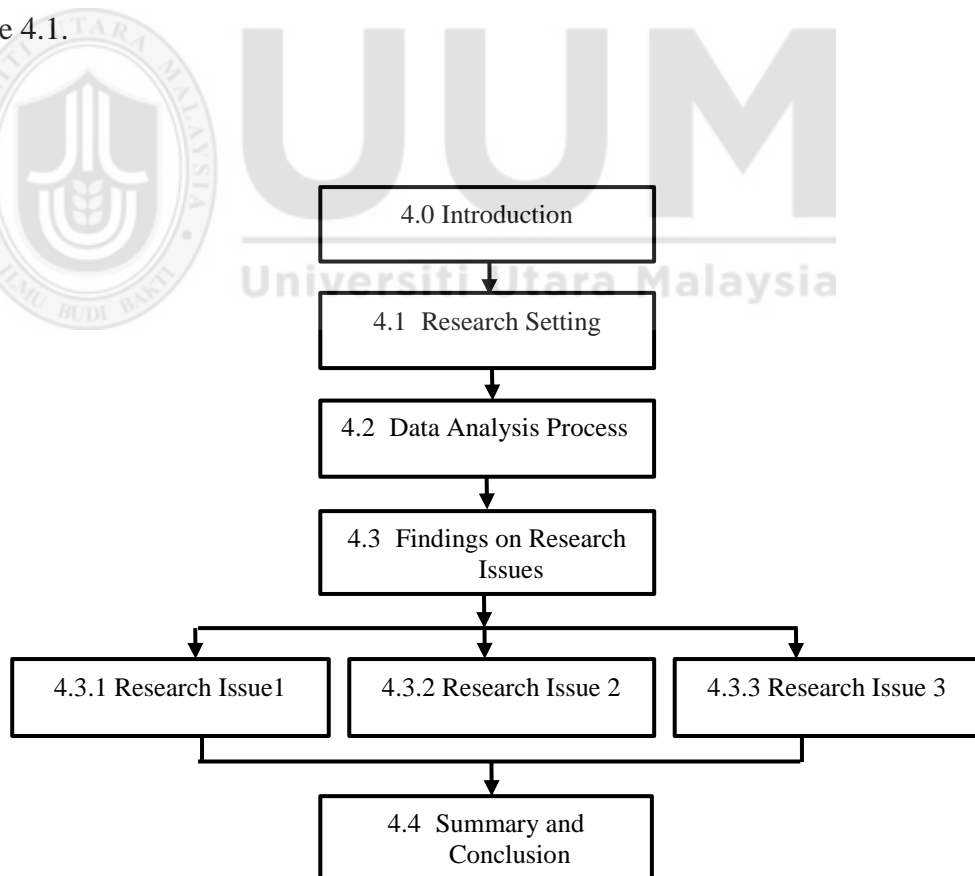


Figure 4.1
Flow of Chapter 4

Source: developed for this research

This chapter is divided into five main sections. The introduction of this chapter is first explained in the Section 4.0, followed by Section 4.1 that provides the research setting. It includes a description about the snowballing of respondents and the profiling of each respondent. Next, Section 4.2 describes the data analysis process and subsequently Section 4.3 addresses the three research issues. Finally, Section 4.4 concludes this chapter with the key findings for each research issue.

4.1 Research Setting

This section introduces the research setting that presents the context that is required to have an insight of the data furnished afterwards. To begin, the snowball of respondent selection for this research is described and the challenges in getting the respondents is explained. Next, a profile of each respondent is presented. The description of each respondent is necessary to set the scene for detailed analysis of the data.

4.1.1 Snowballing of the Respondents for this Research

The interview process was conducted per the procedure explained in the Section 3.3.1 and the selection of respondents was based on snowball sampling technique. There are three main reasons for this research employing the snowball sampling technique above other sampling techniques. The first reason is associated with the snowball sampling method as the most effective method to seek participant from hard-to-reach population. The respondents for this

research were managers holding top positions in SME business. They are considered as the hard-to-reach population due to their busy schedules managing their respective firms, their time constraint to participate in the interview, and their willingness to share experiences and opinions is based on referral by their friends.

The second reason is associated with collecting data about the research topic from specialized people. The present research explored the factors of the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level from the perspective of the managers holding top positions in the Malaysia SME business, hence the respondents could only be obtained through the snowball sampling technique for the causes stated in the first paragraph of the Section 3.4.1.

The final reason for adopting the snowball sampling technique is this research is conducted on the experience, opinion and perception of the managers holding top position in the Malaysia SME business. Thus, this research is explorative in nature and this sampling method is the most appropriate sampling method to be employed (Hendricks et al., 1992; Dragan & Issac-Manue, 2013).

The interview process ceased at the 12th respondent in accordance to the saturation principle mentioned in the section 3.4.2. The snowballing of the 12 respondents is depicted in Figure 4.2.

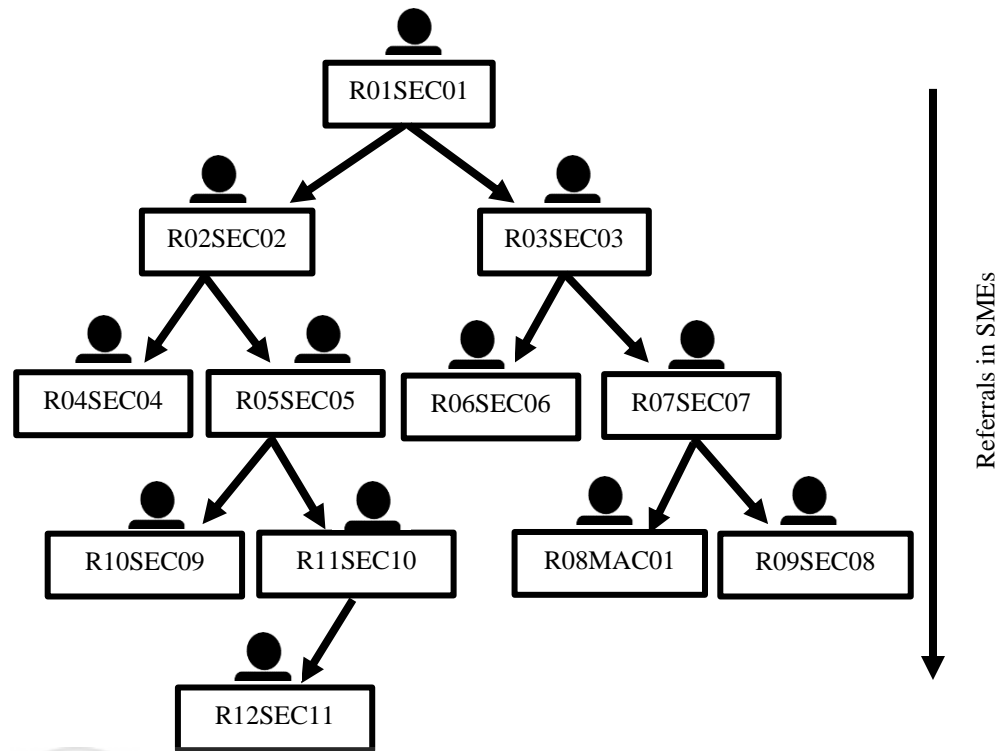


Figure 4.2
Snowballing of Respondents for this Research

Source: developed for this research

There were three main challenges during data collection stage. First, the difficulty to obtain cooperation and agreement from the persons that were referred by the earlier respondents to be interviewed. They mainly declined to accept the interview invitation due to the lack of interest to participate and due to confidentiality reasons. Second, scheduling interviews was also subject to time constraint. There were few incidents occurred where the interviews had to be rescheduled several times due to unforeseen circumstances, and in some cases even the interviews had to be cancelled altogether, causing delays in the data collection process. Finally, some of the names suggested by the preceding respondents did not fall into the criteria of SMEs.

4.1.2 Profiles of the Respondents

In the former section, the snowballing of the respondents for this research had been explained. Subsequently, this section gives a brief profile of each respondent participated in this research. Accumulatively, 12 respondents were interviewed. Due to the fact that the respondents converged on similar issues quickly, a total of 12 respondents were necessary. The 11th and 12th respondents had mentioned factors similar as the other 10 respondents on the factors, the core factors, and the non-core factors of the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level which means that nothing new was mentioned, new information was not yielded, and the story was projected from similar perspectives (refer Section 3.4.2 of Chapter 3). They represented 12 different firms from different primary specialty as illustrated in column 6 of Table 4.1. The categorization of the respondents profiling is in accordance to SMEs definition as discussed in the Section 2.6 of Chapter 2. The information provided in the Table 4.1 is deliberately limited to protect the anonymity of the respondents without compromising the meaning of the data (Patton, 1990; Kaiser, 2010). Furthermore, the respondent code followed the labelling convention for the respondents as explained in the Section 3.4.4 of Chapter 3. A brief introduction to the respondents of this research is explained as follows:

Profile 1: R01SEC01. The identification of a member of the population at the beginning is crucial. In this research, the starting seed of the snowballing sampling was respondent R01SEC01. He joined the current firm since its inception in 2004. The firm offers consultancy and training services in the area of human resources including its new venture in trading business. The

respondent specializes in accounting, finance, credit control, human resources and corporate affairs. He is an experienced auditor working for several large firms and a highly experienced person in the consultation of the financial and non-financial dealings, merger and accusation, restructuring exercise including debt restructuring. Being given the responsibility to run the firm, requires him not only to become the Chief Financial Officer but also to be in charge of the human resource and the operation.

Table 4.1
The Summary of Respondents' Profiles

No.	Respondent Code	Year of business establishment	Number of full-time employees	Category of SMEs (full-time employees)		Primary Specialty	Sector	Position in the firm
				Small-sized	Medium-sized			
1	R01SEC01	2004	20	√	-	Consultancy and training	Services and Other Sectors	Chief Financial Officer
2	R02SEC02	2000	9	√	-	Retail	Services and Other Sectors	General Manager
3	R03SEC03	2003	50	-	√	Transportation	Services and Other Sectors	Executive Director
4	R04SEC04	2003	8	√	-	Advertising	Services and Other Sectors	General Manager
5	R05SEC05	1996	10	√	-	Construction	Services and Other Sectors	Managing Director
6	R06SEC06	2012	12	√	-	Information technology	Services and Other Sectors	Chief Executive Officer
7	R07SEC07	2009	23	√	-	Information technology	Services and Other Sectors	Chief Executive Officer
8	R08MAC01	1990	100	-	√	Manufacturing	Manufacturing	Managing Director
9	R09SEC08	2012	40	-	√	Hospitality	Services and Other Sectors	Managing Director
10	R10SEC09	2012	5	√	-	Agriculture	Services and Other Sectors	Director
11	R11SEC10	2003	20	√	-	Quantity surveying	Services and Other Sectors	Partner
12	R12SEC11	2007	20	√	-	Accounting and audit	Services and Other Sectors	Principal

Note: some details are disguised for confidentiality reasons

Source: developed for this research

Profile 2: R02SEC02. The second respondent R02SEC02 was recommended by R01SEC01. He and his wife started the firm in 2000. R02SEC02 is the owner of the firm and serves as the General Manager, a dealer owned dealer operated (DODO) type of service. Currently, the firm employs three local and six foreign full-time workers. The firm is growing at a stable pace despite of the economic uncertainties. R02SEC02 highest education qualification is Master in Business Administration, and he has a vast working experience in oil and gas industry. He decided to quit from the corporate world to start the retail business alongside with his wife. Currently, he is pursuing his doctorate studies at one of the public universities in Malaysia.

Profile 3: R03SEC03. The third respondent R03SEC03 was also recommended by R01SEC01, is a qualified accountant, possesses several professional qualification, namely Chartered Accountant (CA), Fellow Chartered and Certified Accountant (FCCA), and Certified Public Accountant (CPA). He is the Executive Director in the current firm. He obtained his working experience from various organizations and he is also elected as board of directors in several organizations. His own firm offers transportation services to passengers travelling in Malaysia that cater mostly for long-haul routes. The firm was established in the middle of 2003 and is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Currently, the firm own more than 12 fleets of vehicles and has 50 full-time employees.

Profile 4: R04SEC04. The fourth respondent R04SEC04 was referred to the researcher by R02SEC02. Aged 50 years old, he holds Master of Business Administration from one of the local universities in Malaysia. He started his career as a Regional Manager in the local English-language newspaper firm which is also among the oldest newspaper companies in Malaysia. Having served the firm for more than 15 years, the respondent then joined the current firm as a General Manager. The firm began its advertising business in 2003 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The firm offers advertising services to other businesses to place their advertisements and also advertisement designing services. The firm is experienced in servicing many corporate organizations, government agencies, as well as handling international events.

Profile 5: R05SEC05. The fifth respondent R05SEC05 was referred to the researcher by R02SEC02. After completing his Diploma in Electrical Engineering at one of the local universities in Malaysia, he started his career as a Fire Brigade Officer for about 18 years. While serving, he pursued his bachelor degree in the same field and was promoted to Senior Officer. But later he decided to leave the government sector to start his own business in 1996 and appointed himself as the Managing Director of the firm. This firm is dealing with construction business specializing in mechanical, electrical, and telecommunication services. Currently, the firm has 10 full-time employees.

Profile 6: R06SEC06. Recommended by R03SEC03, R06SEC06 is the sixth respondent. Upon completion of his Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance, he joined an audit division before starting his banking career. He

decided to leave the corporate world and started his own firm and ventured into information technology. He is now the Chief Executive Officer of which was established in the early 2012. It was incorporated in the month of June of the same year when the firm's first product was developed. The product was the first people mover booking applications in Malaysia. His firm now has 12 full-time employees and has expanded rather rapidly.

Profile 7: R07SEC07. Similarly, the seventh respondent R07SEC07 was also referred to the researcher by R03SEC03. He received his Doctor in Business Administration in 2010. He is currently involved in numerous type of businesses such as network marketing, garment retailer, investment, property development, hotel services and IT solution provider. He is also the recipient of many prominent awards namely The Outstanding Young Malaysian, The Merit Top 60 Most Outstanding Entrepreneur Worldwide, and The Outstanding CEO Asia Pacific, as well as an industrial advisor to one of the private universities in Malaysia. One of his firms is situated in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. The firm specializes in information technology. It offers various services which include security system solution, system software solution, mobile application development and web application development. At present, the company has 23 full-time employees.

Profile 8: R08MAC01. Referred by R07SEC07, R08MAC01 was the eighth respondent. Upon the completion of his Bachelor in Business Administration at one of the universities in the United States, he returned to Malaysia to assist his family business. Later, he started his own businesses venturing into

manufacturing, construction, selling of second hand cars and trucks, and many others. Even at the age of 53 and as the Managing Director, he is still actively looking at business opportunities. He started his manufacturing business in 1990, in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The firm specializes in manufacturing of construction products such as metal roof, wall cladding products, gutter, roofing accessories, door frames and other related products. To date, the firm has 100 full-time employees on its payroll system.

Profile 9: R09SEC08. The ninth respondent R09SEC08 was recommended by R07SEC07. The respondent is 43 years old, holding the position of Managing Director in the current firm. After graduating with Diploma in Hotel Catering, he started his career in the hospitality industry as the Public Relation Manager at one of the hotels in Bali, Indonesia for two years. He then returned to Malaysia to earn his Bachelor in Business Administration and continue to working in several major hotels and held different positions such as Sales Manager, Banquet Operation Manager, and Assistant Director of Sales. He took over the current firm in 2012 after having started working with the firm in 2008. The firm is situated in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan. The firm is a 100 percent Bumiputera firm classified under hospitality industry. Currently, the firm has ten departments hiring 40 full-time employees.

Profile 10: R10SEC09. The tenth respondent R10SEC09 was recommended by R05SEC05. He is a Chartered Public Accountant and graduated from one of the Australian universities. He started his career at Arthur Anderson & Co in 1998, and then joined Securities Commission prior to joining Alliance Bank Berhad in

2004. Next, he worked with two Indonesian firms. The respondent, finally decided to open up his own firm in 2012. The firm is situated in Rawang, Selangor. Currently the firm employed five full-time staffs. The firm's nature of business involves in importing live goats and sheep from Australia and courier the livestock through MAS Cargo. Upon reaching Malaysia, the livestock is transported to the firm feedlot in Rawang. The feedlot is managed by the firm's business partner.

Profile 11: R11SEC10. The eleventh respondent R11SEC10 was introduced by R05SEC05. He obtained his Bachelor in Quantity Surveying from one of the top universities in United Kingdom and then earned a Chartered Quantity Surveyor qualification. He is a corporate member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CI Arb) and also a member of the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB). He was appointed as the director in a quantity surveying firm, CIC-QS Services Sdn Bhd in which he was also one of the firm's shareholders. In 2003, after he left the former firm, the respondent started his own firm, a chartered quantity surveyor. Situated in Cheras, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, currently the firm has 20 full-time employees under its payroll, with expertise in a wide range of residential, commercial and industrial projects.

Profile 12: R12SEC11. A friend of R11SEC10, the twelfth respondent was R12SEC1, previously worked with one of the biggest accounting firms in Malaysia for five years. He then served in another private company for a similar length of years and finally decided to re-join an accounting firm prior to his decision to set up his own business with his partner in 2007. It is a registered

chartered accountants firm, and obtained its license from the Ministry of Finance in 2007 to provide comprehensive professional services to the customers. Located in the heart of Kuala Lumpur metropolitan city, the firm offers services such as business advisory, liquidation, corporate recovery and investigation, and other related financial advisory engagements. Presently, the firm hires 20 full-time employees.

In summary, this section presented a brief profile of the respondents participated in this research. All of them held top management positions in their respective firms. Each of the respondent was in different industry specialties. Nine firms are under the classification of small-sized and the remaining four firms are medium-sized. The number of full-time employees hired by these firms ranging from five to 100 workers.

In total, 12 respondents from 12 firms participated in this research which indicates the stability or saturation was reached at this point. For the purpose of this research, all 12 respondents have fulfilled the criteria of the SME definition adopted in this research (refer Section 2.6 of Chapter 2). The actual snowballing of 12 respondents is illustrated in Figure 4.2 which is according to the snowballing technique described in the Section 3.4.1 of Chapter 3. These three conditions implied that the data collected from these respondents were valid in regard to this research, hence, established a solid foundation to proceed with data analysis. The following section then presents the data analysis process.

4.2 Data Analysis Process

To this point, Section 4.1 had provided the profile of each respondent including a brief information about the firm they each represented. Next, this section explains the data analysis process which begins with analysis on the data/information collected based on the preliminary conceptual framework of this research. The summary of the data analysis process deployed in this research is illustrated in Figure 4.3.

