



The Effect of Employee Perception of Career Growth Opportunities and Its Influence on Work Motivation: A Study with reference to Cavinkare Private Limited

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ABSTRACT

How career growth opportunities translate into employee motivation — and what sits between them — is not something the existing literature has pinned down well, particularly in the Indian FMCG context. To bridge that gap, this study looks at 80 employees at CavinKare Private Limited in Chennai. The three aspects that were looked at were Work Motivation (WM), Employee Engagement (EE), and Career Growth Opportunities (CGO). EE was investigated as a mediator between CGO and WM. A series of statistical tests, such as Pearson Correlation, Simple and Multiple Linear Regression, Mediation Analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986), One-Way ANOVA, Independent Samples t-Test, and Chi-Square Test of Association, were performed on the data collected using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. Results were consistent throughout. All pairwise correlations crossed 0.84 ($p < 0.01$); CGO accounted for 71.3% of variance in WM and 75.5% in EE. The mediation test was the clearest finding — 88.40% of CGO's effect on WM ran through EE (Sobel $Z = 10.71$, $p < 0.001$), which points to partial mediation and confirmed all four hypotheses. Among the demographic variables, tenure with the company had the most visible effect on scores, and educational qualification influenced how employees perceived career growth as well as their NPS responses. For organisations in similar settings, the data suggest that career development programmes work best when employee engagement is treated as part of the same effort, not a separate one.

Keywords: *Career Growth Opportunities, Employee Engagement, Work Motivation, Mediation Analysis, FMCG, CavinKare, Baron & Kenny, Talent Management, HR Practices.*

INTRODUCTION

Keeping people motivated at work is harder than it looks — and in an industry like FMCG, where the pace rarely lets up, it matters more than most. CavinKare operates in that environment: short product cycles, tight competition, and a workforce that needs to stay engaged to keep things moving. What the research keeps pointing to, and what managers have long suspected, is that employees who see a genuine future for themselves at a company perform differently from those who do not. That perception — whether growth is real and accessible or just something on the intranet — turns out to be one of the more reliable predictors of employee motivation — shaping their enthusiasm, commitment, and intention to stay.

Career growth plays out differently for different people. For one person, it is about knowing there is a promotion on the horizon and what it takes to get there. For another, it is having a manager who actually invests in their development. For someone else, it might be as simple as feeling that their performance is being assessed honestly. These are not small things. When they are present, people tend to show up differently. When they are missing — or when the signals are mixed — motivation quietly erodes, often before anyone in leadership notices.

CavinKare Private Limited has been around since 1983, building a portfolio that now covers personal care, dairy, food, beverages, and professional care. The company has earned a Great Place to Work certification, which says something about how seriously it takes its people. But even with that foundation, the challenge of keeping a predominantly young, early-career workforce genuinely motivated is one the Talent Management function deals with every day — much like every other major FMCG player.

That is the context this study sits in. It looks at how career growth perceptions connect to work motivation at CavinKare, with employee engagement tested as the link between them. Instead of treating career development as a single variable, the study maps out several of its dimensions and brings them together — filling a gap that the literature has not fully addressed, and arriving at findings that HR practitioners can actually use.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the influence of employee perception of career growth opportunities on work motivation among employees at CavinKare Private Limited.
- To assess employees' level of perception regarding career growth opportunities in the organization.
- To measure the level of employee engagement among employees.
- To evaluate the level of work motivation among employees.
- To identify which dimension of career growth opportunity has the strongest influence on work motivation.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Talent retention in the FMCG sector is not just an HR concern — it has real operational and financial consequences. When people leave, or worse, stay but mentally check out, the cost shows up in productivity, culture, and eventually, the bottom line. Understanding what actually drives motivation — and specifically whether career growth perceptions play a role — is therefore not an academic exercise but a business necessity. This study addresses that on three counts: first, by testing whether low career growth perception directly reduces engagement and commitment; second, by giving leaders data they can use to design better career development practices; and third, by filling a gap in the research by specifically examining employee engagement as the mechanism connecting career growth to motivation.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is rooted in CavinKare's Chennai operations and draws on employees from Marketing, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Analytics, and Procurement. Six aspects of career growth are examined: promotion opportunities, training and development, internal mobility, performance appraisal fairness, career planning support, and mentoring and coaching. The idea is to look at how these dimensions, taken together, flow through employee engagement to ultimately affect work motivation. The entire analysis rests on primary data from 80 respondents who completed a structured Likert-scale questionnaire.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A lot of research has looked at career development and where it leads — mostly to job satisfaction and better performance. But performance is not the only thing worth measuring, and it is certainly not the whole story. Work motivation matters in its own right, and yet it has been treated as secondary in much of the literature. Even where mediating variables have been studied, job satisfaction tends to get the spotlight. Employee engagement — with its cognitive, emotional, and behavioural layers — has been far less examined as the link between how people perceive their career growth and how motivated they are. That gap is especially visible in the Indian FMCG space. This study takes that gap seriously and builds a framework that treats engagement as the mediator and motivation as the real outcome worth chasing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

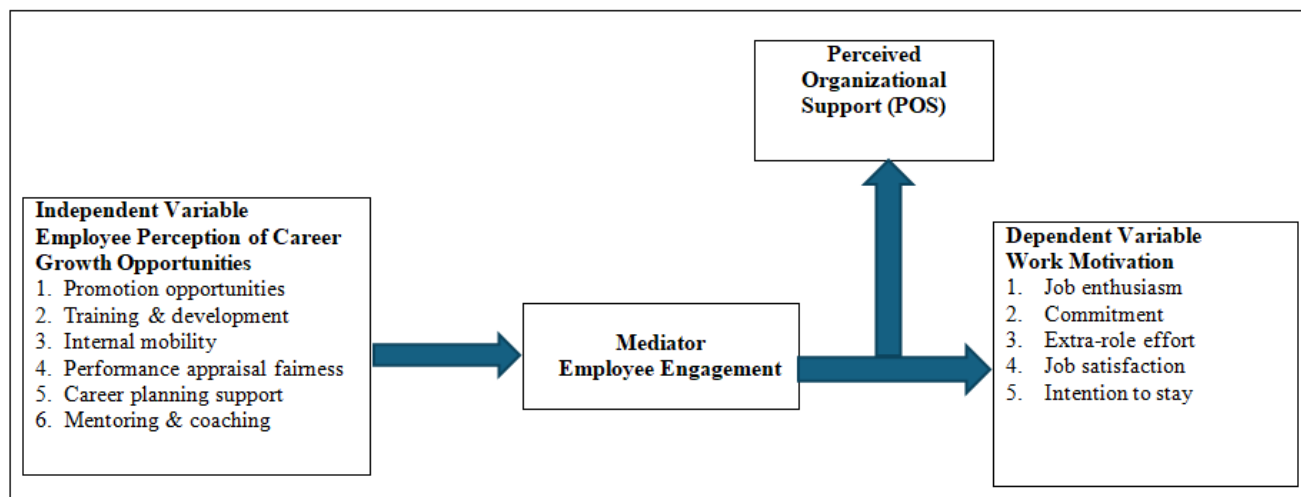
Atak, Atik, and Ceylan (2016) looked at what happens when students and early-career individuals have a clearer sense of where their careers are heading — and found that clarity genuinely lifts both learning motivation and the effort people put into developing themselves. Structured activities like career days and site visits were not just nice-to-haves; they made a measurable difference in how people oriented themselves toward growth. Wau and Purwanto (2018) showed that career development and work motivation each have an independent positive effect on both job satisfaction and performance. What