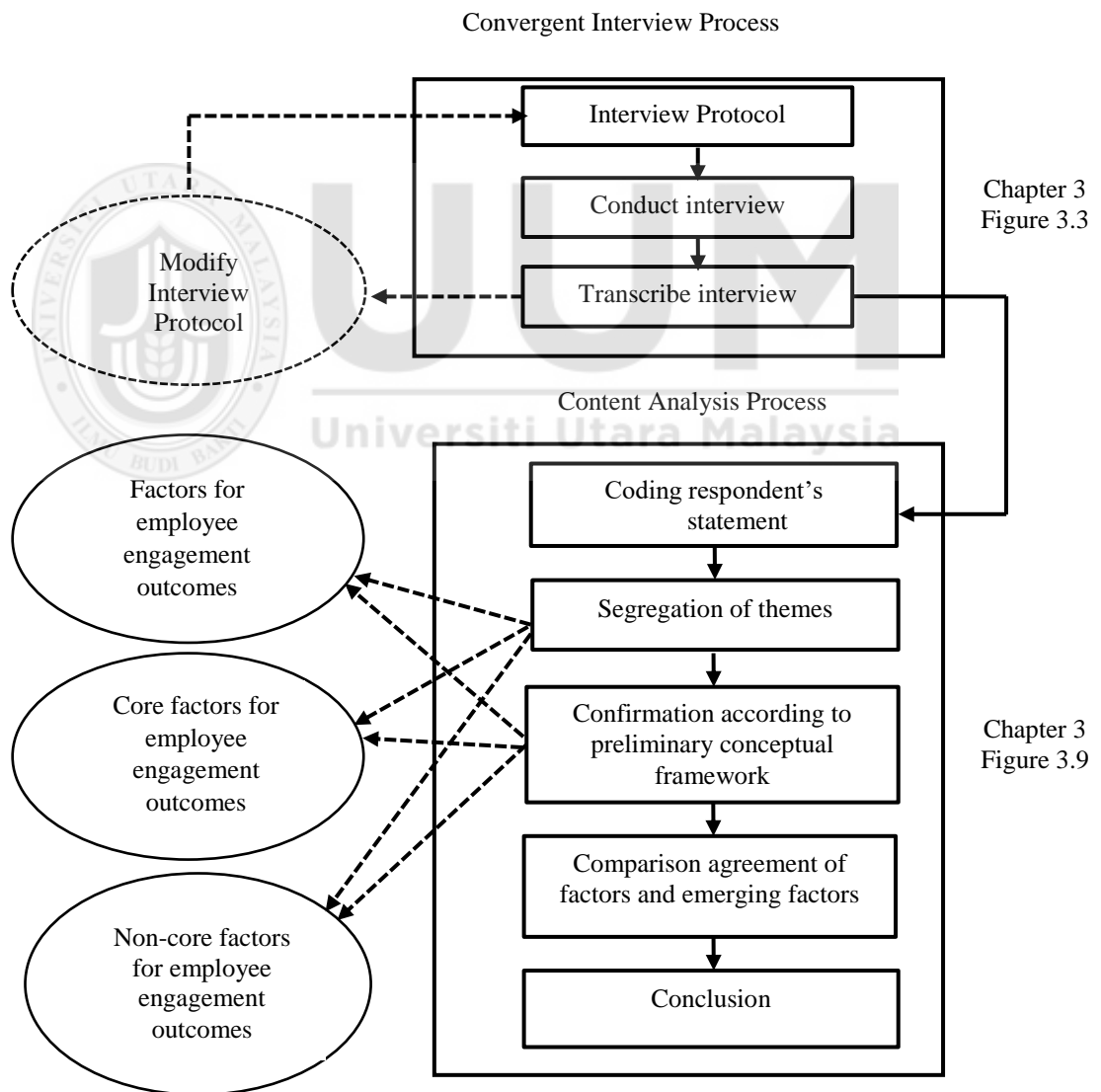


Figure 4.3
Data analysis process

Source: developed for this research

The data analysis process takes into account the adaptation of the content analysis process (Marying, 2000; Elo and Kyngäs, 2008) as described in Figure 3.9, Section 3.5 of Chapter 3. The data was organized based on the three research issues and the research problem. Summaries of the patterns of data being uncovered were presented in the form of tables and figures. Tables and figures are essential in order to follow the patterns that is being uncovered in the data for readers to attain an overall summary of the findings from them. All of the data that had been analysed in this chapter were based on the interview transcriptions from a series of convergent interviews as explained in Chapter 3.

4.3 Findings on Research Issues

The section preceding to this section had briefly explained about the data analysis process on the data collected using convergent interviews. In this section, each of the research issue stemmed from the preliminary conceptual framework as discussed in the Section 2.8 of Chapter 2 is addressed and major themes in the findings from convergent interviews are studied. Three research issues were investigated in this research. As such, research issue 1 is addressed in the Section 4.3.1, research issue 2 is addressed in the Section 4.3.2, and finally, research issue 3 is addressed in the Section 4.3.3. Detailed discussions on the three research issues is presented as follows.

4.3.1 Research issue 1: What are the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

Research issue 1 focused on the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. From the convergent interview conducted among the 12 respondents from SMEs in Malaysia, 11 factors were mentioned by them as depicted in Table 4.2. These 11 factors were extracted from Question 3 of the interview protocol: “What are the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in your organization” (refer Appendix 2).

Table 4.2
Analysis of the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME Business

Factors mentioned by respondents		Respondents from Malaysia SME Business												
		R01SEC01	R02SEC02	R03SEC03	R04SEC04	R05SEC05	R06SEC06	R07SEC07	R08MAC01	R09SEC08	R10SEC09	R11SEC10	R12SEC11	Frequency
1	Employee Retention	x	√	x	x	√	x	√	x	√	√	√	√	7
2	Profitability	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	12
3	Absenteeism	x	√	x	√	√	x	x	x	√	√	x	√	6
4	Customer Satisfaction	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	√	x	√	√	√	9
5	Productivity	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	√	x	9
6	Customer Loyalty	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	5
7	Organizational Performance	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	9
8	Manager Self-Efficacy	√	x	x	x	x	x	x	√	x	x	x	x	2
9	Advocacy of an Organization	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	5
10	Business Growth	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	8
11	Business Partner Satisfaction	x	x	√	x	x	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	7

Legend: √ Factor mentioned by respondents
 x Factor did not mentioned by respondents

Source: analysis of field data

In the present research, the first factor that could be considered as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is employee retention. Seven out of 12 respondents acknowledged that employee retention is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 1, Factor 1). Some related quotes from the respondents were: *“Of course, with employee engagement, there is high employee retention” (R12SEC11).* *“Umm.....employee retention. Retention is one of the outcomes...turnover is very high in this type of business but so far I have my core team that (has been) with us (for) very long...like my supervisor, she is with us since we (had) started the operation” (R02SEC02).* Therefore, employee retention is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The second factor that could be developed into as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is profitability. All respondents mentioned that profitability is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 2, factor 2). This is highly mentioned because profitability is the primary goal of all business ventures. For example, R03SEC03 explicitly stated that: *“Profitability is the ultimate outcome”.* Correspondingly, R05SEC05 expressed his view by stating:

“employee engagement contributes to profitability of the company”. In addition, R07SEC07 also emphasized on this factor and stated: *“(The) Bottom line or (the) financial result of course is the ultimate business goal”*. Similarly, R06SEC06 believed that profitability is a factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. His comment on the issue was: *“the result of having engaged employees is of course the bottom line. The most important, the ultimate is bottom line...this is based on my experience”*. Consequently, profitability is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The third factor that could be looked over as a factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is absenteeism. Out of 12 respondents, five affirmed that absenteeism is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 3, factor 3). Some illustrative comments were: *“...as with employee engagement, we don't have problem at all on absenteeism and other matters related to the (employee) discipline”* (R04SEC04). *“One of the outcomes of employee engagement is staff attendance...we don't have any problem with attendance”* (R05SEC05). Simultaneously, R02SEC02 also acknowledged that high employee engagement resulted in less absenteeism. His comments on the issue was: *“Staff attendance. So far we have problem with employees asking for extra overtime.they sometimes comes early to work, so I have to give them overtime. What I can say, we don't have problem with absenteeism”* (R02SEC02). Hence, absenteeism is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The next factor that could be considered as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is customer satisfaction. Nine out of 12 respondents acknowledged that customer satisfaction is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 4, factor 4). In response to this factor, R08MAC01 shared his experiences in business and has a lot to say on the subject, which can be seen from his statements: *“Customer satisfaction is very...very important. That is why we tell them (employees), they have to make the customer happy the best they (employees) can to service our customers, or else they (customers) can just walk away. Like in SMEs, there are thousands and thousands kinds of business in town, so you have to give something special (to customers)”*. Correspondingly, R05SEC05 stated that with highly engaged employees: *“.....business is getting better, no major complaints from the clients”*. R12SEC11 indicated that: *“....engaged employees engaged more with clients and able to serve our client with their best ability”*. Further responding to the subject, R03SEC03 expressed his view by stating: *“when employees become engaged, they work with their heart, they are happy, customers will be happy. Less customer complaints.”* Thus, customer satisfaction is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The fifth factor that could be considered as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is productivity. Nine out of 12 respondents stated that productivity is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 5, factor 5). Some illustrative

comments were: “.....the consequences to make them (employees) engaged is productivity...productivity increases” (R01SEC01). “....productivity which depends on the staff how productive they are to contribute to the company” (R08MAC01). “....people are starting to move things...starting to embark on the activities or tasks...you know you can see the output. The result of having engaged employees is productivity” (R06SEC06). “....a better productivity in term of designing our work ...for sales and marketing we can have more input from the market. With engaged employees we can have them really go to the market and get clients” (R04SEC04). Consequently, productivity is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The sixth factor that could be looked into as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is customer loyalty. Out of 12 respondents, five of them indicated that customer loyalty is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 6, factor 6). Some of the illustrative comments in support of this factor were: “Customer loyalty is very important especially in my type of business ...service industry...specifically hospitality industry” (R09SEC08). “When you have employees who are engaged, they can serve customers or clients better...so when we serviced them better, they...I mean clients will be happy and will look for us when they require our service” (R11SEC10). Therefore, customer loyalty is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The seventh factor that could be considered as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is organizational performance. Two third of the respondents professed that organizational performance is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 7, factor 7). For example, R07SEC07 expressed his view on organizational performance by stating: “...*morale of the working environment is very good when we have employee engagement*”. R04SEC04 indicated that: “...*we have a very harmonious situation in the office based on the employee engagement*”. Correspondingly, R06SEC06 confirmed the factor in a similar fashion to that of R07SEC07 by saying: “*it is very true. Harmonious working environment is the factor for organizational level outcomes of employee engagement*”. Hence, organizational performance is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The following factor that could be delved into as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is manager self-efficacy. Two out of 12 respondents asserted that manager self-efficacy is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 8, factor 8). For example, R01SEC01 commented: “*So when we... with employee engagement we have the confident the staff can do it...they are motivated and be more creative*”. Similarly, R08MAC01 unambiguously noted: “*They (engaged employees) are willing to learn when give them new things.....there is no resistance when ask to learn new things. The engaged staff you know...is the back bone of the company....to support company to perform*”

well.” As a result, manager self-efficacy is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The ninth factor that could be considered as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is advocacy of an organization. Out of 12 respondents, five have affirmed that advocacy of an organization is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 9, factor 9). Employees who are highly engaged embark on value-added activities that are significant to expand not only achievement and well-being of everyone in the organization, but also the organization itself. Some of the illustrative comments in support of this issue were: *“advocacy of an organization...oh yes...umm....it is a team work. When you have engaged employees, of course they go extra miles for the organization”* (R12SEC11). *“This advocacy of an organization is obviously the outcome of employee engagement for organization”* (R11SEC10). Hence, advocacy for an organization is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The tenth factor that could be looked over as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is business growth. Eight out of 12 respondents mentioned that this factor is the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 10, factor 10). R08MAC01 stressed the importance of business growth by stating: *“business growth is important to the company”*. R05SEC05 indicated: *“through employee*

engagement, the company is able to embark into new business and able to grow". Correspondingly, R01SEC01 highlighted that *"...it (employee engagement) gives us the confidence to embark into a new business. With employee engagement, we have the confident that staff can do it"*. As a result, business growth is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The last factor that could be considered as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is business partner satisfaction. Seven out of 12 respondents expressed that business partner satisfaction is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.2 (row 11, factor 11). For instance, several respondent stated: *"when employee is engaged, business partners such as our agents and suppliers are satisfied"* (R03SEC03). *"Business partner satisfaction is...umm...the outcome of employee engagement"* (R06SEC06). *"Yes, business partner satisfaction is the organizational level outcome of employee engagement"* (R08MAC01). Hence, business partner satisfaction is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Summary of research issue 1. In conclusion, evidences gathered from the interviews to answer research issue 1 regarding the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business yielded 11 factors. These 11 factors were confirmed to be included as the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business, thus it answered the first research issue of this

research. The following section discusses the second research issue of this research.

4.3.2 Research issue 2: What are the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

The data for the second research issue is analysed in this section. The second research issue looked at the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business in which they were introduced in the Section 1.4 of Chapter 1 and explained in the Section 2.9 of Chapter 2. The result of the core factors mentioned by the respondents is illustrated in Table 4.3. To answer the second research issue, the core factors were extracted from Question 4 of the interview protocol: “From the factors you have mentioned, which can be classified as core factor(s)?” (refer Appendix 2), and Question 7 of the modified interview protocol: “Do you agree that the following factors are not employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and why? (1) employee retention; (2) absenteeism; (3) customer loyalty; (4) advocacy of an organization. Which factor(s) can be classified as the core factor and the non-core factor?” (refer Appendix 3).

The first factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is employee retention. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the

organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 1, factor 1). Five out of seven respondents (>50%: always when above 50%, the factor is included) indicated that employee retention is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.3 (row 1, factor 1). In response to this factor, R10SEC09 stated that: “employee retention is very important because good employees are hard to find...so...employee retention is crucial”. As a result, employee retention is confirmed to be as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Table 4.3
Analysis of the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME Business

Factors mentioned by respondents extracted from Table 4.2		Respondents from Malaysia SME Business											Total Mentioned by Respondent	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
		R01SEC01	R02SEC02	R03SEC03	R04SEC04	R05SEC05	R06SEC06	R07SEC07	R08MAC01	R09SEC08	R10SEC09	R11SEC10				R12SEC11
1	Employee Retention		x			x		√		√	√	√	√	5	7	71
2	Profitability	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	12	12	100
3	Absenteeism		x		x	x				√	x		x	1	6	17
4	Customer Satisfaction	√	√	√	√	x			√		x	√	√	7	9	78
5	Productivity	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√		9	9	100
6	Customer Loyalty								x	√	√	√	√	4	5	80
7	Organizational Performance		√	√	x	√	√	√	√	√	x			7	9	78
8	Manager Self-Efficacy	x							x					0	2	0
9	Advocacy of an Organization								√	x	√	√	√	4	5	80
10	Business Growth	√	x	√	√	√	x	x	√					5	8	63
11	Business Partner	*	*	√			√	√	√	x	x		√	5	7	71

Satisfaction																			
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

- Legend:
- Respondent did not mention this factor
 - √ Respondent mentioned as the core factor
 - x Respondent did not mention as the core factor

Source: analysis of field data

The second factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is profitability. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 2, factor 2). All 12 respondents (>50%) acknowledged that profitability as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.3 (row 2, factor 2). For example, R08MAC01 pointed out: *“profit....very important. If they (employees) can’t do any sales, business is not good. You must know how to collect the money and bring back to business”*. *“Whatever your vision and mission you want to achieve, the most obvious reason is getting the bottom line... that is always the profitability, your sales target before achieving the non-financial outcomes”* (R10SEC09). Hence, profitability is confirmed to be as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The next factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is absenteeism. This factor had also been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 3, factor 3). Only one out of five respondents (<50%: always when below 50%, the factor is

not included) mentioned that absenteeism is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.3 (row 3, factor 3). As such, absenteeism is not the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. To support this point as not the core factor, R10SEC09 stated: *“Absenteeism is a subjective term. It is not an important factor because now with mobile technology, even if you are absence at some place, but your work can still progress. So, it is not a core factor”*. Consequently, absenteeism is confirmed to be stated as not the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The fourth factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is customer satisfaction. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 4, factor 4). Seven out of nine respondents (>50%) affirmed that customer satisfaction is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.3 (row 4, factor 4). Some comments in support of this issue were: *“Of course, customer satisfaction is a core factor”* (R04SEC04). *“One for the core factors is increase customer satisfaction...service level increases towards our clients”* (R01SEC01). *“In my opinion, factor that can be classified as the core factor is better customer satisfaction”* (R02SEC02). Therefore, customer satisfaction is confirmed to be as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The subsequent factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is productivity. This factor had also been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 5, factor 5). All nine respondents (>50%) confirmed that productivity is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.3 (row 5, factor 5). Some of the illustrative comments from the respondents were: *“Productivity...yes....umm...is important. When they become engaged, they are productive, and when they are given the task even though more, they are willing to do, is like multitask...you know. For example programmers, they are not only do programming but if there is a need in other areas they will help”* (R07SEC07). *“Next, is productivity...can be classified as the core factor...as I said they know what they are doing, it is more on reminding them what they need to do. So, if we look at from our assessment, the audit report, so far the assessment is good”* (R02SEC02). As a result, productivity is confirmed to be as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The sixth factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is customer loyalty. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 6, factor 6). Four out of five respondents (>50%) have indicated that customer loyalty is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as

shown in Table 4.3 (row 6, factor 6). *“Customer loyalty is important factor....umm...core factor. It is because (pause)...umm.... engaged employees could service the clients at their level best”* (R12SEC11). Thus, customer loyalty is confirmed to be as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The seventh factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is organizational performance. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 7, factor 7). Seven out of nine respondents (>50%) specified that organizational performance is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.3 (row 7, factor 7). R09SEC08 stressed on the importance of organizational performance from the human resource perspective by saying: *“When employees understand how to run the business, so they become proactive, they know how the outlet can be managed, know what the organization wants from them. So, I personally think organizational performance is a core factor in this case”* (R09SEC08). As a result, organizational performance is confirmed to be as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The succeeding factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is manager self-efficacy. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement

outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 8, factor 8). None of the respondents (<50%) mentioned manager self-efficacy is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.3 (row 8, factor 8). Hence, manager self-efficacy is not the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Justifying this point, R08MAC01 said: *“manager is people working for you. So, manager self-efficacy....umm... is related to an individual characteristics or personality. So, you see the results of manager self-efficacy are different”*. Consequently, manager self-efficacy is confirmed to be stated as not the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The ninth factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is advocacy of an organization. This factor had also been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 9, factor 9). Four out of five respondents (>50%) mentioned advocacy of an organization is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.3 (row 9, factor 9). For instance, R08MAC01 stated: *“this factor...umm...advocacy...advocacy of an organization is a vital factor....because engaged employees give more, do more for the organization”*. *“Advocacy of an organization...definitely an important factor, yeah...because when they (employees) are engaged, they believed in the organization”* (R10SEC10). Therefore, advocacy of an organization is confirmed to be as the

core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The tenth factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is business growth. This factor had also been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 10, factor 10). Five out of eight respondents (>50%) acknowledged business growth is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.3 (row 10, factor 10). Some of the statements made by the respondents were: *“Yeah...business growth is important. With business growth, the business will continue...like...let say we have...we get a three years contract, we have the confident to extend for another three years...it is growth and continuity”* (R01SEC01). *“Business growth is important. In my situation now, from a small engineering company, recently I have started my telecommunication business. You know why? Because I have a dedicated team...umm...staff I mean”* (R05SEC05). Hence, business growth is confirmed to be as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The eleventh and final factor that could be the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is business partner satisfaction. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 11, factor 11). Four out of seven respondents (>50%) asserted

business partner satisfaction is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.3 (row 11, factor 11). Examples of comments from the respondents were: *“Business partner satisfaction is very important factor” (R07SEC07). “It is definitely...because engaged employees give a lot of ease to the partner. Partner will have less stress. They give good support to the organization” (R12SEC11).* Therefore, business partner satisfaction is confirmed to be as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Summary of research issue 2. In summary, evidences gathered from those interviews on the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business revealed nine core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level namely employee retention, profitability, customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, organizational performance, advocacy of an organization, business growth and business partner satisfaction. The aforementioned findings that had been elaborated using the statements uttered by the respondents answered the second research issue of this research. The third research issue is discussed in the subsequent section.

4.3.3 Research issue 3: What are the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

In this section, data from convergent interviews was analysed for the third research issue. This research issue concentrated on the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as discussed in the


Section 1.3 and Section 2.9 respectively. The summary of the results on the non-core factors from the convergent interviews is shown in Table 4.4.

To answer the third research issue, the non-core factors were obtained from Question 5 of the interview protocol: “From the factors you have mentioned, which can be classified as the non-core factors?” (refer Appendix 2) and Question 7 of the modified interview protocol: “Do you agree that the following factors are not employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and why? (1) employee retention; (2) absenteeism; (3) customer loyalty; (4) advocacy of an organization. Which factor(s) can be classified as core factor and non-core factor?” (refer Appendix 3).

Table 4.4
The analysis of the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within Malaysia SME Business

Factors mentioned by respondents extracted from Table 4.2		Respondents from Malaysia SME Business												Total Mentioned by Respondent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
		R01SEC01	R02SEC02	R03SEC03	R04SEC04	R05SEC05	R06SEC06	R07SEC07	R08MAC01	R09SEC08	R10SEC09	R11SEC10	R12SEC11			
1	Employee Retention		√			√		x		x	x	x	x	2	7	29
2	Profitability	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	0	12	0
3	Absenteeism		√		√	√				x	√		√	5	6	83
4	Customer Satisfaction	x	x	x	x	√			x		√	x	x	2	9	22
5	Productivity	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		0	9	0
6	Customer Loyalty							√	x	x	x	x		1	5	20
7	Organizational Performance		x	x	√	x	x	x	x	x	√			2	9	22
8	Manager Self-Efficacy	√							√					2	2	100
9	Advocacy of an Organization							√	x	x	x	x		1	5	20
10	Business	x	√	x	x	x	√	√	x					3	8	38

	Growth															
11	Business Partner Satisfaction	*	*	x	x			x	x	√	√		x	2	7	29

- Legend:*
-  Respondent did not mentioned this factor
 - √
 - Respondent mentioned as the non-core factor
 - Respondent did not mentioned as the core factor (Table 4.2)
 - x
 - Respondent mentioned as the non-core factor
 - Respondent mentioned as the core factor (Table 4.2)

Source: analysis of field data

The first factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is employee retention. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 1, factor 1). Only two out of seven respondents (<50%: always when below 50%, this factor is not included) acknowledged that employee retention is the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 1, factor 1). The remaining five respondents agreed that this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer Table 4.3, row 1). Therefore, employee retention is confirmed to be not the non-core factor and is confirmed as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business indeed.

The subsequent factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is profitability. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 2, factor 2). None of the respondents (<50%) mentioned profitability is the non-

core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 2, factor 2). All of the respondents agreed that this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer Table 4.3, row 2, factor 2). Hence, profitability is confirmed to be not the non-core factor and is confirmed as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business indeed.

The third factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is absenteeism. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 3, factor 3). Five out of six respondents (>50%: always when above 50%, this factor is included) affirmed that absenteeism is the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 3, factor 3). Only one respondent mentioned that this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer Table 4.3, row 3, factor 3). Hence, absenteeism is confirmed to be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The fourth factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is customer satisfaction. This factor had also been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 4, factor 4). Two out of nine respondents (<50%) asserted that customer satisfaction is

the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 4, factor 4). The remaining seven respondents mentioned this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer Table 4.3, row 4, factor 4). Consequently, customer satisfaction is confirmed to be not the non-core factor and is confirmed as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business indeed.

The fifth factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is productivity. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 5, factor 5). None of the respondents (<50%) mentioned productivity as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 5, factor 5). All of the nine respondents mentioned this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer Table 4.3, row 5, factor 5). Therefore, productivity is confirmed to be not the non-core factor and is confirmed as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business indeed.

The next factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is customer loyalty. This factor had also been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 6, factor 6). Only one out of five respondents (<50%) insisted customer loyalty is the

non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 6, factor 6). The remaining four respondents mentioned this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer Table 4.3, row 6, factor 6). Thus, customer loyalty is confirmed to be not the non-core factor and is confirmed as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business indeed.

The seventh factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is organizational performance. This factor had also been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 7, factor 7). Only two out of nine respondents (<50%) acknowledged organizational performance is the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 7, factor 7). The remaining seven respondents mentioned this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer Table 4.3, row 7, factor 7). Therefore, organizational performance is confirmed to be not the non-core factor and is confirmed as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business indeed.

The eighth factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is manager self-efficacy. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row

8, factor 8). Only two respondents (>50%) mentioned manager self-efficacy is the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 8, factor 8). None of the respondents mentioned this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer Table 4.3, row 8, factor 8). Consequently, manager self-efficacy is confirmed to be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The succeeding factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is advocacy of an organization. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 9, factor 9). Only one out of five respondents (<50%) affirmed that advocacy of an organization is the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 9, factor 9). The remaining four respondents mentioned this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer Table 4.3, row 9, factor 9). Therefore, advocacy of an organization is confirmed to be not the non-core factor and is confirmed as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business indeed.

The tenth factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is business growth. This factor had also been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 10,

factor 10). Only three out of eight respondents (<50%) acknowledged business growth is the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 10, factor 10). The remaining five respondents mentioned this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer Table 4.3, row 10, factor 10). Hence, business growth is confirmed as not the non-core factor and is confirmed as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business indeed.

The final factor that could be the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is business partner satisfaction. This factor had already been confirmed to be included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as stated in the Section 4.3.1, Table 4.2 (row 11, factor 11). Two out of seven respondents (<50%) mentioned business partner satisfaction is the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as shown in Table 4.4 (row 11, factor 11). The remaining five respondents mentioned this factor is the core factor as discussed and agreed in the Section 4.3.2 (refer table 4.3, row 11, factor 11). Thus, business partner satisfaction is confirmed to be not the non-core factor and is confirmed as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level the within Malaysia SME business indeed.

Summary of research issue 3. In summary, the interview findings helped to clarify the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. There are two non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the

Malaysia SME business namely absenteeism and manager self-efficacy. Hence, this section has answered the third research issue of this research.

In brief, this section presented the findings that answered the three research issues stemmed from the preliminary conceptual framework developed from the synthesis of selected literature. The interview findings clarified three important issues: (i) highlighting the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business – answers to the first research issue; (ii) identifying and refining the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business - answers to the second research issue; and (iii) expounding the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business – answers to the third research issue.

4.4 Summary and Conclusions

This chapter had elaborated the analysis of data on the factors, the core factors, and the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The data collected from the convergent interviews involving 12 respondents were analysed using content analysis technique. The three research issues were examined and the findings are shown in Table 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 respectively.

Empirical evidence from the interviews had confirmed that there are 11 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level with reference to

the discussion in the Section 4.3.1 and. Next, after initial extraction from the 11 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, nine factors had been confirmed to be the core factors specifically employee retention, profitability, customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, organizational performance, advocacy of an organization, business growth, and business partner satisfaction with reference to the discussion in the Section 4.3.2. Meanwhile, the remaining two factors were confirmed as the non-core factors namely absenteeism and manager self-efficacy with reference to the discussion in the Section 4.3.3. As depicted in Figure 4.4, these findings have answered research issue 1, research issue 2, and research issue 3.



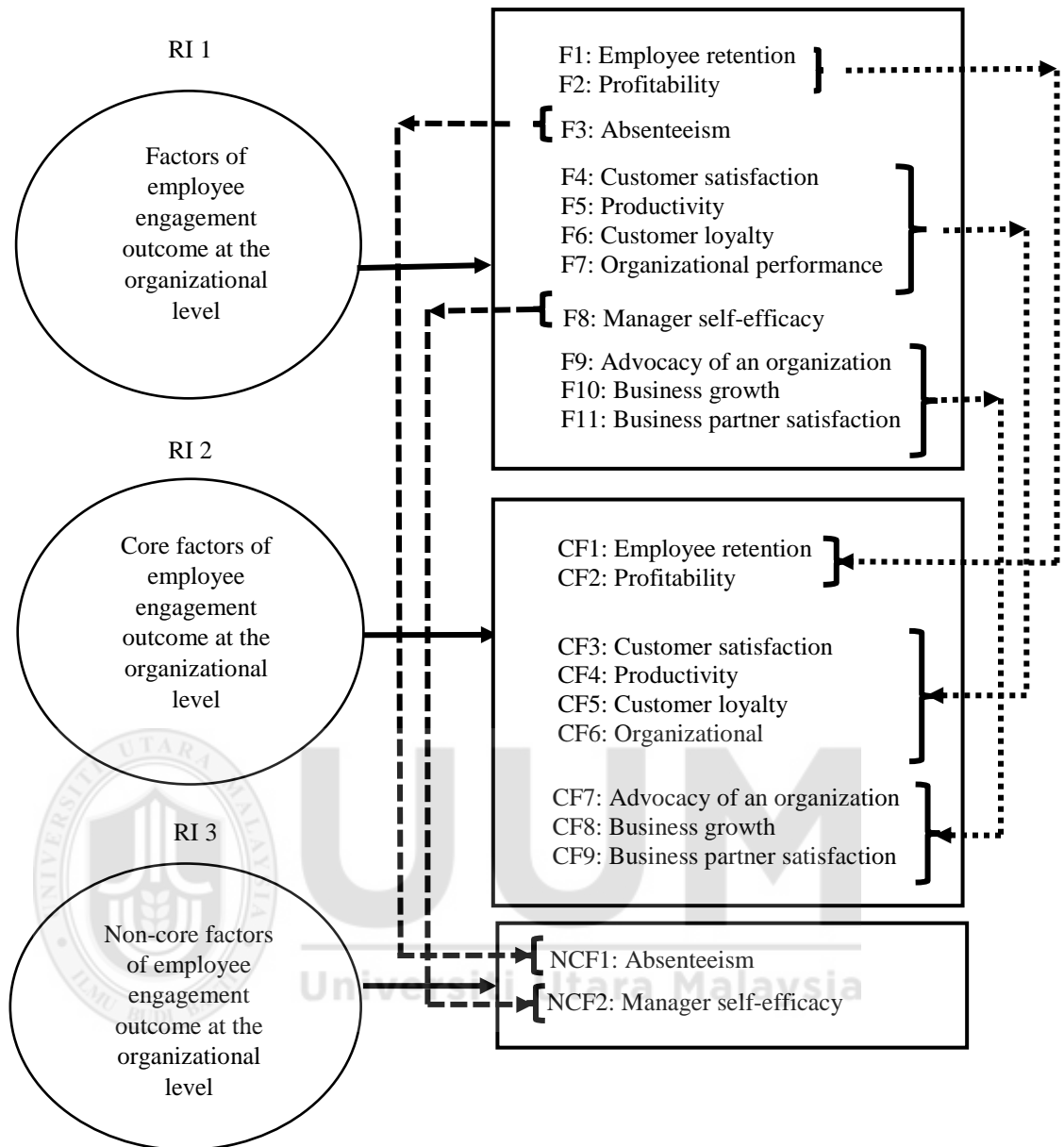


Figure 4.4
Summary of the data analysis to answer the three research issues of this research

Source: developed for this research

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This research is designed to address the research problem: *How and why the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level could be established within the Malaysia SME business?* The research problem had been presented in the Section 1.2 of Chapter 1. This final chapter reports the findings generated in response to this research problem. In order to investigate this research problem, this dissertation is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the whole dissertation. The first section explained about the background of the problem. Next, the research problem was introduced followed by the justifications of the research and a glimpse on the three research issues. Subsequently, the summary of the methodology that was employed to investigate the research problem was discussed. Finally, the last three sections presented the delimitations of the research, the definition of key terms, the organization of this dissertation and the conclusion of the chapter.

Next in Chapter 2, the literature relating to the research problem was reviewed and the gaps in the literature were identified. The first section of this chapter highlighted the evolution of the employee engagement research, followed by the definitions of employee engagement. The related employee engagement theories and the two levels of employee engagement outcomes namely the individual level and the organizational level were also highlighted. The next

section then elaborated on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in business setting followed by an overview of SMEs in Malaysia. Subsequently, it discussed about the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SMEs. Based on the extant literature, the preliminary conceptual framework for this research was constructed and three research issues had been derived. The preliminary framework was shown as Figure 2.12 in the Section 2.8 and research issues was further discussed in the Section 2.9.

On the one hand, Chapter 3 described the research approach of this research in order to achieve its objectives. This chapter began with the justification of the qualitative approach for the current research. Then, the nature of convergent interviewing as the data collection technique was explained together with the sample selection, the sample size, the interview protocol and the labelling conventions for respondents. Finally, the explanation on the content analysis as the data analysis method, the ethical considerations and conclusion of the chapter were provided.

Meanwhile, Chapter 4 reported the analysis of the data collected using convergent interviews to answer the three research issues. It began with a description of the research setting, followed by the data analysis process. The subsequent section highlighted the factors emerged from the convergent interviews in aiding the answers for the three research issues. Finally, the chapter was concluded.

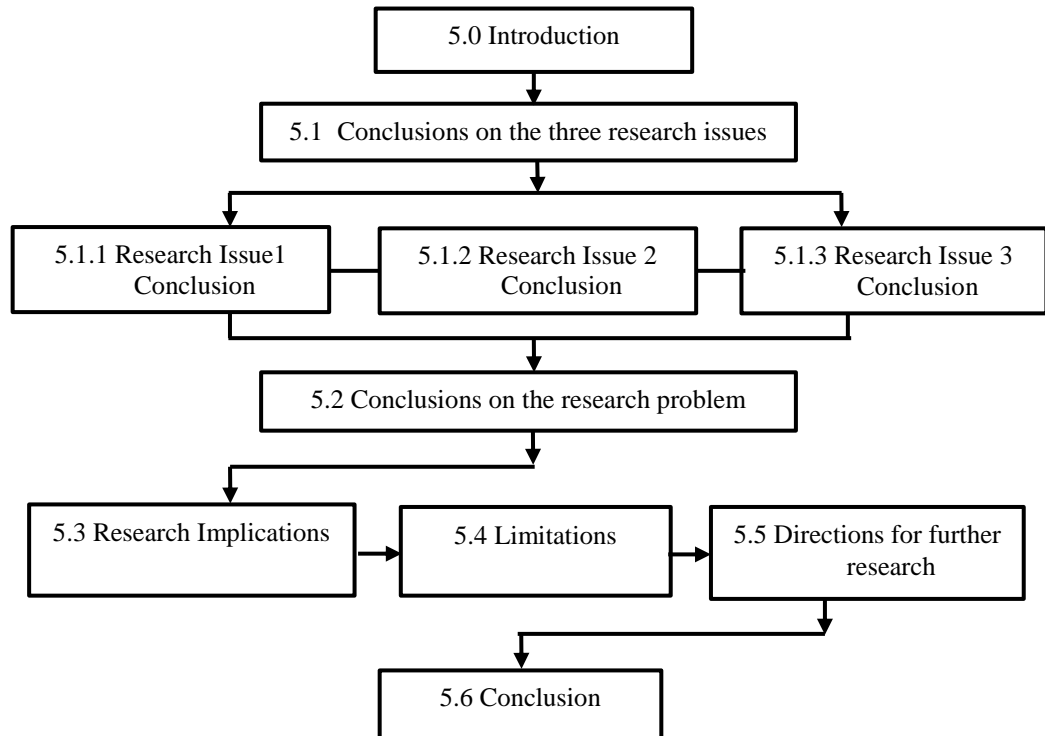


Figure 5.1
Flow of Chapter 5

Source: developed for this research

Chapter 5 is the final chapter of this dissertation, comprising of seven main sections as illustrated in the aforementioned Figure 5.1. It begins with the outlines of this chapter. This is then followed by the conclusions on the three research issues as presented in the section 5.1. Findings from the interviews discussed in the Section 4.3 of Chapter 4 are compared against the findings from the literature discussed in the Section 2.5 of Chapter 3 to highlight similarities and differences between the two. It is also to show where this research advances in the existing literature. Specific reference is then made to the contribution of this research to the body of knowledge. Then, the conclusions on the research problem and the revised conceptual framework are presented in the Section 5.2. Next, a discussion in the areas of methodological,

theoretical, practice, as well as policy implications of this research are offered in the Section 5.3. Finally, the research limitations are discussed, areas of future research are recommended and conclusion are offered in the Section 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 respectively.

5.1 Conclusions on the Three Research Issues

This section summarizes the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level put forward in the literature review for each of the research issue. Then, comparison of these factors to the findings of this research is made. Specifically, this section compares the findings of this research with the literature, with a purpose to outline the research contributions in comprehending the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. A summary of the conclusions for each research issue is shown in the Table 5.1.

The research issue number is listed in column (i), the research findings are listed in column (ii), and the frequency of each factor specified in the literature pertaining to employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business is stated in column (iii). The frequency of each factor in the literature is organized into three categories, namely “to some extent”, “to a very small extent” and “none”.

Table 5.1
Conclusions for each research issue of present research

Research Issue (i)	Findings on the research issues (ii)	Frequency in literature (iii)
1	<p>1.1 Ten factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business from the preliminary conceptual framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Employee retention ii. Profitability iii. Absenteeism iv. Customer satisfaction v. Productivity vi. Customer loyalty vii. Organizational performance viii. Manager self-efficacy ix. Advocacy of an organization x. Business growth <p>1.2 One new factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Business partner satisfaction 	<p>To some extent To some extent To some extent To some extent To some extent To some extent To some extent To some extent To some extent To some extent</p> <p>none</p>
2	<p>2.1 Four core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business from the preliminary conceptual framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Employee retention ii. Profitability iii. Customer satisfaction iv. Productivity <p>2.2 Four additional core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business from the preliminary conceptual framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Customer loyalty ii. Organizational performance iii. Advocacy of an organization iv. Business growth <p>2.3 One new core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Business partner satisfaction 	<p>none none none none</p> <p>none none none none</p> <p>none</p>
3	<p>3.1 Two non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Absenteeism ii. Manager self-efficacy 	<p>none none</p>

Source: developed based on the literature synthesis in the Chapter 2 and data analysis in the Chapter 4

The confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations on the phenomenon that had been initially speculated on, or implied or mentioned or had been empirically investigated in some depth on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is labelled as “to some extent”.

Next, the confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations about the phenomenon that has been speculated about or had been mentioned briefly without empirical testing in the literature on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level is labelled as “to a very small extent”.

Finally, the confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations about the phenomenon that had not been investigated before or had not been raised in the previous literature about the phenomenon is labelled as “none”.

The contribution to the literature by this research is presented in the next section. It should be noted that this research had also made an interesting contribution to the employee engagement strategies of the human resources practitioners in SMEs. The subsequent section presents the conclusions on the first research issue.

5.1.1 Research issue 1: What are the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

Research issue 1 concerned with the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Two main

conclusions could be drawn from the findings about research issue 1, as provided in table 5.1, conclusion 1.1 and 1.2 respectively (refer row 2, column (ii) of research issue 1). Conclusion 1.1 encapsulated 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business (conclusion 1.1; factors i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x of conclusion 1.1) and conclusion 1.2 comprises of one new factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business (conclusion 1.2; factor i). Then, the summary of the conclusion 1.1 and 1.2 for research issue 1 is provided at the end of the discussion. Each factor is further discussed as follows:

Conclusion 1.1 (i): Employee retention as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The first conclusion associates with employee retention as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. In the literature on employee engagement outcome in business, employee retention was found dominating other factors (refer column 1, Table 2.4, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2). Meanwhile, from the literature in SMEs, only two empirical research had discussed the inclusion of employee retention as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. However, these articles were not included in this research as they both did not satisfy the criteria of article selection for this research, yet they provide a strong platform to investigate this factor within the Malaysia SME business (refer Section 2.7 of Chapter 2). Both of the existing literature in business and in

SMEs suggested that employee retention is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

In this sense, the findings of this research as explained in research issue 1 in the Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4 had confirmed that employee retention as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. These findings are found to be consistent with the previous research on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and to be related to the SET and the JD-R model. Hence, employee retention would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the factor of the organizational level outcomes of employee engagement within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 1.1 (ii): Profitability as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The second conclusion is related to profitability as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. This factor was discussed rather extensively in the literature on employee engagement outcome in business (Harter et al., 2002; Heger, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009; Jauhari et al., 2013) as shown in column 2, Table 2.4, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2. The literature in business suggested that profitability to be considered as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. However, none of the literature on employee engagement outcome in SMEs had mentioned the inclusion of profitability as the factor of employee outcome at the organizational level.