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is interesting is that job satisfaction did not just sit at the end of the chain — it actually served as a conduit, connecting career development and motivation to the performance outcomes that followed. Riyanto, Endri, and Herlisha (2021) found something counterintuitive: job satisfaction, by itself, did not drive performance. Motivation did. The study showed that employees need to be both satisfied and motivated before their engagement actually converts into results — satisfaction without the drive to act tends to plateau rather than improve outcomes. Mofokeng, Amoa-Gyarteng, and Dhlwayo (2025) examined demographic influences on how employees view performance management, motivation, and career advancement in a South African company. The finding that stood out was the irrelevance of gender, age, and education — what actually shaped perceptions was job grade. In other words, it was the employee's position within the hierarchy, not who they were, that coloured their experience. Ratnasari, Sutjahjo, and Adam (2019) found that career development and motivation each have a direct, positive effect on performance. But they also traced an indirect path: both variables first raise job satisfaction, and that satisfaction then lifts performance further. The mechanism matters, not just the end result. Zhu and Song (2022) looked specifically at knowledge workers and found that career growth — particularly making progress toward goals and building professional capability — was positively linked to organisational engagement. Affective commitment acted as the mediator, and the strength of that effect varied depending on how much support employees felt from the organisation. Widiastari and Etikariena (2022) found that employees who feel good about how their careers are developing also tend to perform better. That connection showed up across several indicators — productivity, creative output, and discipline all improved when people had clarity about where they were headed in terms of skills, promotions, and pay. Syamilah, Cahyono, Sanosra, and Said (2024) added further evidence that career advancement, promotions, and competence development all feed into both motivation and performance in ways that are difficult to separate. The constructs do not just correlate — they seem to pull each other along. Wirana, Suyoto, Darmawan, and Alfalisado (2024) found that competence, motivation, and career development all contribute positively to performance, but career development had an additional role as a mediator — essentially amplifying the effect that competence and motivation had on how well employees performed. Emmanuel and Nwuzor (2021) showed that motivation does not run on money alone. While extrinsic rewards like salary and bonuses matter, intrinsic ones — being recognised, having learning opportunities, seeing a path to advancement — carry equal if not greater weight. Employees who feel their broader needs are being met, not just the financial ones, tend to perform better and stay more motivated over time. Chen (2022) studied how P&G structures its employee incentives in the FMCG space and found that getting the design right — drawing on Herzberg's two-factor model — makes a real difference to both loyalty and overall performance. It is a useful reminder that incentive systems are not just HR tools; they are strategic levers, and the same logic applies squarely to a company like CavinKare. Manggis, Yuesti, and Sapta (2018) established that career development lifts work motivation, and work motivation in turn lifts performance. The mediation, however, was only partial — career development also has its own direct effect on performance, independent of the motivational boost it provides.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in established theories of motivation, engagement, and career development. The framework positions Career Growth Opportunities as the Independent Variable, Employee Engagement as the Mediating Variable, and Work Motivation as the Dependent Variable. Perceived Organisational Support (POS) is incorporated as a moderating contextual factor. The framework is theoretically grounded in Vroom's Expectancy Theory

(1964), which proposes that employees are motivated when they perceive a clear link between effort, performance, and career outcomes; Kahn's (1990) framework of psychological engagement, which establishes that career growth resources foster cognitive and affective engagement; and the Job Demands-Resources Model (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), which posits that career development resources buffer disengagement and sustain motivation. Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation framework provides the statistical basis for testing the role of employee engagement as the primary pathway through which career growth perceptions translate into motivational outcomes.

HYPOTHESES

The literature pointed clearly in one direction. So did the conceptual model. Four testable hypotheses were developed from both:

H₁: There is a significant positive association between career growth opportunities and work motivation.

H₂: Career Growth Opportunities and Employee Engagement share a significant positive relationship.

H₃: There is a strong positive correlation between work motivation and employee engagement.

H₄: The relationship between career growth opportunities and work motivation is mediated by employee engagement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a cross-sectional, quantitative study. At the time of data collection, CavinKare's Chennai office had 100 employees. Using Simple Random Sampling, 80 were selected to participate. The number was not arbitrary — it came from applying Yamane's (1967) formula ($n = N / [1 + N(e^2)]$) with a 5% margin of error, which gave a statistically defensible sample for this population size.