The findings of this research as explained in research issue 1, Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4 had confirmed the literature on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in business and the theories of employee engagement, the SET and the JD-R model. This research posited that profitability is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Therefore, profitability would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 1.1 (iii): Absenteeism as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The third conclusion is related to absenteeism as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Absenteeism had been documented in the literature on employee engagement outcome as the factor of employee engagement at the organizational level in business (Schaufeli et al., 2009; Merrill et al., 2013; Soane et al., 2013) as shown in column 3, Table 2.4, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2 but not in the literature in SMEs.

The findings of this research as discussed in research issue 1, section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4 had posited that absenteeism is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. These findings are consistent with the literature in business by other scholars discussed in the Chapter 2 and coherent with the SET and the JD-R model, specifically on employee engagement outcome. Therefore, absenteeism would be included in the conceptual

framework of this research as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 1.1 (iv): Customer satisfaction as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Next, the fourth conclusion is customer satisfaction as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Several evidence were found from the literature on employee engagement outcome in business, showing that customer satisfaction was included as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (Harter et al., 2002; Ram et al., 2011; Jauhari et al., 2013) as depicted in column 4, Table 2.4, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2. However, no previous research had documented customer satisfaction as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SMEs.

The findings of this research from the perspectives of the managers holding top positions in the Malaysia SME business as explained in research issue 1, Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4 are consistent with the existing literature in business on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, and with the SET and the JD-R model. This research had discovered that customer satisfaction is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Thus, customer satisfaction would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 1.1 (v): Productivity as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The fifth conclusion is productivity as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The literature on employee engagement outcome in business suggested that productivity to be considered as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as explained in the Section 2.5 of Chapter 2. Yet, none of the literature in SMEs had mentioned about the inclusion of productivity as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

In turn, the findings of this research as discussed in research issue 1, Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4 had confirmed that productivity is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. These findings are consistent with the previous studies and with the SET and the JD-R model. Hence, productivity would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 1.1 (vi): Customer loyalty as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Subsequently, the sixth conclusion is associated with customer loyalty as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. As explained in the Section 2.5 of Chapter 2, the literature on employee engagement outcome in business implied that customer loyalty is the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. On the

other hand, existing literature in the context of SMEs regarding the inclusion of customer loyalty as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level was unavailable.

In turn, the findings of this research (refer research issue 1, Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4) had also confirmed that customer loyalty is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. These findings are consistent with the existing literature in business and supported by the SET and the JD-R model. Therefore, customer loyalty would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 1.1 (vii): Organizational performance as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The seventh conclusion is related to organizational performance as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. As explained in the Section 2.5 of Chapter 2, the literature in business had mentioned the inclusion of organizational performance as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Yet, this factor was not discussed in the SMEs' literature to be considered as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

Nevertheless, the findings of this research as discussed in research issue 1, Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4 had revealed that organizational performance is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. These findings are consistent with the previous research on employee engagement

outcome at the organizational level and with the SET and the JD-R model. Therefore, organizational performance would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 1.1 (viii): Manager self-efficacy as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The eighth conclusion is manager self-efficacy as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Only one research from the literature in business reported that this factor as the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (Luthans & Peterson, 2002) as shown in column 8, Table 2.4, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2. However, no previous research had reported manager self-efficacy as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SMEs.

Based on the findings of this research (refer research issue 1, Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4), manager self-efficacy is confirmed as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within Malaysia SME business. These findings are consistent with the previous studies on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and supported by the SET and the JD-R model. Therefore, manager self-efficacy would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 1.1 (ix): Advocacy of an organization as the factor s of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The ninth conclusion is related to advocacy of an organization as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Only one literature on employee engagement outcome in business suggested that advocacy of an organization to be considered as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (refer column 9, Table 2.4, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2). However, no studies in SMEs on the organizational level outcomes of employee engagement were found that has included this factor as the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

The findings of this research from the perspectives of the managers holding top positions in the Malaysia SME business as explained in research issue 1, Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4 had found that advocacy of an organization is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. These findings are consistent with the literature in business and are coherent with the SET and the JD-R model. Thus, advocacy of an organization would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 1.1 (x): Business growth as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Finally, the tenth conclusion is business growth as the factor of employee

engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. As explained in the Section 2.5 of Chapter 2 and shown in column 10, Table 2.4, the literature in business on employee engagement outcome indicated that business growth is employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. On the other hand, existing literature in the context of SMEs showed no research were available that had discussed the inclusion of business growth as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

In turn, the findings of this research as discussed in research issue 1, Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4 had confirmed that business growth is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. These findings are consistent with the previous research on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and are supported by the SET and the JD-R model. Therefore, business growth would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The aforementioned 10 conclusions are centred on factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level which had been documented in the existing literature on employee engagement outcomes in business and in SMEs (the employee retention factor). These 10 factors were found to be consistent with the findings of this research. The following section is focused on the conclusion of the new emerging factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 1.2 (i): Business partner satisfaction as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. This conclusion is concerned with business partner satisfaction as the new emerging factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Neither in the literature in business nor in the literature of SMEs on employee engagement outcome had discussed the inclusion of business partner satisfaction as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

In this sense, the findings of this research extends the literature by providing the first evidence that business partner satisfaction is the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as discussed in research issue 1, Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4. Therefore, business partner satisfaction would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business and is a new contribution to the body of knowledge

Summary of the conclusion 1.1 and 1.2 for research issue 1. The first research issue is concerned with the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within Malaysia SME business. The 10 factors discussed aforementioned were employee retention, profitability, absenteeism, customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, organizational performance, manager self-efficacy, advocacy of an organization, and business growth. In addition, a newly emerging factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level that is business partner satisfaction is also discussed

above. These 11 factors were found to be part of comprehensive list of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business (as listed in Table 5.1, row 2, research issue 1; conclusion 1.1 and 1.2 respectively). The following section presents the conclusions on the second research issue.

5.1.2 Research issue 2: What are the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business?

Research issue 2 focused on the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Three main conclusions could be drawn from the findings on research issue 2, as provided in Table 5.1, conclusion 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 respectively (refer row 3, column (ii) of research issue 2). Conclusion 2.1 consists of four core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business (factors i, ii, iii, iv of conclusion 2.1). Meanwhile, conclusion 2.2 consists of four additional core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business (factors i, ii, iii, iv of conclusion 2.2). These eight core factors were from the preliminary conceptual framework of this research (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2). Next, the conclusion 2.3 encapsulates one newly emerging core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business (factor i of conclusion 2.3). Then, the summary of the conclusion 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 for research issue 2 is provided at the end of the discussion. Each factor is discussed in details as follows.

Conclusion 2.1 (i): Employee retention as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The first conclusion is related to employee retention as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Employee retention had been discussed both in literature in business and in SMEs as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (conclusion 1.1 (i) Section 5.1.1), but both literature did not specifically discuss the inclusion of employee retention as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Conversely, in the preliminary conceptual framework (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2), employee retention had been categorized as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. This was based on the frequency of this factor being mentioned in the literature (refer Table 2.3, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

Essentially, the findings of this research had regarded employee retention as the core factor (refer discussion in research issue 2, Section 4.3.2 of chapter 4), which confirming both the synthesis of the literature and the preliminary conceptual framework of this research. As there had been no previous empirical research on employee retention as the core factor therefore, this research findings makes a contribution to some extent to the current knowledge on the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. With that conclusion, employee retention would be included in the conceptual

framework of this research as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 2.1 (ii): Profitability as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The second conclusion is concerned with profitability as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The literature in business had discussed on profitability as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (refer conclusion 1.1 (ii) Section 5.1.1), but both literature in business and in SMEs on employee engagement outcome did not documented specifically the inclusion of productivity as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Nonetheless, in the preliminary conceptual framework (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2), profitability had been categorized as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level according to the frequency of this factor being mentioned in the literature (refer Table 2.3, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

In this case, the findings of this research had revealed that profitability is the core factor (refer discussion in research issue 2, Section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4), confirming both the synthesis of the literature and the preliminary conceptual framework of this research. Therefore, this research makes a significant contribution by adding to the current knowledge on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level by providing evidence that profitability is the core factor. With that conclusion, profitability would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the core factor of

employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 2.1 (iii): Customer satisfaction as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Next, the third conclusion is about customer satisfaction as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The literature in business had discussed on customer satisfaction as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (conclusion 1.1 (iv) Section 5.1.1), however none of the current literature showed any discussions specifically on the inclusion of customer satisfaction as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Nevertheless, in the preliminary conceptual framework (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2), customer satisfaction had been categorized as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level according to the frequency of this factor being mentioned in the literature (refer Table 2.3, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

Based on the findings of this research, customer satisfaction is confirmed as the core factor (refer discussion in research issue 2, Section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4), verified both the synthesis of the literature and the preliminary conceptual framework of this research. Therefore, this research had significantly contributed to the current literature, stating that customer satisfaction is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. As a result, customer satisfaction would be included in the conceptual framework of this

research as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 2.1 (iv): Productivity as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The fourth conclusion is productivity as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. There had been empirical investigation in literature in business about productivity as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (conclusion 1.1 (v) Section 5.1.1) but none of the existing literature in business and in SMEs included productivity specifically as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. However, in the preliminary conceptual framework (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2), productivity had been categorized as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level based on the frequency of this factor being mentioned in the literature (refer Table 2.3, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

In turn, the findings of this research posited that productivity is the core factor (refer discussion in research issue 2, Section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4) which confirmed both the synthesis of the literature and the preliminary conceptual framework. Therefore, the findings of this research add to the literature by providing the first evidence that productivity is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. As such, productivity would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as

the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The aforementioned four conclusions (conclusion 2.1 (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv)) were dedicated to the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. The findings of this research had confirmed both the synthesis of the literature and the preliminary conceptual framework. Also they had provided the first evidence stating that these four factors (employee retention, profitability, customer satisfaction, and productivity) are the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The following section is focused on the conclusions of the additional four core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 2.2 (i): Customer loyalty as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The first conclusion is related to customer loyalty as the additional core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The current literature in business identified customer loyalty as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (conclusion 1.1 (vi) Section 5.1.1) but did not specifically discuss the inclusion of this factor as the core factor nor as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. However, in the preliminary conceptual framework (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2), this factor had been categorized as the non-core factor of employee engagement

outcome at the organizational level according to the frequency of this factor being mentioned in the literature (refer Table 2.3, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

In this sense, the findings of this research had confirmed that customer loyalty is the core factor (refer discussion in research issue 2, Section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4). Therefore, this research makes an important contribution by adding to the literature that customer loyalty is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. As such, customer loyalty would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 2.2 (ii): Organizational performance as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The second conclusion regards organizational performance as the additional core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The current literature in business identified organizational performance as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (conclusion 1.1 (vii) Section 5.1.1) but did not specifically discuss the inclusion of this factor as the core factor nor as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. However, in the preliminary conceptual framework (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2), this factor had been categorized as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

This was based on the frequency of this factor being mentioned in the literature (refer Table 2.3, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

In turn, the findings of this research had confirmed that organizational performance is the core factor (refer discussion in research issue 2, Section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4). Therefore, this research makes a contribution by adding to the literature that organizational performance is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. As such, organizational performance would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 2.2 (iii): Advocacy of an organization as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The next conclusion is related to advocacy of an organization as the additional core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The current literature in business identified organizational performance as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (conclusion 1.1 (ix) Section 5.1.1) but did not specifically discuss the inclusion of this factor as the core factor nor as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. However, in the preliminary conceptual framework (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2), this factor had been categorized as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level

according to the frequency of this factor being mentioned in the literature (refer Table 2.3, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

In this sense, the findings of this research had confirmed that advocacy of an organization is the core factor (refer discussion in research issue 2, Section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4). Therefore, this research makes an important contribution by adding to the literature that advocacy of an organization is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. As such, advocacy of an organization would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 2.2 (iv): Business growth as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The fourth conclusion is concerned with business growth as the additional core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The current literature in business identified business growth as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (conclusion 1.1 (x) Section 5.1.1) but did not specifically discuss the inclusion of this factor as the core factor nor as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Nevertheless, this factor had been categorized as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in the preliminary conceptual framework (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2). This was based on the frequency

of this factor being mentioned in the literature (Table 2.3, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

In turn, the findings of this research had confirmed that business growth is the core factor (refer discussion in research issue 2, Section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4). Therefore, this research makes a significant contribution by adding to the literature that business growth is the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. As such, business growth would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

The aforementioned four conclusions (conclusion 2.2 (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv)) concentrated on the additional core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. The findings of this research had confirmed both the synthesis of the literature and the preliminary conceptual framework. They also had provided the first evidence that these four factors (customer loyalty, organizational performance, advocacy of an organization, and business growth) are the additional core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. In order to proceed, the following section is dedicated to the conclusions on a newly emerging core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 2.3 (i): Business partner satisfaction as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. This conclusion is related to business partner satisfaction as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. None of the previous research mentioned about the inclusion of business partner satisfaction as the factor or specifically as the core factor nor as the non-core of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. As a result, this factor was not categorized as either the factor, the core or the non-core factor in the preliminary conceptual framework. Nevertheless, the finding of this research on the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level had confirmed that business partner satisfaction is the factor (refer discussion in research issue 1, Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4), thus establishing it as the newly emerging factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and is included in the conceptual framework of this research (refer conclusion 1.2, Section 5.1).

Furthermore, the findings of this research on the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business found that business partner satisfaction is the core factor (refer discussion in research issue 2, Section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4). As there had been no previous empirical research on business partner satisfaction as the core factor hence, this research's finding makes a contribution to some extent to the current knowledge on the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. With that conclusion, business partner satisfaction would

be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Summary of the conclusion 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 for research issue 2. The second research issue is concerned with the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. In total, there are nine core factors discussed above: employee retention, profitability, customer satisfaction, productivity (conclusion 2.1); customer loyalty, organizational performance, advocacy of an organization, business growth (conclusion 2.2); and business partner satisfaction (conclusion 2.3). These core factors were found to be part of a comprehensive list of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business (as shown in Figure 5.2), which emphasized that no other previous research had investigated the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (refer Section 2.7 of Chapter 2). The next section presents the conclusions on the third research issue.

5.1.3 Research issue 3: What are the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within Malaysia SME business?

Research issue 3 probed on the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The main conclusion could be reached from the findings on research issue 3, as provided in Table 5.1, conclusion 3.1 (refer to row 4, column (ii) for research

issue 3). This conclusion comprised of two non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within Malaysia SME business (factors i, ii of conclusion 3.1). Then, the summary of the conclusion 3.1 for research issue 3 is provided at the end of the discussion. These two factors are discussed in details as follows:

Conclusion 3.1 (i): Absenteeism as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The first conclusion is related to absenteeism as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The existing literature in business identified absenteeism as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (conclusion 1.1 (iii) Section 5.1.1), but there had been no empirical investigation in literature in business and in SMEs on absenteeism specifically as the core factor or the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. However, in the preliminary conceptual framework (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2), this factor had been categorized as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level according to the frequency of this factor being mentioned in the literature (refer Table 2.3, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

In turn, the findings of this research found that absenteeism is the non-core factor (refer discussion in research issue 3, Section 4.3.3 of Chapter 4). Therefore, the findings of this research appended to the literature by providing the first evidence that absenteeism is the non-core factor of employee

engagement outcome at the organizational level. As such, absenteeism would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Conclusion 3.2 (ii): Manager self-efficacy as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The second conclusion is manager self-efficacy as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The literature in business identified manager self-efficacy as the factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (conclusion 1.1 (viii) Section 5.1.1) but there had been no empirical evidence in current literature about manager self-efficacy as the core factor or the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Nevertheless, this factor had been categorized as the non-core factor in the preliminary conceptual framework (refer Figure 2.12, Section 2.8 of Chapter 2) according to the frequency of this factor being mentioned in the literature (refer Table 2.3, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2).

Indeed, the findings of this research had revealed that manager self-efficacy is the non-core factor (refer discussion in research issue 3, Section 4.3.3 of Chapter 4). Therefore, the findings of this research makes an important contribution by adding to the existing knowledge on manager self-efficacy as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational

level. As such, manager self-efficacy would be included in the conceptual framework of this research as the non-core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Summary of the conclusion 3.1 (i, ii) for research issue 3. The summary for the third and the last research issue highlights its concerns on the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. The two non-core factors discussed above namely absenteeism and manager self-efficacy were found to be part of a comprehensive list of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business (refer Figure 5.2), which emphasized that no other previous research had investigated the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business (refer Section 2.7 of Chapter 2).

5.2 Conclusions on the Research Problem

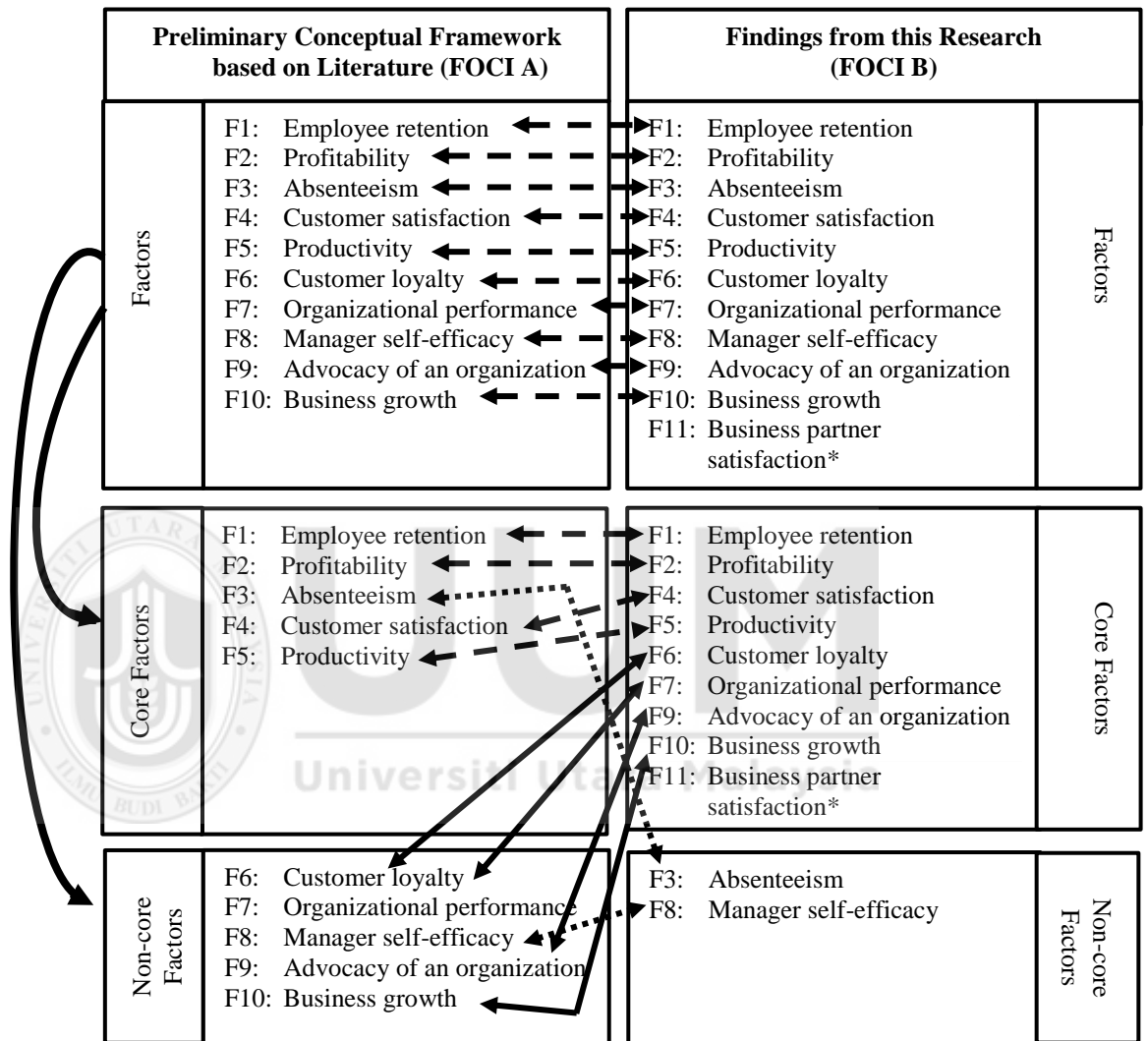
Discussions about the overall research problem of this dissertation are conceivable. Therefore, this section presents the conclusion on the research problem. Due to the unique characteristics of SME business in comparison to other businesses, co-operation, public sector and large enterprises, coupled with the limitations of study in the field of employee engagement outcome in SMEs, this research was initiated to understand the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

Correspondingly, the core factors and the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level had also been identified.

Chapter 2 through Figure 2.12 in the Section 2.8 then concluded with the preliminary conceptual framework of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. This preliminary conceptual framework was developed based on the synthetisation of literatures found in general business setting that had been presented in the Section 2.5. In this preliminary conceptual framework, 10 factors were listed. The literature however, did not sufficiently reveal the specific factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Indeed, the findings of the present research produced 11 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. The two (2) sets of factors (Foci A and Foci B) were listed next to each other for comparison purpose as illustrated in the Figure 5.2.

As depicted in Figure 5.2, there are 10 factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level which were derived from the literature synthetisation (Foci A, Factors Box, F1-F10). All of these factors had been confirmed by the respondents in which all of them were from the Malaysia SME business. In fact, there is one newly emerging factor being unveiled by this research which was extracted from the interviews conducted during this research (Foci B, Factors Box, F11). This factor is business partner satisfaction that refers to the “pleased feeling” of individuals or company with a certain degree of involvement with a particular entity’s business dealings. They consists

of internal and external stakeholders like the investors, suppliers, agents or vendors.



Legend:

- ← → Similar factor in preliminary conceptual framework and findings from this research
- ← - - - → Core factor in preliminary conceptual framework being confirmed as the non-core factors in the findings of this research
- ← - - - → The non-core factor in preliminary conceptual framework being confirmed as the core factor in the findings of this research
- * New emerging factor
- ⤵ The same factors extracted for the core and the non-core factors

Figure 5.2
Preliminary conceptual framework versus findings of this research

Source: developed for this research

Next, all of the confirmed factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level were further examined to be classified as the core-factors. As depicted in Figure 5.2, there are five core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level derived from the literature synthetisation (Foci A, Core Factors Box, F1-F5). In this sense, nine factors had been confirmed by the respondents from the SME business in Malaysia as the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (Foci B, Core Factors Box, F1-F2, F4-F7, F9-F11). The five additional factors that had been confirmed as the core factors are customer loyalty, organizational performance, advocacy of an organization, business growth, and business partner satisfaction. Business partner satisfaction is the newly emerging factor. Meanwhile, one core factor identified from the literature, absenteeism, was not confirmed by respondents in this research as the core factor of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. However, it was confirmed as the non-core factor.

Finally, as depicted in Figure 5.2, there are five non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level obtained from the literature synthetisation (Foci A, Non-Core Factors Box, F6-F10). However, only two factors had been confirmed by the respondents from the SME business in Malaysia as the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level (Foci B, Non-Core Factors Box, F3, F8). These two non-core factors are absenteeism and manager self-efficacy. The other factors previously classified as the non-core factors namely customer loyalty,

organizational performance, advocacy of an organization, and business growth were not confirmed by the respondents in this research as the non-core factors but were confirmed as the core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business instead.

The above discussion showed that the findings of the core factors and the non-core factors listed in Foci B (Core Factors Box; Non-Core Factors Box) were slightly different from the prior findings on the core factors and the non-core factors listed in Foci A (Core Factors Box; Non-Core Factors Box) in term of the categories of those factors. The slight difference between the findings of this research and the prior findings is due to three reasons. Firstly, the difference between the findings of this research and the prior findings was due to the research method being used. As depicted in the Table 2.3 and discussed in the Section 2.5 of Chapter 2, 16 out of 19 articles (84%) that investigated the employee engagement outcome utilized quantitative research method. The utilization of qualitative research method enabled this research to delve deeper into the problem and produce findings that were not determine in advance, thus, explained the slight difference between both findings.

Second, the slight difference between the findings of this research and the prior findings was due the unique characteristics of SMEs compared to the general business setting. Discussions in the Section 2.5 of Chapter 2 and summaries in the Table 2.3 indicated that all of the selected articles (100%) that examined the employee engagement outcome were conducted in general business setting. The unique characteristics of SMEs could be observed with regards to the size of business, the type of employees SMEs hire and the lack of financial capabilities

which influence their employee engagement outcomes at the organizational level. These characteristics helped in explaining the difference between both findings.

Third, the slight difference between the findings of this research and the prior findings was due to the type of respondents selected for this research. Most of the selected articles that inspected the employee engagement outcome were from the perspective of lower managerial level and non-managerial employees instead of the top managers. The selection of top managers as the key informants for this research had resulted in different findings because top managers were highly involved in daily operation of the business, dealt with human resource issues related to hiring, policy implantation, as well as controlling outputs and monitoring business performance. These makes their perspectives more relevant in respect of the employee engagement outcomes at the organizational level. In view of that, these reason explained the slight difference between both findings.

As a result, based on the overall discussion, a minor amendment to the preliminary conceptual framework was made for this research. The revised conceptual framework is presented in Figure 5.3. This revised conceptual framework serves as a basis for discussion to conclude the research problem of this research: *“How and why the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level could be established within the Malaysia SME business?”*

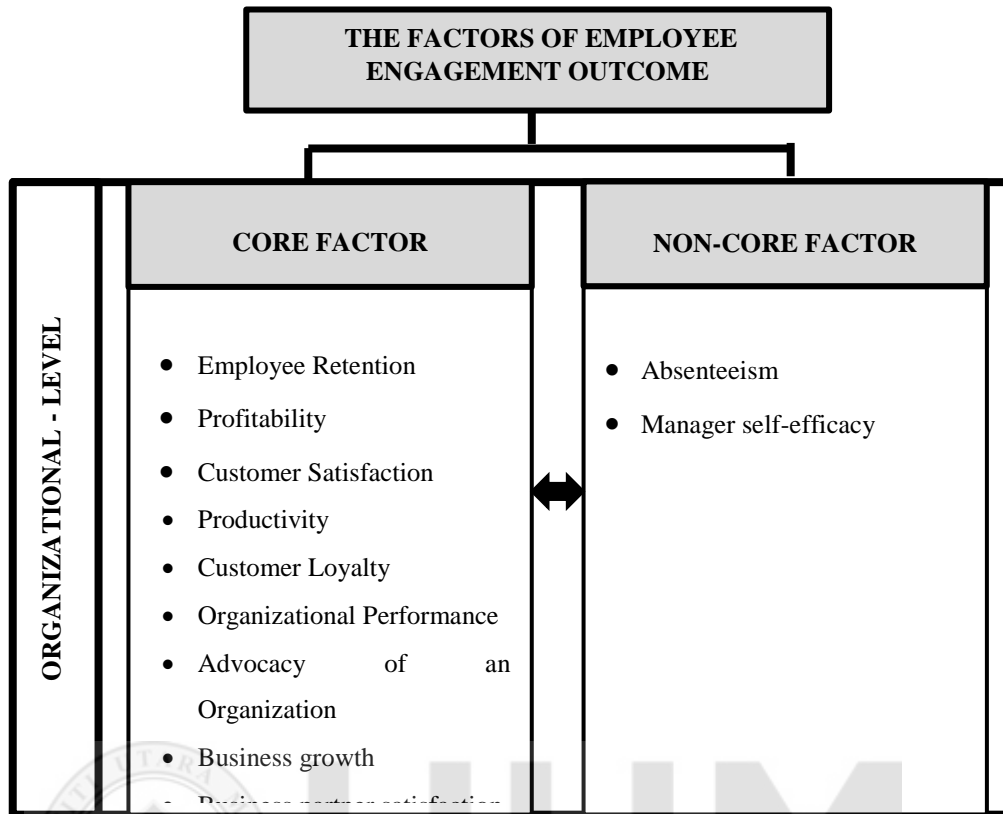


Figure 5.3
Revised conceptual framework based on findings of this research

Source: developed for this research

5.3 Research Implications

In the former sections, the conclusions on the three research issues had been fully addressed, followed by the conclusions on the research problem. Subsequently, the revised conceptual framework of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business based on the numerous amounts of discussion was presented. Now, the discussion on the implications of the findings of this research with respect to: (i) Methodology (Section 5.3.1); (ii) Theory (Section 5.3.2); (iii) Practice (Section 5.3.3); and (iv) Policy (Section 5.3.4) are offered.

5.3.1 Implications for methodology

This section presented the implications of this research for methodology. This research had two implications for methodology. First, this research was assumed to be the first rigorous and in-depth study in the paradigm of Malaysia SME business which deployed “qualitative convergent interviewing” technique to investigate the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level including the core factors and the non-core factors. In this research, the technique allowed the experts in SMEs specifically the managers holding top positions to express their opinions and share their experience. Their opinions, experiences and insights had answered the research problem and the three research issues in this research, thus subsequently led to the confirmation and the refinement of the preliminary conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2. This apparently provides important evidence on the capability of qualitative convergent interview research methodology.

Second, this research was assumed to be the first in this topic in which the sampling method that had been utilized was a combination of “purposive sampling and snowball sampling technique”. This combination of sampling techniques not only enabled opinions to be obtained from the target population but also enable the population that are inaccessible to be reached, hence strengthened the collected data as they added diversity to the sampling technique in this research. The implication for theory is discussed next.

5.3.2 Implication for theory

This research had resulted to two theoretical implications. First, the new knowledge generated by this research could inform the *theory building* related to the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, including the core factors and the non-core factors. It indeed proposed new ways in order to understand them. It is also provide an accurate, comprehensive lens through which to view the future research on employee engagement outcome. Consequently, this research contributes to advancing a theory of employee engagement by developing the two classifications of factors for the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level which is the core factors and the non-core factors. This research also further strengthening the SET and JD-R model as viable theoretical model about the employee engagement outcomes by confirming the 11 factors of the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

Second, this research was the first to provide evidence that business partner satisfaction is the new emerging factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. This research was also the first to provide confirmation that business partner satisfaction is the core factors, thus makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on the core factors of the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

5.3.3 Implications for practice

The previous section had presented the implication for theory of this research and now this section discusses on the implications for practice. The implications

of this research are targeted to managers holding top positions in SMEs and human resource practitioners who are seeking measures to optimize employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and for them to develop solid guidelines so that the implementation of focused and effective employee engagement intervention strategies particularly in SMEs could be made. Thus, this research has three implications for practice.

Firstly, the findings of this research recommended one way for organizational leaders particularly the managers holding top positions in SMEs to achieve organizational success. They would be able to do so by: (i) evaluating the employees' employee engagement needs in the context of organizational goals so as to determine the suitable type of employee engagement intervention. This could be implemented first by insuring all employees are clear about the guiding principles – organisation's vision, values, and goals – for organisational success; (ii) putting together technologies, processes, and programs in order to support, motivate and engage employees in improving their performance; and (iii) integrating measurement and evaluation that could visibly link employee engagement to high employee retention, profitability, customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, organizational performance, advocacy of an organization, business growth and business partner satisfaction. This could be achieved via engagement management model as recommended by Gruman and Saks (2011) which comprises of three components. It begins with a performance agreement followed by the second component that is an engagement facilitation, and finally, a performance and engagement appraisal and feedback. The performance agreement outlines the expectations of the

management from their employees. Next, the engagement facilitation focuses on job design, leadership, coaching, supervisor support, and training. The purpose is to assist employees and facilitate their engagement. Meanwhile, the performance and engagement appraisal and feedback emphasizes on perceptions of justice and trust as drivers of engagement. Each component contributes to employee engagement which in turn produces improved performance of the SME business.

Secondly, the findings of this research enabled human resource practitioners to recognize the relevance of employee engagement outcomes at the organizational level within the Human Resource Management field by becoming the “new best practice” human resource approach, and to be termed as “positive human resource management” as proposed by Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes, & Delbridge (2013). The adoption of human resource practices had been considerably diverse among SMEs (Daud & Mohammad, 2010), thus, the findings of this research could possibly assist human resource practitioners in SMEs to develop the performance implications through factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as the “new best practice” approach because investment in human resource management practices could result in higher firm performance (Ugheoke, Mohd Isa, and Wan Mohd Noor, 2015) and competitive advantage (Albrecht, Baker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). First, the human resource practitioners must ensure that formal rewards and recognitions programs are in place. Next, they must communicate appreciation by rewarding top performance that achieve business objectives and exemplify the values of the organisation. At the same time, it is vital to show to

all employees how their personal career potential can be realized. This could be achieved through coaching and mentoring programs from the respective managers (Miller, 2014).

In addition, human resource management has the recruitment and selection function, training and development function, performance management function, and compensation and benefits functions. Consequently, the findings of this research could be used to improvise these functions. Human resource practitioners could come out with their own practices on recruitment and selection criteria that could detect employee's level of engagement in order to achieve high employee retention. In connection with the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty factors, human resource practitioners could provide training to their employees on how to service customers to achieve higher level of satisfaction and gain their loyalty through better customer service. In addition, human resource practitioners could also design performance management practice measuring the employee engagement which promote high employee productivity and as a consequence to construct compensation and benefit scheme to those employees appropriately. This chapter continues with the discussion on the implication for policy presented in the following section.

5.3.4 Implication for policy

In this section, discussions on the implications for policy are offered. This research had one implication for policy. The research findings are useful to National SME Development Council (NSDC), the highest policy making body for SME development in Malaysia. The fundamental mission and concentration

for SME development is to enhance their contribution to the economy through the development of highly competitive and resilient SMEs. Therefore, the findings of this research could be incorporated in the National SME Development Blueprint, an annual action plan for SME development in terms of major programs that focus on the capacity building of SMEs especially in the area of human capital development. The Blueprint could include this implication in the policy and strategy related to improving and intensifying employee engagement in SMEs by focusing on the outcome at the organizational level. Given the fact that in general SMEs do not allocate any budget or having a very low budget allocation for human capital development, thus it is recommended for NSDC to collaborate with the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) which was formulated as part of Malaysia's National Transformation Programme (NTP). Its goal is to elevate the country towards becoming a developed nation country by 2020.

In regard to ETP, one of its policies is the Human Capital Development (HDC). This policy focuses on enhancing and addressing the human capital capabilities and needs. One of its programmes is to strengthen human resource management in SMEs by equipping Malaysian SMEs with the necessary tools to maintain their productivity and manage their workforce. This collaboration could be in term of aligning the Blueprint annual action plan with the programmes under ETP specifically in tackling human capital development in SMEs in which concentration is given to the area related to employee engagement outcomes.

Besides the Blueprint, SME Masterplan (2012-2020) is of equal importance to SMEs to help improve productivity and to accelerate their growth through the collaboration with the private sector. SME Corp. Malaysia (SME Corp.) is entrusted to proceed with the five focused programs outlined in the SME Masterplan (2012-2020). Thus, the findings of this research could assist on the implementations of these programs to be further refined especially for those that are related to human capital development and employee engagement intervention strategies. The findings of this research could also assist another related government agency responsible on development of SME, which is the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF). This agency could incorporate the findings of this research in its various schemes including training grant scheme, SME Training Needs Analysis (SMETNA) scheme and SME “On-the-Job” (SME OJT) scheme with the objective to improve higher performance among the SME business in Malaysia.

The programs contained under these schemes must be related to promoting and encouraging high employee engagement that could produce superior financial results (productivity, profitability, and business growth), better customer-related results (customer satisfaction and customer loyalty), excellent people-related results (employee retention and business partner satisfaction), and exclusive environment-related results (advocacy of an organization and organizational performance).

In conclusion, the findings from this research can be useful to be incorporated in the blueprint for SMEs, the SME Masterplan and to various schemes available

to SMEs to enhance their performance and competitiveness by assisting the policy-makers to design the governmental and the non-governmental sound support programs and various strategies in relations to the performance of the SMEs.

5.4 Limitations

The preceding section had presented the discussion on the implications of this research. In this sense, this section highlights the limitations of this research. Evidently, this research provided several new insights into the implications of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business. Nevertheless, these should be viewed with some limitations. In the Section 1.6 of Chapter 1, four delimitations of the research scope were explained. In the Section 3.3.2 of Chapter 3, four limitations of convergent interviewing technique were discussed. In addition, in Section 4.1.1 of Chapter, certain limitations associated to the data collection process were highlighted mainly due to the time involved in scheduling an interview. Nonetheless, these limitations should not be viewed as weaknesses as they were minimized by careful preparation and planning of the data collection and the interview process. In addition, the uniqueness of this study paired with its limitations, constituted that any results that were drawn would be confined to SME business only. In summary, despite of the emerged limitations, the main strengths of this research remained, for the limitations had not detracted from them because this research yield a valuable contributions to employee engagement methodology, theory, practice and policy.

5.5 Directions for Future Research

The earlier sections had presented the conclusions on the research issues, conclusions on the research problem, research implications and limitations. This section continues to highlight the avenues for possible future research. This research took a strong first step to explore factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business, including the core factors and the non-core factors. Although the findings of this research had answered some questions, they also led to the possibility of further research in the future. There are three possible directions for future research.

Firstly, this research could be the foundation to build other factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Hence, any future research should explore other relevant factors. The future investigation on other factors of employee engagement could shed more light on the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level especially in the context of SME business including the core factors and non-core factors.

Secondly, further research is required to validate and to generalize the findings to a broader settings. Therefore, similar research issues should be explored in different service sectors such as oil and gas, insurance, food and beverages, waste management, mining and quarrying, and telecommunications. This research could also be replicated in other developing countries such as

Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Pakistan, and India to confirm factors found in this research are similar or generic in SME business in other developing countries, which encompasses different culture and regulatory contexts.

Thirdly, in the future, additional research should also examine employee engagement outcome at the organizational level from the perspective of women entrepreneurs. There are 19.7% women entrepreneurs in Malaysia in which 91.7% of business establishment owned by women entrepreneurs are in services industry as reported in the Economic Census 2011. Hence, future research could investigate any similarities or differences in the factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level of SME business owners by gender assimilation to further enhance an understanding on the core factors and the non-core factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level within the Malaysia SME business.

In summary, there are three possible directions for further research. First, the future research are required to build other factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in the context of SME business. Next, they could be conducted to validate and to generalize the findings to a broader setting, and finally, future studies could examine employee engagement outcome at the organizational level from the perspective of women entrepreneurs.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the discussion and comparison of the literature with the findings of the three research issues were presented: (i) to confirm and disconfirm the preliminary conceptual framework of the research; and (ii) to identify the contribution this research makes in order to deepen the understanding of the research problem. Subsequently, conclusions on the research problem were presented to address the preliminary conceptual framework that had been established for this research. Furthermore, several possible implications for methodology, theory, practice and policy were offered. These were followed by the limitations of the present research. Finally, the directions for future research had been recommended.

In summary, this research had provided a structure for the understanding on factors of employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Indeed, this research had also explored the core factors and the non-core factors. The literature suggested that the factors for employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, including the core factors and the non-core factors in general business setting, were similar to the factors for employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in SME business. This theory building research showed that the 10 factors for employee engagement outcome at the organizational level as mentioned in the literature are consistent with the findings of this research.