The questionnaire had four sections: demographics, then 7 items on Career Growth Opportunities, 6 on Employee Engagement, and 7 on Work Motivation. All scale items used a five-point Likert format. Once collected, the data was run through SPSS — reliability checks via Cronbach's Alpha, Pearson Correlation, Simple and Multiple Regression, the Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation procedure, One-Way ANOVA, Independent Samples t-Test, and Chi-Square tests.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Demographic Profile

The sample skewed male (55%) and young — over half were between 25 and 34 (51.25%), and 56.25% had completed a Master's degree. Marketing was the most represented department at 22.5%, followed by Finance and HR at 17.5% each. About 56.25% had been at CavinKare for one to three years, and 61.25% had fewer than five years of work experience in total. It is essentially a snapshot of a company where much of the workforce is still finding its footing professionally.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics – Construct-Level Summary

Construct	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Career Growth Opportunities (CGO)	80	3.84	0.70	Agree
Employee Engagement (EE)	80	3.87	0.66	Agree
Work Motivation (WM)	80	3.95	0.55	Agree

Note: Scale: 1.00–1.80 = Strongly Disagree; 1.81–2.60 = Disagree; 2.61–3.40 = Neutral; 3.41–4.20 = Agree; 4.21–5.00 = Strongly Agree.

All three constructs averaged within the 'Agree' band (3.41–4.20). Employees were generally positive about their career growth, engagement, and motivation. Work Motivation outperformed the others with a mean of 3.95 and the lowest standard deviation (0.55), indicating that it was not only strong but also remarkably consistent among respondents.

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Reliability Analysis

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha – Internal Consistency

Construct	Items	α Value	Interpretation
Career Growth Opportunities	7	0.965	Excellent
Employee Engagement	6	0.957	Excellent
Work Motivation	7	0.949	Excellent

Note: $\alpha \geq 0.90$ = Excellent (George & Mallery, 2003). All items retained.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	CGO	EE	WM
CGO	1.000	0.869**	0.844**
EE	0.869**	1.000	0.858**
WM	0.844**	0.858**	1.000

Note: ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed). $N = 80$. H_1 , H_2 , H_3 all accepted.

Every pair came back strongly correlated — all three coefficients cleared 0.84 and were significant at $p < 0.001$. CGO and WM, CGO and EE, EE and WM: the connections held across the board. H_1 , H_2 , and H_3 accepted.

Regression Analysis

Table 4: Simple and Multiple Regression Results

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	Sig.	Decision
CGO → WM	0.844	0.713	0.709	193.616	< 0.001	H_1 Accepted
CGO → EE	0.869	0.755	0.753	240.328	< 0.001	H_2 Accepted
CGO + EE → WM	0.881	0.776	0.771	133.706	< 0.001	Accepted

Table 5: Multiple Regression Coefficients (CGO + EE → WM)

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig.	Interpretation
Career Growth Opp. (CGO)	0.402	3.689	< 0.001	Significant
Employee Engagement (EE)	0.509	4.680	< 0.001	Significant

Note: EE ($\beta = 0.509$) is the stronger unique predictor of WM compared to CGO ($\beta = 0.402$).

CGO alone explained 71.3% of the variance in WM and 75.5% in EE — strong numbers for a single predictor. Once EE was added alongside CGO, the model explained 77.6% of WM. And here is the interesting part: in that combined model, EE ($\beta = 0.509$) had more explanatory power than CGO. Engagement was not just a passenger — it was doing more of the driving.

Mediation Analysis Baron & Kenny (1986)

Table 6: Mediation Analysis Summary

Step	Path	Beta (β)	Sig.	Test Stat.	Result
1	CGO $\rightarrow$ WM (Total Effect, Path c)	0.844	< 0.001	F = 193.616	Significant
2	CGO $\rightarrow$ EE (Path a)	0.869	< 0.001	F = 240.328	Significant
3	EE $\rightarrow$ WM (Path b)	0.858	< 0.001	F = 218.474	Significant
4	CGO $\rightarrow$ WM Direct Effect, Path c' (with EE)	0.402	< 0.001	t = 3.676	Reduced Partial Mediation

Note: Indirect Effect ($a \times b$) = 0.5743. Sobel Z = 10.71, $p < 0.001$. Proportion mediated = 88.40%. H_4 Accepted.

Working through Baron and Kenny's (1986) four-step process, all conditions checked out. Path c (direct CGO $\rightarrow$ WM) started at $\beta = 0.844$. Once EE was introduced, it fell to $\beta = 0.402$ — still significant, but clearly reduced. That is what partial mediation looks like. The Sobel Test confirmed the indirect effect was real (Z = 10.71, $p < 0.001$). Put simply, 88.40% of the motivational impact of career growth travels through engagement first. H_4 accepted.