Nevertheless, one newly emerging factor had been unveiled in this research. Conversely, in term of the core factors and the non-core factors, there was

dissimilarity between the two categories of factors in business setting and in SME business as shown in the preliminary conceptual framework and the revised conceptual framework. The revised conceptual framework that was built from theory and empirical research to represent this process had provided a foundation for future research on the factors for employee engagement outcome at the organizational level, as well as on the core factors and non-core factors which could add value to the researchers of human resource cum personnel department, organizational leaders, human resource practitioners, and other stakeholders with various different interests towards the organizational issues.



REFERENCES

- Aaker, D.A., and Day, G.S. (1990). *Marketing research* (4th ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley.
- Abduljlil, F.M., Yazam, M., and Ahmid, K.B. (2011). The mediating effect of HRM outcomes (employee retention) on the relationship between RRM practices and organizational performance. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 2(1), 75-79.
- Abu-Jarad, I.Y., Yusof, N., and Nikbin, D. (2011). A review paper on organizational culture and organizational performance. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 1(3), 26-46.
- AbuKhalifeh, A.N., and Mat Som, A.P. (2013). The antecedents affecting employee engagement and organizational performance. *Asian Social Science*, 9(7), 41-46.
- Acosta, H., Salanova, S., and Llorens, S. (2012). How organizational practices predict team work engagement: A role of organizational trust. *Ciencia and Trabajo*, 7-15.
- Acs, Z.J. (1999). The new American evolution. In Z.J. Acs (Ed.). *Are small firms important?* Boston, Massachusetts: Kluwer Academic, 1-30.
- Agarwal, U.A. (2014). Linking justice, trust, and innovative behaviour to work engagement. *Personnel Review*, 43(1), 41-73.
- Ahlowalia, S., Tiwary, D., and Jha, A. (2014). Employee engagement: A structured theoretical review. *The International Journal of Business and Management*, 2(6), 309-317.
- Al-Ansari, Y., Pervan, S., and Xu, J. (2013). Innovation and business performance of SMEs: The case of Dubai. *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 6(3), 162-80.

- Albdour, A.A., and Altarawneh, I.I. (2014). Employee engagement and organizational commitment: Evidence from Jordan. *International Journal of Business*, 19(2), 192-212.
- Albrecht, S.L. (Ed.). (2010). *Handbook of employee engagement: Perspectives, issues, research and practice*. Glos, England: Edward Elgar.
- Albrecht, S.L. (2012). The influence of job, team and organizational level resources on employee well-being, engagement, commitment and extra-role performance: test of a model. *International Journal of Manpower*, 33(7), 840-853.
- Albrecht, S.L., Baker, A.B., Gruman, J.A., Macey, W.H., and Saks, A.M. (2015). Employee engagement, human resource management practices and competitive advantage: an integrated approach. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 2(1), 7-35.
- Alfes, K., Truss, C., Soane, E., Rees, C., and Gatenby, M. (2013). Linking perceived supervisor support, perceived human resource management practices and individual performance: the mediating role of employee engagement. *Human Resource Management*, 52(6), 839-859.
- Alias, N.E., Mohd Noor, N., and Hassan, R. (2014). Examining the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between talent management practices and employee retention in the information and technology organizations in Malaysia. *Journal of Human Resources Management and Labor Studies*, 2(20), 227-242.
- Al-Shuaibi, A.S.I., Subramaniam, C., and Mohd. Shamsudin, F. (2014). The mediating influence of job satisfaction on the relationship between HR practices and cyberdeviance. *Journal of Marketing and Management*, 5(1), 105-119.
- Anderson, E.W., and Sullivan, M.W. (1993). The antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction. *Marketing Sciences*, 12, 125-143.
- Arksey, H., and Knight, P. (1999). *Interviewing for Social Scientist*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Armstrong, J. (1985). *Long range forecasting: From crystal ball to computer* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley.

- Atkinson, R., and Flint, J. (2001). *Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: snowball research strategies*. UK: Social Research Update.
- Bakker, A.B., and Demerouti, E. (2007). The job demands-resources model: state of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 309-328.
- Bakker, A.B., and Demerouti, E. (2008). Towards a model of work engagement. *Career Development International*, 13(3), 209-223.
- Bakker, A.B., and Leiter, M.P. (Eds.). (2010). *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Bakker, A.B., and Schaufeli, W.B. (2008). Positive organizational behaviour: engaged employees in flourishing organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 29, 147-154.
- Balakrishnan, C., Mashtan, D., and Chandra, V. (2013). Employee retention through employee engagement: A study at an Indian International Airport. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 2(8), 9-16.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: a social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs: NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: W.H. Freeman.
- Bank Negara Malaysia. (2005). *Status and performance of small and medium enterprises*, 19-35.
- Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 1(17), 99-120.
- Bates, S. (2004). Getting engaged. *HR Magazine*, 49(2), 44-51.

- Baumruk, R. (2004). The missing link: The role of employee engagement in business success. *Workspan*, 47, 48-52.
- Beaver, G., and Hutchings, K. (2005). Training and developing an age diverse workforce in SMEs: the need for a strategic approach. *Education and Training*, 47(8/9), 592-604.
- Bei, L.T., and Chiao, Y.C. (2001). An integrated model for the effects of perceived conduct, perceived service quality, and perceived price fairness on customer satisfaction and loyalty. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behaviour*, 14, 125-140.
- Bellenger, D.N., Bernhart, K.L., and Goldstucker, J.L. (1989). Qualitative research technique: focus group interviews. In T.J. Hayes and C.B. Tatham (Eds), *Focus Group Interviews: A Reader*. Chicago, Illinois: American Marketing Association.
- Bhatnagar, J. (2007). Talent management strategy of employee engagement in India ITES employees: Key to retention. *Employee Relations*, 29(6), 640-663.
- Biernacki, P., and Waldorf, D. (1981). Snowball sampling: problems and techniques of chain referral sampling. *Sociological Methods and Research*, 10(2), 141-163.
- Bigsten, A., and Gebreyesus, M. (2007). The small, the young, and the productive: Determinants of manufacturing firm growth in Ethiopia. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 55, 813-840.
- Blau, P. (1964). *Power and exchange in social life*. NY: John Wiley and Sons.
- Bonoma, T.V. (1985). Case-research in marketing: problems and opportunities and a process. *Journal of Marketing Research*, XXII, 199-208.
- Bowen, G.A. (2005). Preparing a qualitative research-based dissertation: Lesson learned. *The Qualitative Report*, 10(2), 208-222.
- Boz, I., Ayan, A., Eskin, I., and Kahraman, G. (2014). The effect of the level of self-monitoring on work engagement and emotional exhaustion: A

research on small and medium size enterprises. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 150, 1080-1089.

Brink, H.I.L. (1993). Validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Curationis*, 16(2), 35 - 38.

Browell, S. (2003). *Staff retention in a week*. London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton.

Cardon, M.S., and Stevens, C.E. (2004). Managing human resources in small organizations: What do we know? *Human Resource Management Review*, 14, 295-323.

Carpentar, C., and Suto, M. (2008). *Qualitative research for occupational and physical therapists: a practical guide*. Oxford, London: Blackwell.

Carson, D., Gilmore, A., Perry, C., and Gronhaug, K. (2001). *Qualitative marketing research*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Cavanagh, S. (1997). Content analysis: concepts, methods and applications. *Nurse Researcher*, 4, 5-16.

Chan, J.K.L. (2009). The empirical evidence of human resource practices by SMEs in accommodations: issues of training, benefits and staff retention. *TEAM Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 6(1), 46-60.

Chat-Uthai, M. (2013). Leveraging employee engagement surveys using the turnover stimulator approach: a case study of automotive enterprises in Thailand. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 8(6), 16-21.

Cheema, S., Akram, A., and Javed, F. (2015). Employee engagement and visionary leadership: impact on customer and employee satisfaction. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 7(2), 139-148.

Cheng, C.C., Chiu, S.I., Hu, H.Y., and Chang, Y.Y. (2011). A study on exploring the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty in the fast food industry: with relationship inertia as a mediator. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(13), 5118-5126.

- Choi, B.P. (2010). The U.S. property and liability insurance industry: Firm growth, size, and age. *Risk Management and Insurance Review*, 13(2), 207-224.
- Choo, L.S., Mat, N., and Kandayah, J. (2011). Perceptions of authentic leadership and its impact on employee engagement: A case of Malaysia semiconductor manufacturing firm. *Elixir Management Arts*, 41, 5871-5876.
- Churchill, G.A. Jr., and Suprenant, C. (1982). An investigation into the determinants of customer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19, 491-504.
- Coad, A., and Rao, R. (2008). Firm growth and R&D expenditure. *Economics of Innovation and New Technology*, 19(2), 127-145.
- CLC. (2004). *Driving performance and retention through employee engagement*. Washington, DC: Corporate Executive Board.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Crook, T.R., Todd, S.Y., Combs, J.G., and Woehr, D.J. (2011). Does human capital matter? A meta-analysis of the relationship between human capital and firm performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(3), 443-456.
- Cropanzo, R., and Mitchell, M.S. (2005). Social exchange theory: an interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, 31, 874-900.
- Culnan, M., and Blair, J. (1983). Human communication needs and organizational productivity: The potential impact of office automation. *Journal of American Society for Information Science*, 34(3), 215-221.
- Czarnowsky, M. (2008). *Learning's role in employee engagement: An ASTD research study*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.
- Dalton, D.R., and Mesch, D.J. (1991). On the extent and reduction of avoidable absenteeism: An assessment of absence policy provisions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 810-817.

- Daud, N., and Mohamad, P.N. (2010). Exploring human resource practices in small and medium-sized enterprises in Malaysia: An empirical analysis. *2010 International Conference on Education and Management Technology*, Cairo, 426-430. DOI: 10.1109/ICEMT.2010.5657625
- Davies, A., and Crane, A. (2010). Corporate social responsibility in small-and medium-size enterprises: Investigating employee engagement in fair trade companies. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 19(2), 126-139.
- Deci, E.L., and Ryan, R.M. (1989). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behaviour*. NY: Plenum.
- Deci, E.L., and Ryan, R.M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: human needs and the self-determination of behaviour. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 227-268.
- DeConinck, J.B. (2010). The influence of ethical climate on marketing employees’ job attitudes and behaviours. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(4), 384-391.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A.B., Nachreiner, F., and Schaufeli, W.B. (2001). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 499-512.
- Delery, J.E., and Doty, D.H. (1996). Modes of theorizing in strategic human resource management: Tests of universalistic, contingency, and configurational performance predictions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36, 802-835.
- Denzin, N.K., and Lincoln, Y.S. (2011). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, UK: Sage Publications.
- De Ruyter, K., and Scholl, N. (1998). Positioning qualitative market research: reflections from theory and practice. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 1(1), 7-14.

- Dick, B. (1990). *Convergent interviewing* (3rd ed.). Interchange resource document. Chappel Hill, QLD: Interchange
- Dick, B. (1998). *Convergent interviewing: A technique for qualitative data collection*. Retrieved from www.aral.com/au/resources/iview.html.
- Dollard, M.F., and Bakker, A.B. (2010). Psychological safety climate as a precursor to conducive work environments, psychological health problems and employee engagement. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 83, 579-599.
- Dragan, I., and Isaic-Maniu, A. (2013). Snowball sampling completion. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*, 5(2), 160-177.
- Droege, S.B., and Hoobler, J.M. (2003). Employee turnover and tacit knowledge diffusion: A network perspective. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 15(1), 50-64.
- Dyer, L., and Reeves, T. (1995). Human resource strategies and organizational performance: what do we know and where do we need to go? *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 6(3), 656-671.
- Elo, S., and Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107-115.
- Fauzi, N.F., Ahmad, F., and Gelaidan, H.M. (2013.) The employee retention status in paddy and rice industry in Malaysia. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 18(5), 642-650.
- Flemming, J.H., and Asplund, J. (2007). *Human sigma*. New York, NY: Gallup Press.
- Flick, U. (2002). *An introduction to qualitative research* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Fornell, C. (1992). A national customer satisfaction barometer: The Swedish experience. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(1), 6-21.

- Frank, F.D., Finnegan, R.P., and Taylor, C.R. (2004). The race for talent: Retaining and engaging workers in the 21st century. *Human Resource Planning*, 27(3), 12-25.
- Frederickson, B.L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotion. *American Psychologist*, 56, 218-226.
- Freeney, Y., and Fellenz, M.R. (2013). Work engagement, job design and the role of the social context at work: Exploring antecedents from a relational perspective. *Human Relations*, 66(11), 1427-1445.
- Gable, G.G. (1994). Integrating case study and survey research methods: an example in information systems. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 3(2), 112-126.
- Gangai, K.N. (2014). Absenteeism at workplace: What are the factors influencing to it? *International Journal of Organizational Behaviour and Management Perspectives*, 3(4), 1258-1265.
- Ganiyu, R.A., Uche, I.I., and Elizabeth, A.O. (2012). Is customer satisfaction an indication of customer loyalty? *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 2(7), 14-20.
- Ghafoor, A., Qureshi, T.M., Khan, M.A., and Hijazi, S.T. (2011). Transformational leadership, employee engagement and performance: mediating effect of psychological ownership. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5, 7391-7403.
- Gonring, M.P. (2008). Customer loyalty and employee engagement: An alignment for value. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 29(4), 29-40.
- Gorgievski, M.J., Moriano, J.A., and Bakker, A.B. (2014). Relating work engagement and workaholism to entrepreneurial performance. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 29(2), 106-121.
- Gray, D. (2004). *Doing research in the real world*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

- Griffeth, R.W., and Hom, P.W. (2001). *Retaining valued employees*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Griffin, B.L., Hall, N., and Watson, N. (2005). Health at work in small and medium sized enterprises: Issues of engagement. *Health Education, 105*(2), 126-141.
- Gruman, J.A., and Saks, A.M. (2011). Performance management and employee engagement. *Human Resource Management Review, 21*, 123-136.
- Guest, D., Michie, J., Sheehan, M., Conway, N., and Methochi, M. (2000). *Human resource management and performance: first findings from the future work study*. Chartered Institute of Personnel Development Issue Series, CIPD, London.
- Gummersson, E. (2000). *Qualitative methods in management research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Gupta, P., Guha, S., and Krishnaswami, S. (2013). Firm growth and its determinants. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 2*(1), 1-14.
- Guthrie, J., Yongvanich, K., and Ricceri, F. (2004). Using content analysis as a research method to inquire into intellectual capital reporting. *Journal of Intellectual Capital, 5*, 282-293.
- Habaradas, R.B. (2008). SME development and technology upgrading in Malaysia: lesson for the Philippines. *Journal of International Business Research, 7*(1), 89-116.
- Hackman, J.R., and Oldham, G.R. (1980). *Work redesign*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Hair, J.F., Bush, R.P., and Ortinau, d.J. (2009). *Marketing research in a digital information environment* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.
- Hakanen, J., Bakker, A.B., and Schaufeli, W.B. (2006). Burnout and work engagement among teachers. *The Journal of School Psychology, 43*, 495-513.

- Hakeem, I., and Gulzar, S. (2014). Employee engagement: An integrated theoretical review. *Abhinav National Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Commerce and Management*, 3(6), 84-94.
- Halstead, D., Hartman, D., and Schmidt, S.L. (1994). Multisource effects on the satisfaction formation process. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 22, 114-129.
- Handa, M., and Gulati, A. (2014). Employee engagement. *Journal of Management Research*, 14(1), 57-67.
- Handcock, M.S., and Gile, K.J. (2011). *On the concept of snowball sampling*. *Sociological Methodology*, 41(1), 367-371.
- Harter, J.K., Schmidt, F.L., and Hayes, T.L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 268-279.
- Hashim, M.K., and Wafa, S.A. (2002). *Small and medium sized enterprises in Malaysia development issues*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Prentice Hall.
- Hastings, K. (2000). *Evolution of international and marketing channels: An Australia-Asia perspectives*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Faculty of Business, University of Southern Queensland, Australia.
- Healy, M., and Perry, C. (2000). Comprehensive criteria to judge validity and reliability of qualitative research within the realism paradigm. *Qualitative Market Research*, 3(3), 118-126.
- Heger, B.K. (2007). Linking the employment value proposition (EVP) to employee engagement and business outcomes: Preliminary findings from a linkage research pilot study. *Organizational Development Journal*, 25(2), 121-233.
- Hendricks, V.M., Blanken, P., and Adriaans, N. (1992). *Snowball sampling: a pilot study on cocaine use*. Rotterdam: IVO.
- Henry, L. (2013). Intellectual capital in a recession: Evidence from UK SMEs. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 14(1), 84-101.

- Heryati, P., and Ramadhan, A.S. (2012).the influence of employee satisfaction in supporting employee work performance and retention moderated by the employee engagement factor of an institution. *International Journal of Economics and Management*, 6(1), 191-200.
- Hewitt Associates LLC. (2004). *Research brief: Employee engagement higher double digit growth companies*. Retrieved from www.hewitt.com.
- Hill, R., and Stewart, J. (2000). Human resource development in small organizations. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 24, 105-117.
- Hobfoll, S.E. (1989). Conservation of resources: a new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44, 513-524.
- Homburg, C., and Giering, A. (2001). Personal characteristics as moderators of the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty: An empirical analysis. *Psychology and Marketing*, 18(1), 43-66.
- Hoon, S.J., Kolb, J.A., Hee, L.U., and Kyoung, K.H. (2012). Role of transformational leadership in effective organizational knowledge creation practices: mediating effects of employees' work engagement. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 23(1), 65-101.
- Hsieh, H.F., and Shannon, S.E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15, 1277-1288.
- Huselid, M.A. (1995). The impact of human resource management practices on turnover, productivity, and corporate financial performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(3), 635-672.
- Hussain, I.A., Yunus, N., Ishak, N.A., and Daud, N. (2013). The influence of intention to leave towards employee engagement among young bankers in Malaysia. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 8(14), 89-97.
- Huynh, K.P., and Petrunia, R.J. (2010). Age effects, leverage, and firm growth. *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control*, 34(5), 1003-1013.
- Jauhari, V., Sehgal, R., and Sehgal, P. (2013). Talent management and employee engagement: Insights from Infotech Enterprises Ltd. *Journal of Services Research*, 13(1), 161-186.

- John, J. (2011). An analysis on the customer loyalty in telecom sector: Special reference to Bharath Sanchar Nigan Limited, India. *African Journal of Marketing Management*, 3(1), 1-5.
- Jones, J.R., and Harter, J.K. (2005). Race effects on the employee engagement-turnover intention relationship. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 11(2), 78-88.
- Jose, G., and Mampilly, S.R. (2012). Satisfaction with HR practices and employee engagement: A social exchange perspectives. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 4(7), 423-430.
- Juhdi, N., Pa'wan, F., and Hansaram, R.K. (2012). HR practices and turnover intention: The mediating roles of organizational commitment and organizational engagement in a selected region in Malaysia. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(15), 3002-3019.
- Kahn, W.A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692-724.
- Kaiser, K. (2010). Protecting respondent confidentiality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(11), 1632-1641.
- Kamil, B.A.M., Abdul Hamid, Z., Hashim, J., and Omar, A. (2013). A study on the implementation of talent management practices at Malaysian companies. *Asian Journal of Business and Management Sciences*, 1(4), 147-162.
- Kaplan, M., Ogut, E., Kaplan, and Aksay, K. (2012). The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment: The case of hospital employees. *World Journal of Management*, 4(1), 22-29.
- Kapoor, S., and Meachem, A. (2012). Employee engagement: A bond between employee and organization. *Amity Global Business Review*, 7, 14-21.
- Karatepe, O.M. (2012). High-performance work practices and hotel employee performance: the mediation of work engagement. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 32, 132-140.

- Kataria, A., Rastogi, R., and Garg, P. (2013). Organizational effectiveness as a function of employee engagement. *South Asian Journal of Management*, 20(4), 56-73.
- Kishore, K., Majumdar, M., and Kiran, V. (2012). Innovative HR strategies for SMEs. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 2(6), 1-8.
- Khalique, M., Isa, A.H.B.A., Shaari, J.A.N., and Ageel, A. (2011). Challenges faced by the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia: An intellectual capital perspective. *International Journal of Current Research*, 3(6), 398-340.
- Klein, W. (1986). Missed work and lost hours, May 1985. *Monthly Labour Review*, 109(11), 26-30.
- Koh, Y., Lee, S., and Boo, S. (2009). Impact of brand recognition and brand reputation on firm performances: U.S.-based multinational restaurant companies' perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28, 620-30.
- Kular, S., Gatenby, M., Rees, C., Soane, E., and Truss, K. (2008). *Employee engagement: A literature review*. Kingston Business School: Working Paper Series, 19.
- Leaker, D. (2008). Sickness absence from work in UK. *Office of National Statistics*, 2(11), 18-22.
- Lebans, M., and Euske, L. (2006). A conceptual and operational delineation of performance. *Business Performance Measurement*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Leiter, M.P., and Bakker, A.B. (2010). Work engagement: state of the art. In A.B. Bakker and M.P. Leiter (Eds.), *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Leiter, M.P., and Maslach, C. (1998). Burnout. In H. Friedman (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of mental health* (pp. 202-215). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Liamputtong, P. (2013). The science of words and the science of numbers: research methods as foundations for evidence-based practice in health.

In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Research method in health: foundations for evidence-based practice* (pp. 8-21). Australia: Oxford University Press.

Lincoln, Y. S. (1990). The making of a constructivist: A remembrance of transformation past. In E. Guba (Ed.), *The paradigm dialog* (pp.67-87). Newsbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Lincoln, Y.S., and Guba E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Berverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Little, B., and Little, P. (2006). Employee engagement: Conceptual issues. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, 10(1), 111-120.

Llorens, S., Bakker, A.B., Schaufeli, W.B., and Salanova, M. (2006). Testing the robustness of the job demands-resources model. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 13, 378-391.

Lockwood, N.R. (2007). Leveraging employee engagement for competitive advantage: HR's strategic role. *HR Magazine*, 52(3), 1-11.

Luthans, D., and Peterson, A.J. (2002). Employee engagement and manager self-efficacy. *Journal of Management Development*, 21(5), 376-387.

Macey, W.H., and Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 1, 3-30.

Macey, W.H., Schneider, B., Barbera, K., and Young, S.A. (2009). *Employee engagement: Tools for analysis, practice, and competitive advantage*. London, England: Blackwell.

Mahotra, N., Hall, J., Shaw, M., and Openheim, P. (2002). *Marketing research: An applied orientation* (2nd ed.). Sydney, AU: Prentice-Hall.

Malik, S.Z., and Khalid, N. (2016). Psychological contract breach, work engagement and turnover intention. *Pakistan Economic and Social Review*, 54(1), 37-54.

- Marchington, M., and Grugulis, I. (2000). "Best practice" human resource management: Perfect opportunity or dangerous illusion? *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11(4), 905-925.
- Marimuthu, M., Arokiasamy, L., and Ismail, M. (2009). Human capital development and its impact on firm performance: Evidence from developmental economics. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 2(8), 265-272.
- Marthichhio, J.J., and Jimeno, D. (2003). Employee absenteeism as an affective event. *Human Resource Management Review. Special Issue: Methodological Issues in Absenteeism Research and Human Resource Management and Entrepreneurship*, 13, 227-241.
- Martins, E.C., and Hester, W.J.M. (2012). Organizational and behavioral factors that influence knowledge retention. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 16(1), 77-96.
- Maslach, C., and Leiter, M.P. (1997). *The truth about burnout*. San Francisco, U.S.A.: Jossey Bass.
- Maslach, C., and Leiter, M.P. (2008). Early predictors of job burnout and engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(3), 498-512.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W.B., and Leiter, M.P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 397-422.
- Mason, C.M., and Griffin, M.A. (2003). Group task satisfaction: Applying the construct of job satisfaction to groups. *Small Group Research*, 33, 271-312.
- Matin, H.Z., Razavi, H.R., Azimy, L., and Emamgholizadeh, S. (2014). Is stress management related to workforce productivity? *Iranian Journal of Management Studies*, 7(1), 1-19.
- Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative content analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2). Retrieved January 31, 2016 from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1089/2385>
- McBain, R. (2007). The practice of engagement. *Strategy HR Review*, 6(6), 16-19.

- McCain, G.C. (1988). Content analysis: a method for studying clinical nursing problems. *Applied Nursing Research*, 1(3), 146-150.
- McDaniel, C., and Gates, R. (1991). *Contemporary Market Research*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing.
- McPhail, J. (2003). *Research methodology study book*. Toowoomba, Qld: Distance Education Centre.
- Merrill, R.M., Aldana, S.G., Pope, J.E., Anderson, D.R., Coberley, C.R., and Grossmeier, J.J. (2012). Self-rated job performance and absenteeism according to employee engagement, health behaviours, and physical health. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 55(1), 10-18.
- Miles, I., and Evans, J. (1987). *Demystifying social statistics*. London, UK: Pluto.
- Miles, M.B., and Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Miller, H.S. (2014). *The 10 best practices for enhance employee engagement*. The Henry Miller Group LLC, 1-18.
- Mobley, W. (1982). *Employee turnover: Causes, consequences, and control*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Mohd Harif, A.A., Chee, H.H., and Md Zali, S.K. (2011). Business financing for Malaysian SMEs: What are the banks' determining factors? *World Review of Business Research*, 1(3), 78-101.
- Mohd Harif, A.A., Chee, H.H., and Ahmad, M.I. (2013). The financial and non-financial performance indicators of paddy farmers' organizations in Kedah. *World Review of Business Research*, 3(1), 80-102.
- Morgan, D.L. (1997). *Focus Group as Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Morgan, D.L., and Kreugar, R.A. (1993). When to use focus groups and why. In D.L. Morgan (Ed.), *Successful focus groups: Advancing the state of the art*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mozammel, S., and Haan, P. (2016). Transformational leadership and employee engagement in the banking sector in Bangladesh. *The Journal of Developing Areas, suppl. Special Issue on Dubai Conference*, 50(6), 43-55.
- Muhammad, M.Z., Char, A.K., Yasoa', N.R., and Hassan, Z. (2010). Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) competing in the global business environment: A case of Malaysia. *International Business Research*, 3(1), 66-75.
- Mullins, L.J. (2013). *Management and organizational behaviour* (10th ed.). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.
- Muthuveloo, R., Basbous, O.K., Teoh, A.P. and Choi, S.L. (2013). Antecedents of employee engagement in the manufacturing sector. *American Journal of Applied Sciences*, 10(12), 1546-1552.
- Nadim, A.G., and Khan, M.A. (2013). The moderating role of employee engagement on the relationship of determinants of job satisfaction, and job satisfaction itself. *Business and Management Review*, 2(11), 1-12.
- Nair, G.S., and Reige, A. (1995). *Using convergent interviewing to develop the research problem of a postgraduate thesis*. Proceedings in Marketing Educators and Researchers International Conference, Griffith University, Gold coast, Australia, 496-508.
- Nakagawa, R. (2012). The policy approach in promoting small and medium sized enterprises in Japan. *International Business and Economics Research Journal*, 11(10), 1087-1098.
- Neuman, W.L. (2006). *Social research methods* (6th ed.). Boston, USA: Pearson Education.
- Newman, D., and Harrison, D. (2008). "Been there, bottled that: Are state and behavioural work engagement new and useful construct "wines". *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 1, 31-36.

- Niresh, J.A., and Velnampy, T. (2014). Firm size and profitability: A study of listed manufacturing firms in Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 9(4), 57-64.
- Normah, M.A. (2007). SMEs: building blocks for economic growth. *Department of Statistics Malaysia*, 1, 1-13.
- NSDC. (2010). *SME Annual Report 2009/2010*. Transformation to the New Economic Model, N.S.D. Council, Kuala Lumpur.
- NSDC. (2013). *Guidelines for New SME Definition*. SME Corp. Malaysia Secretariat to the National SME Development Council
- OECD. (2013). *Economic outlook for Southeast Asia, China, and India 2014: Beyond the middle-income trap*. OECD. Retrieved from [www.oecd.org/site/seao/Poket %20Edition%20SAE\) 2014.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/site/seao/Poket%20Edition%20SAE%202014.pdf).
- Okeye, P.V.C., and Ezejiofor, R.A. (2013). The effect of human resources development on organizational productivity. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 3(10), 250-268.
- Oliver, R.L. (1980). A cognitive model of antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17, 460-469.
- Oliver, R.L. (1997). *Satisfaction: A behavioural perspectives on the consumer*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Omar, S.S., Arokiasamy, L., and Ismail, M. (2009). The background and challenges faced by the small medium enterprises. A human resource development perspective. *Journal of Business and Management*, 4(10), 192-199.
- Othman, N., and Mohd Nasurdin, A. (2011). Work engagement of Malaysian nurses: Exploring the impact of hope and resilience. *International Journal of Social, Management, Economics and Business Engineering*, 5(12), 351-355.
- Padgett, D.K. (1998). *Qualitative methods in social work research: Challenges and rewards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Padgett, D.K. (2008). *Qualitative methods in social work research*. Los Angeles, USA: Sage Publications.
- Pălălaoia, W. (2011). The analysis of profitability in the iron and steel industry. *Economy Transdisciplinary Cognition*, 14(1), 215-227.
- Palinkas, L.A., Horwitz, S.M., Hoagwood, K., Green, C.A., Wisdom, P.A., and Duan, N. (2013). *Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research*. New York: Springer Science and Business Media.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Patton, E., and Johns, G. (2007). Women's absenteeism in the popular press: Evidence for a gender specific absence culture. *Human Relations*, 60, 1579-1612.
- Perry, C. (1998). Process of case study research methodology for postgraduate research in marketing. *The European Journal of Marketing*, 32(9/10), 785-802.
- Platis, C., Reklitis, P., and Zimeras, S. (2015). Relation between job satisfaction and job performance in healthcare services. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 175, 480-487.
- Poon, J.M.L. (2013). Relationships among perceived career support, affective commitment and work engagement. *International Journal of Psychology*, 48(6), 1-8.
- Popli, S., and Rizvi, I.A., (2015). Exploring the relationship between service orientation, employee engagement and perceived leadership style: A study of managers in the private service sector organizations in India. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 29(1), 70-79.

- Pugh, S. D., and Dietz, J. (2008). Employee engagement at the organizational level of analysis. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 1, 45-48.
- Radam, A., Abu, U.M., and Abdullah, A.M. (2008). Technical efficiency of SMEs in Malaysia: A stochastic frontier production model. *International Journal of Economics and Management*, 2(2), 395-408.
- Ram, P. (2013). Relationship between job satisfaction and job performance in the public section: A case study for India. *International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences*, 2(2), 16-35.
- Ram, P., Bhargavi, S.G., and Prabhakar, G.V. (2011). Work environment, service climate, and customer satisfaction: Examining theoretical and empirical connections. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(20), 121-132.
- Ramirez, Y., and Nembhard, D. (2004). Measuring knowledge worker productivity: A taxonomy. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 5(4), 602-628.
- Rao, S., and Perry, C. (2003). Converging interviewing to build a theory in under-researched areas: principles and an example investigation of Internet usage in inter-firm relationships. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 6(4), 236-247.
- Reichheld, F.F., and Sasser, W.E. (1990). Zero defections: Quality comes to services. *Harvard Business Review*, 68, 105-111.
- Ricardo, R., and Wade, D. (2001). *Corporate performance management: How to build a better organization through measurement driven strategies alignment*. Boston, MA: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Rich, B.L. (2006). *Job engagement: Construct validation and relationships with job satisfaction, job involvement and intrinsic motivation*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, Tallahassee, FL.
- Richman, A. (2006). Everyone wants an engaged workforce how you can create it? *Workspan*, 49, 36-39.

- Riege, A., and Nair, G. (2004). The diversity of converging interviewing: applications for early researchers and postgraduate students. *The Marketing Review*, 4(1), 73-85.
- Robbins, S.P. (2003). *Organizational behaviour* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Robertson, I., and Cooper, C.L. (2010). Full engagement: The integration of employee engagement and psychological well-being. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 31(4), 324-336.
- Robertson-Smith, G., and Markwick, C. (2009). *Employee engagement: A review of current thinking*. Brighton, UK: Institute for Employee Studies (IES).
- Robinson, D., Perryman, S., and Hayday, S. (2004). *The drivers of employee engagement*. Brighton, UK: Institute for Employment Studies.
- Rothbard, N.P. (2001). Enriching or depleting? The dynamics of engagement in work and family roles. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46, 655-684.
- Rubel, M.R.B., and Mui, D.H.K. (2013). Perceived support and employee performance: the mediating role of employee engagement. *Life Science Journal*, 10(4), 2557-2567.
- Russel, J.A. (1980). A circumplex model of affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39(6), 1161-1178.
- Russel, J.A. (2003). Core affect and the psychological construction of emotion. *Psychological Review*, 110, 145-172.
- Saks, A.M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21(7), 600-619.
- Salanova, M., Agut, S., and Peiró, J.M. (2005). Linking organizational resources and work engagement to employee performance and customer loyalty: the mediation of service climate. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(6), 1217-1227.

- Salleh, A.S., and Ndubisi, N.O. (2006). An evaluation of SME development in Malaysia. *International Review of Business Research Papers*, 2(1), 1-14.
- Samad, N.A. (2007). Positioning Malaysian SMEs in the global. *Proceedings of Persidangan Kebangsaan IKS 2007*, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia: Universiti Utara Malaysia.
- Sanda, A., and Ntisful, A. (2013, September). Dynamics of employee retention among SMEs in a developing economy. *Proceedings of the 2013 International Conference on Business Administration, Marketing and Economics*, Venice, IT.
- Sandelowski, M. (1995). Sample size in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 18, 179-183.
- Sarwar, S., and Abugre, J. (2013). Does provision of feedback increase work engagement and reduce cynicism among employee? *The Business and Management Review*, 3(4), 20-31.
- Schaufeli, W.B. (2013). What is engagement? In C. Truss, K. Alfes, R. Delbridge, A. Shantz, and E. Soane (Eds.), *Employee engagement in theory and practices*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Schaufeli, W.B., and Bakker, A.B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: a multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25, 293-315.
- Schaufeli, W.B., and Bakker, A.B. (2010). Defining and measuring work engagement: Bringing clarity to the concept. In A. B. Bakker and M.P. Leiter (Eds.), *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research* (p.10). New York, NY: Madison Avenue.
- Schaufeli, W.B., Bakker, A.B., and Van Rhenen, W. (2009). How changes in job demands and resources predict burnout, work engagement, and sickness absenteeism. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30, 893-917.
- Schaufeli, W.B., Martinez, I.M., Pinto, A.M., Salanova, M., and Bakker, A.B. (2002). Burnout and engagement in university students a cross-national study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 33(5), 464-481.

- Shmailan, A.S. (2016). The relationship between job satisfaction, job performance and employee engagement: An explorative study. *Business Management and Economics*, 4(1), 1-8.
- Seiling, J.G. (2001). Organizational advocacy. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, 24(1), 42-45.
- Sekaran, U. (2006). *Research Method for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley.
- Shah, S.H.A., and Ali, A.R.M. (2011). *Entrepreneurship* (2nd ed.). Shah Alam, Malaysia: Oxford Fajar.
- Sharma, J., and Magotra, I. (2013). Employee absenteeism in manufacturing industry of Jammu: An analysis of precursors. *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*, 5(2), 175-193.
- Shipman, M.D. (1997). *The limitations of social research* (4th ed.). New York: NY: Longman.
- Shuck, B., and Reio, G. (2013). Employee engagement and well-being: A moderation model and implications for practice. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 21(1), 43-58.
- Shuck, B., Reio, G., and Rocco, T.S. (2011). Employee engagement: An examination of antecedents and outcome variables. *Human Resource Development International*, 14, 427-445.
- Shuck, B., and Wollard, K. (2010). Employee engagement and HRD: A seminal review of the foundations. *Human Resource Development Review*, 9(1), 89-110.
- Shuck, B., Zigarmi, D., and Owen, J. (2015). Psychological needs, engagement, and work intention: A Bayesian multi-measurement mediation approach and implications for HRD. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 39(1), 2-21.
- Shusha, A. (2013). The role of psychological engagement in relationship between perceived organizational support and withdrawal behaviour and intentions: An empirical study on small industries in Egypt. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 8(16), 22-29.

- Singh, R., and Mohanty, M. (2012). Impact of training practices on employee productivity: A comparative study. *Inter-science Management Review*, 2(2), 87-92.
- Slåtten, T., and Mehmetoglu, M. (2011). Antecedents and effects of engaged frontline employees: a study from the hospitality industry. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, 21(1), 88-107.
- SME Corp Malaysia. *Programmes*. Retrieved from www.smecorp.my/vn2/programmes.
- SME Corp Malaysia. *Economic Census 2011 Profile of SMEs*. Retrieved from <http://www.smecorp.gov.my/index.php/en/policies/2015-12-21-09-09-49/sme-statistics>
- Soanne, E., Shantz, A., Alfes, K., Truss, C., Rees, C, and Gatenby, M. (2013). The association of meaningfulness, well-being, and engagement with absenteeism: a moderated mediation model. *Human Resource Management*, 52(3), 441-456.
- Srivastava, A.K. (2008). Effect of perceived work environment on employees' job behavior and organizational effectiveness. *Journal of Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, 34(1), 47-55.
- Stake, R.E. (1994). Case studies. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Strauss, A., and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Suharti, L., and Suliyanto, D. (2012). The effect of organizational culture and leadership style toward employee engagement and their impacts toward employee loyalty. *World Review of Business Research*, 2(5), 128-139.
- Sulea, C., Virga, D., Maricutoiu, L., Schaufeli, W., Dumitru, C.Z., and Sava, F.A. (2012). Work engagement as mediator between job characteristics

and positive and negative extra-role behaviours. *Career Development International*, 17(3), 188-207.

Sundaray, B.K. (2011). Employee engagement: A drivers of organizational effectiveness. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 3(8), 53-59.

Swarnalatha, C., and Prasanna, T.S. (2013). Employee engagement: A review of literature. *International Journal of Management Research and Development*, 3(1), 52-61.

Swetha, G., and Kumar, D.P. (2014). Implications of employee engagement on critical business outcomes: An empirical evidence. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1, 60-68.

Szymanski, D.M., and Henard, D.H. (2001). Customer satisfaction: A meta-analysis of the empirical evidence. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 29(1), 16-35.

Tee, C. W. (2013). Talent retention: the pressures in Malaysia SMEs. *American Journal of Economics*, 3, 35-40.

Thomas, A., and MacDiarmid, A. (2004). Encouraging employee engagement. *CMA Management*, 78(4), 14-15.

Tladinyane, R., and van der Merwe, M. (2016). Career adaptability and employee engagement of adults employed in an insurance company: an exploratory study. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(1), 1-9.

Towers Perrin. (2003). *Working today: Understanding what drives employee engagement*. Towers Perrin. Available at www.towersperrin.com.

Towers Perrin. (2007). *Closing the engagement gap: A road map for driving superior business performance*. Retrieved from www.towersperrin.com.

Towers Watson (2012). *Engagement at risk: Driving strong performance in a volatile global environment*. Retrieved from www.towerswatson.com.