Demographic Analysis ANOVA and t-Test

Table 7: Summary of ANOVA and t-Test Results

Demographic Variable	CGO	EE	WM	Overall Finding
Gender (t-Test)	p = 0.303	p = 0.409	p = 0.497	No significant difference across gender
Age Group (ANOVA)	p = 0.175	p = 0.026*	p = 0.098	35–44 yrs: significantly higher EE
Education (t-Test)	p = 0.025*	p = 0.065	p = 0.066	Masters: significantly higher CGO perception
Experience in CavinKare (ANOVA)	p < 0.001***	p < 0.001***	p < 0.001***	4–7 yrs: highest scores across all constructs

Note: * $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$. Years of experience in CavinKare is the most powerful demographic predictor.

Chi-Square Test NPS Association

Table 8: Chi-Square Test of Association NPS Category vs Demographic Variables

Demographic Variable	χ^2	p-value	Cramér's V	Result
Gender	3.179	0.204	0.199	Not Significant
Age Group	7.609	0.107	0.218	Not Significant
Educational Qualification	9.445	0.009**	0.344	Significant
Department	16.493	0.086	0.321	Not Significant
Experience in CavinKare	11.485	0.022*	0.268	Significant
Total Work Experience	7.699	0.103	0.219	Not Significant

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$. NPS categories: Low (Score 3, $n=12$), Medium (Score 4, $n=45$), High (Score 5, $n=23$). Employees with 4–7 years of CavinKare experience showed 70% High NPS scores.

FINDINGS

Pulling together what the data showed:

- CGO, EE, and WM all averaged in the ‘Agree’ band — 3.84, 3.87, and 3.95 respectively. Employees were positive across the board.
- Scale reliability was excellent — Cronbach’s Alpha came in at 0.965 for CGO, 0.957 for EE, and 0.949 for WM. All items were retained.
- The three constructs correlated strongly with each other — every r exceeded 0.84 ($p < 0.001$). H_1 , H_2 , H_3 all supported.
- CGO predicted WM ($R^2 = 0.713$) and EE ($R^2 = 0.755$) on its own. Combine CGO with EE and you get 77.6% of WM explained — a meaningful improvement.
- 88.40% of CGO’s effect on WM runs through EE (Sobel $Z = 10.71$, $p < 0.001$). Partial mediation confirmed. H_4 accepted.
- Tenure at CavinKare was the standout demographic factor. Employees with 4–7 years in the company scored highest on CGO, EE, and WM — suggesting that the longer people stay and settle in, the more positively they experience all three.
- Educational background shaped how employees perceived career growth ($p = 0.025$) and their NPS responses ($\chi^2 = 9.445$, $p = 0.009$). Master’s graduates were far more likely to give a High NPS score — 40.0% did, compared to just 14.3% of those with undergraduate degrees.
- Gender made no meaningful difference across CGO, EE, or WM scores — male and female employees were largely aligned in how they experienced career growth and motivation at CavinKare.

CONCLUSION

The core finding here is simple enough to state but significant in practice: how employees feel about their career prospects directly shapes how motivated they are — and most of that effect works through engagement, not around it. With 88.40% of the total CGO–WM relationship running through EE, it is hard to argue that you can build motivation without first building engagement. All four hypotheses held, the statistics were robust, and the pattern was consistent enough to draw some genuine conclusions from.

What that means practically is worth sitting with. Career development on paper — the policies, the frameworks, the appraisal cycles — is not the same thing as career development that employees actually feel. The difference shows up in engagement scores, and engagement scores show up in motivation. For a company like CavinKare, where more than half the workforce has been around for three years or less, those early years carry outsized weight. That is when people decide, often quietly, whether the organisation is genuinely invested in them or not.

A few things stand out as worth acting on. Career paths need to be visible and specific, not vague aspirations on an intranet page. Individual Development Plan conversations should happen regularly and feel personal. Mentorship, particularly for people in their first three years, can make a real difference to how supported and engaged someone feels. Access to learning should not depend on seniority. And the gap this study found between how postgraduates and undergraduates experience career growth is worth addressing directly — everyone should feel the door is open. Get these things right and the motivation follows. Get them wrong and no amount of policy work will compensate.

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