- Trochim, W.M. K., and Donnelly, J.P. (2008). *The Research Method Knowledge Base*. Mason, OH; Cengage Learning.
- Truss, C., Shantz, A., Soane, F., Alfes, K., and Delbridge, R. (2013). Employee engagement, organizational performance and individual well-being: Exploring the evidence, developing the theory. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(14), 2657-2669.
- Tse, D.K., and Peter, C.W. (1988). Models of customer satisfaction formation: An extension. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25, 204-212.
- Ugheoke, S.O., Mohd Isa, M.F., and Wan Mohd Noor, W.S. (2015). Antecedents of strategic human resource management practices on intangible firm performance: Analytical investigation on SMEs. *Asian Social Science*, 11(13), 33-44.
- Vaijayanthimala, P., and Vijakumar, A. (2014). Analysis of operating performance of Indian cement industry. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 3(5), 88-100.
- Wafa, S.A., Noordin, R., and Kim-Man, M. (2005). Strategy and performance of small and medium-size enterprises in Malaysia. *Proceedings of the International Conference in Economics and Finance (ICEF)*, Labuan, Malaysia: University Malaysia Sabah.
- Waiyahong, N. (2012). Information provision for Thai small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). *Asia Pacific Journal of Library and Information Science*, 2(2), 117-125.
- Waldman, J.D., and Arora, S. (2004). Measuring retention rather than turnover: A different and complementary HR calculus. *Human Resource Planning*, 27(3), 6-9.
- Walsh, G., Evanshitzky, H., and Wunderlich, M. (2008). Identification and analysis of moderator variables: Investigating the customer satisfaction-loyalty link. *European Journal of Marketing*, 42(9), 977-1004
- Wang, H.J., Lu, C.Q., and Siu, O.L. (2014). Job insecurity and job performance: the moderating role of organizational justice and the mediating role of work engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(4), 1249-1258.

- Wang, Y. (2011). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement: A case study of five-star hotels, Malaysia. *TEAM Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 8(1), 30-43.
- Welch, M. (2011). The evolution of the employee engagement concept: Communication implications. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 16(4), 328-346.
- Westbrook, R.A., and Oliver, R.L. (1991). The dimensionality of consumption emotion patterns and customer satisfaction. *Journal of consumer Research*, 18, 84-96.
- White, G.I., Sondhi, A.C., and Fried, D. (2003). *The analysis and use of financial statements* (3rd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.
- Woodward, T. (1997). *Identifying and Measuring customers-based brand equity and its elements for a service industry*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.
- Xanthopoulou, D., Bakker, A.B., Demerouti, E., and Schaufeli, W.B. (2007). The role of personal resources in the job demand resources model. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 14(2), 121-141.
- Xanthopoulou, D., Bakker, A.B., Demerouti, E., and Schaufeli, W.B. (2009). Reciprocal relationships between job resources, personal resources, and work engagement. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 74, 235-244.
- Xu, J., and Thomas, H.C. (2011). How can leaders achieve high employee engagement? *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, 32(4), 399-416.
- Yahya, A.Z., Othman, M.S., and Shamsuri, A.L.S. (2012). The impact of training on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) performance. *Journal of Professional Management*, 2(1), 14-25.
- Yazdanfar, D. (2013). Profitability determinants among micro firms: Evidence from Swedish data. *International Journal of Managerial Finance*, 9(2), 150-160.
- Yin, R.K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods. Applied social research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Yong, S.M., Suhaimi, M.N., Abdullah, S.S., Abdul, S.R., and Nik Mat, N.K. (2013). Employee engagement: A study from the private sector in Malaysia. *Human Resource Management Research*, 3(1), 43-48.
- Young, R.L. (2011). *Engagement: Defining and measuring the construct*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama, Melbourne, USA.
- Zigarmi, D., Nimon, K., Houson, D., Witt, D., and Diehl, J. (2009). Beyond engagement: Toward a framework and operational definition for employee work passion. *Human Resource Development Review*, 8(3), 300-326.
- Zhu, W., Avolio, B.J., and Walumba, F.O. (2009). Moderating role of follower characteristics with transformational leadership and follower work engagement. *Group and Organization Management*, 34, 590-619.



UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Invitation Letter

Safiah Rashid

(Matric No.: 92778)

Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business (OYAGSB)

Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)

06010 Sintok, Kedah

Tel: 012 305 7432

Email: safiah_rashid@yahoo.com

<Interviewee Name>

<Address>

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Research Project Title:

The Factors of Employee Engagement within Malaysia SME Business: An Exploratory Qualitative Inquiry

I am undertaking a research project in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) in Human Resource in the Othman Yeop Abdullah (OYA) Graduate School of Business at UUM under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr Mohd Amy Azhar Haji Mohd Harif.

I am conducting interviews to investigate employee engagement within Malaysia SME business. This research aims to better understand the top manager's experiences and perceptions in relation to employee engagement outcome at the organizational level. Employee engagement can be defined as "an individual employee's positive work-related state characterized by combination of or more component namely cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components directed toward desired organizational outcomes".

Therefore, I would like to invite the top manager of SMEs in Malaysia preferable the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or the Head of Human Resource to participate in this research. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. The participant may withdraw from this research project at any time without giving a reason. He/she also has the option to withdraw any input that may identify him/her.

The interview consists of a set of questions which will take approximately 30 minutes. The participant will be required to answer questions in regards to his/her experiences in his/her job on employee engagement practices and outcomes in the company. The participant will also be asked for some demographic information.

The participant input consists of vital information regarding the participant experiences on employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in his/her company. The participant's permission will be asked to tape record the interview session, to enable me to accurately document the information the participant convey. If at any time during the interview, the participant wishes to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, he/she is free to do so.

All data collected in the interview is confidential and anonymous. For the secrecy of the company and the participant, the company and the participant name will be disguised in the final research report along with any other significant details, in order to achieve anonymity.

At the conclusion of this research project, a summary of the results and associated reports (only a summary of the participant company) will be made available should the participant request for it. The final results of the interview will be reported in a dissertation to be submitted for Ms. Safiah's DBA degree, and as appropriate, in papers for presentation at conferences or for publication in scientific journals.

Should you require any clarification and/or additional information, please do not hesitate to inform me at safiah_rashid@yahoo.com or by calling or Whatsapp me at **012 3057432**.

To participate in this research project, kindly contact the researcher at the above mentioned contact information. The date, time and venue of the interview will be set according to the participant preference. The consent form will be signed by the participant before the interview session.

I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration to participate in this research project.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Safiah Rashid

Appendix 2: Interview Protocol of Convergent Interview



Safiah Rashid

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)

Tel: 012 3057432

safiah_rashid@yahoo.com

Employee Engagement Outcome at Organizational-Level within Malaysia SME Business

Interview Protocol of Convergent Interview

Date :...../...../..... Time :.....am/pm
Company :.....
Interviewee :.....
Position :.....

Introduction

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. You will be required to answer questions in regards to your experiences in your job and the human resource practice in your company.

Purpose of the Research Project

This research project investigates employee engagement within Malaysia SME business. This research aims to better understand the top manager's experiences and perceptions in relations to employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

Ethical Concerns

All data collected in this interview is confidential and anonymous. For the safety benefits of your company and yourself, the company and your name will be disguised in the final research report along with any other significant details, in order to achieve anonymity.

Your permission to tape record this interview is required. The recorded interview will assist me with my data analysis. Please note that you are free to push “pause” button of the tape recorder at any time during the interview and you can terminate the interview at any time that you wish.

Do you have further question regarding the aim or procedure of this interview?

Benefits Associated with Participation

There is no direct benefits for participating in this research project but your input will provide vital information regarding the specific outcomes of employee engagement in Malaysia’s SME business.

The final results of the interview will be reported in a dissertation to be submitted for Ms. Safiah’s DBA degree, and as appropriate, in papers for presentation at conferences or for publication in scientific journals.

Your cooperation and generosity in participating in this study is highly valued and appreciated.

Thank you,

Safiah Rashid
92778
DBA

Interview Questions

Question 1:

Can you please tell me about your experience in getting your employees engage with their work/tasks?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Question 2:

Tell me briefly how employee engagement assists your organization?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Question 3:

What are the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in your organization?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Question 4:

From the factors that you have mentioned, which can be classified as core factors?

.....
.....
.....

Question 5:

From the factors that you have mentioned, which can be classified as non-core factors?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Question 6:

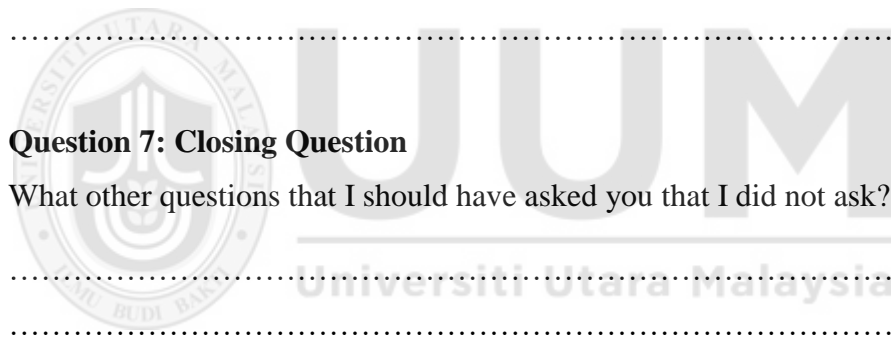
Who else should I talk to about this topic?

.....
.....
.....

Question 7: Closing Question

What other questions that I should have asked you that I did not ask?

.....
.....
.....



Thank you for your valuable time.

Appendix 3: Modified Interview Protocol of Convergent Interview



Safiah Rashid
Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
Tel: 012 3057432
safiah_rashid@yahoo.com

Employee Engagement Outcome at Organizational-Level within Malaysia SME Business

Interview Protocol of Convergent Interview

Date :...../...../..... Time :.....am/pm

Company :.....
Universiti Utara Malaysia

Interviewee :.....

Position :.....

Introduction

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. You will be required to answer questions in regards to your experiences in your job and the human resource practice in your company.

Purpose of the Research Project

This research project investigates employee engagement within Malaysia SME business. This research aims to better understand the top manager's experiences and perceptions in relations to employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

Ethical Concerns

All data collected in this interview is confidential and anonymous. For the safety benefits of your company and yourself, the company and your name will be disguised in the final research report along with any other significant details, in order to achieve anonymity.

Your permission to tape record this interview is required. The recorded interview will assist me with my data analysis. Please note that you are free to push “pause” button of the tape recorder at any time during the interview and you can terminate the interview at any time that you wish.

Do you have further question regarding the aim or procedure of this interview?

Benefits Associated with Participation

There is no direct benefits for participating in this research project but your input will provide vital information regarding the specific outcomes of employee engagement in Malaysia’s SME business.

The final results of the interview will be reported in a dissertation to be submitted for Ms. Safiah’s DBA degree, and as appropriate, in papers for presentation at conferences or for publication in scientific journals.

Your cooperation and generosity in participating in this study is highly valued and appreciated.

Thank you,

Safiah Rashid
92778
DBA

Interview Questions

Question 1:

Can you please tell me about your experience in getting your employees engage with their work/tasks?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Question 2:

Tell me briefly how employee engagement assists your organization?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....



Question 3:

What are the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in your organization?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Question 4:

From the factors that you have mentioned, which can be classified as core factors?

.....

.....
.....

Question 5:

From the factors that you have mentioned, which can be classified as non-core factors?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Question 6:

Do you agree that business partners' satisfaction is the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level?

Can this factor be classified as core factor?

.....
.....
.....

Question 7:

Do agree that the following factors are not the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and why?

- (1) Employee retention;
- (2) Absenteeism;
- (3) Customer loyalty; and
- (4) Advocacy an organization.

Which factors can be classified as core factor(s) and non-core factor(s)?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Question 8:

Who else should I talk to about this topic?

.....
.....
.....

Question 9: Closing Question

What other questions that I should have asked you that I did not ask?

.....
.....
.....
.....



UUM

Thank you for your valuable time.

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Appendix 4: Consent to Participate in a Research Project Form



Consent to Participate in a Research Project Universiti Utara Malaysia

Title of the Research: Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational level within Malaysia SME Business

Investigator:
Name: Safiah Rashid
School: Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business (OYAGSB)
Tel: 012 305 7432
Email: safiah_rashid@yahoo.com

Supervisor:
Name: Associate Prof Dr Mohd Amy Azhar Mohd Harif
School: College of Business
Tel: 019 555 9939
Email: amyazhar@uum.edu.my

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. You will be required to answer questions in regards to your experiences in your job and the human resource practice in your company.

Purpose of the Research Project

This research project investigates employee engagement outcome within Malaysia SME business. This research aims to better understand the top manager's experiences and perceptions in relations to employee engagement outcome at the organizational level.

Ethical Concerns

All data collected in this interview is confidential and anonymous. For the safety benefits of your company and yourself, the company and your name will be disguised in the final research report along with any other significant details, in order to achieve anonymity.

Your permission to tape record this interview is required. The recorded interview will assist me with my data analysis. Please note that you are free to push “pause” button of the tape recorder at any time during the interview and you can terminate the interview at any time that you wish.

Benefits Associated with Participation

There is no direct benefits for participating in this research project but your input will provide vital information regarding the specific outcomes of employee engagement in Malaysia’s SME business.

The final results of the interview will be reported in a dissertation to be submitted for Ms. Safiah’s DBA degree, and as appropriate, in papers for presentation at conferences or for publication in scientific journals.

Voluntary Consent by Participant

By signing below, you indicate that:

- This study has been explained to you;
- You have read this document or it has been read to you;
- Your questions about this research project have been answered;
- You are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it;
- You voluntarily agree to participate in the research entitled: *Employee Engagement Outcome at the Organizational level within Malaysia SME Business*

Participant’s Name: _____

Position: _____

Participant’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Appendix 5: Seven Steps to Facilitate Effective Communication

<p>Step 1 Contacting the respondents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The potential respondents will be contacted. ▪ An overview of the research will be explained, purpose of the interview will be clarified. ▪ If agreed to participate, the venue and time will be decided (Carson et al, 2001).
<p>Step 2 Time and setting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The length of the interview session will be informed. ▪ Face-to-face interviews will be carried out. ▪ Confirmation of the interview time will be confirmed the day prior to the scheduled interview.
<p>Step 3 Establishing rapport and neutrality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarification of the preliminary issues will be made at the start of the interview session (Carson et al, 2001). ▪ A briefs explanation on the aim of the research will be given after the researcher introducing herself. ▪ Confidentiality and anonymity of the interviews will be informed. ▪ Permission to tape record the interview will be sought.
<p>Step 4 Opening question</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To start the interview with opening question (Nair & Reige, 1995).
<p>Step 5 Probe questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Probe questions will be prepared based on the input from the first interview for the subsequent interview based on the proceeding interview.
<p>Step 6 Inviting a summary</p>	<p>The researcher starts closure by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ inviting the interviewee to highlight the key points; ▪ indicating their relative priority and then questions to indicate priority (Dick, 1990),
<p>Step 7 Concluding the interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The interviewer will summarize the interview. ▪ End the session ends by thanking the interviewee for the cooperation given and offering a copy of the data analysis. ▪ Reassure the interviewee of the confidentiality and anonymity of the interview.

Source: adaptation from Dick (1990) and developed for this research


Appendix 6: Results of Convergent Interviews

Respondent	Questions				
	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
	What are the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level in your organization?	From the factors that you have mentioned, which can be classified as core factors?	From the factors that you have mentioned, which can be classified as non-core factors?	Do you agree that business partners' satisfaction is the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level? Can this factor be classified as a core factor?	Do you agree that the following factors are not the employee engagement outcome at the organizational level and why? (1) Employee retention; (2) absenteeism; (3) customer loyalty; (4) advocacy of an organization. Which factors can be classified as core factor(s) and non-core factor(s)?
R01SEC01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give us confidence to embark into new business • Confidence in the staff, the staff can do the task • Profit is good • Customer satisfaction increase, no complaints • Productivity increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business growth • Profitability • Customer satisfaction • Productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager self-efficacy 		
R02SEC02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No problem with absenteeism • Employee retention is one of the outcomes • Customer satisfied with our service • Profitability of the company • Productivity increase, less mistakes • Business grow • Working environment is good and harmonious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Profitability • Productivity • Organizational performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee retention • Absenteeism • Business growth 		
R03SEC03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity increase • Having engaged employees, customers will be happy and less customer complaints • Harmonious working environment, employees get along very well • Business growth or continuity of business • Profitability is the ultimate outcome, no leakages • Business partners are satisfied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity • Customer satisfaction • Profitability • Business growth • Organizational performance • Business partner satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 		
R04SEC04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No problem on relationship with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Business growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absenteeism • Organizational 		

	<p>customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With employee engagement, no problem with absenteeism • Have a harmonious situation in the office • Business is able to continue and grow • A better productivity, mistakes are reduced • Sales increase, better financial result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity • Profitability 	performance		
R05SEC05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embark into new business and able to grow • Contributes to profitability of the company, sales increase • Able to work independently and committed • No major complaints from the clients • Less employee turnover • No problem with absenteeism • Good working environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business growth • Profitability, sales • Productivity is core • Organizational performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Employee retention • Absenteeism 		
R06SEC06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They embark on the activities or tasks and you can see the output • Business able to grow • The result of having engaged employee is the bottom line • Our business partners are happy and received less complaints from them • Working environment is good and employees are happy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity • Profitability is a critical success factor • Business partner satisfaction • Organizational performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business growth 		
R07SEC07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even when given the task even though more they are willing to do • Bottom line or financial result is the ultimate business goal • Company can expand rapidly • Do not have to monitor them even though they work until morning • Harmonious working environment is the factor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity yes • Profitability • Organizational performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree • Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagree. Only employee retention is the outcome. Other factors are not important • Core factors: employee retention
R08MAC01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business growth is important to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business growth • Customer satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Yes, is the outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not agree. • None are core factors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> company Employees make the customer happy, give something extra to customers Profit is very important, know how to collect money and bring back to business They are committed to you Willing to learn new things Ability to close deal and bring back to business Harmonious working environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profitability Productivity Organizational performance 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-core factors: customer loyalty; Manager self-efficacy; advocacy of an organization
R09SEC08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good financial standing, sales increase Employees understand how to run the business, how the outlet can be managed, how what the organization wants from them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profitability Organizational performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of course I agree Business partner satisfaction is very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disagree All factors i.e. Employee retention, Customer loyalty, Absenteeism and Advocacy of an organization are core factors Customer loyalty is very important
R10SEC09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get satisfaction from customers Better workplace environment, happier time in the workplace Getting the bottom line, profitability, sales target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer satisfaction Organizational performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes and No Core factors: employee retention; Customer loyalty; and Advocacy of an organization Employee retention is crucial Non-core factors: Absenteeism because absenteeism is a subjective term because of mobile technology
R11SEC10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients are happy, satisfied, they give more jobs to us Employees are productive Obviously, money matters in term of cash flow, profitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer satisfaction Productivity Profitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Yes, a core factor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depends Core factors are only employee retention, Customer loyalty and Advocacy of an organization Clients will look for us when they require our service Absenteeism is not applicable due to usage of technology in communication
R12SEC11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged employees engaged more with clients and make clients happy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer satisfaction Profitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I agree Of course business partner satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I disagree Core factor(s): employee retention;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give prosperity, financial returns to the firm 			<p>is the core factor, partners have less stress and give support to the organization</p>	<p>Customer loyalty; Advocacy of an organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With employee engagement, there is high employee retention • Engaged employees able to service client with their best ability • Non-core factor(s): Absenteeism
--	--	--	--	---	--

Legend:  The question was not asked at this stage of interview





UUM

Universiti Utara Malaysia