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**DETERMINANTS OF GEN Y EMPLOYEES' JOB  
PERFORMANCE, EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT AS MEDIATOR,  
NOT MODERATED BY LEADERSHIP STYLES**

Lin Lin Lim<sup>1</sup>, Junaimah Jauhar<sup>2</sup>, Yashar Salamzadeh<sup>3\*</sup>, Rizwan Ullah Khan<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Graduate School of Business, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia  
Email: limlin2757@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Center of Excellence for Continuous Education and Development, Usains Holding Sdn Bhd, Penang, Malaysia  
Email: naimah@usm.my

<sup>3</sup> Sunderland Business School, Sunderland, UK  
Graduate School of Business, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia  
Email: yashar.salamzadeh@sunderland.ac.uk

<sup>4</sup> Graduate School of Business, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia  
Email: rizwanhayat1989@gmail.com

\* Corresponding Author

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**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study is to examine empirically the effects of human resources practices (mainly rewards, training and development and work-life balance), Generation Y (Gen Y) employee commitment and leadership styles on Gen Y employees' job performance. The study also investigates human resources practices on Gen Y employee job performance with employee commitment as mediator and both transactional and transformational leadership styles as moderator. This study used the sample data collected which completed by fully employed Gen Y employees of manufacturing companies from Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) Malaysia and used multiple measurement instruments. This study will be an original contribution to employers, organization decision makers and human resources practitioners that provides insights about what impacts Gen Y employee commitment and job performance. The outcome of this study will contribute to the leadership development to obtain the skills to lead their Gen Y employees for the better performance. This subsequently will reduce the negative impacts such as low commitment and low performance among Gen Y workforce. Data were obtained from 203 Gen Y employees who are working in manufacturing companies in Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER). Data were analysed using partial least squares technique (PLS-SEM). Results show that rewards and work-life balance have positive effect on targeted Gen Y employee commitment. While employee commitment mediates the relationship between rewards and work-life balance and employee job

performance. However, this research paper couldn't show the transactional and transformational leadership styles as moderator role in the relationship between the three HR practices and employee commitment. Training and development show no positive effect on employee commitment; furthermore, employee commitment also couldn't mediate the relationship between training and development and employee job performance.

**Keywords:**

Gen Y Employees, Human Resources Practices, Rewards, Training and Development, Work-Life Balance, Employee Commitment, Employee Job Performance, Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership

**Introduction**

Nowadays due to the market uncertainty, the businesses has become very competitive globally (Hassard & Morris, 2018). Every organization is striving to achieve high performance for their business sustainability (Lee & Kim, 2019). The manufacturing sector remains an important sector in Malaysia economy after the services sector (Raj-Reichert, 2020). This study focuses on the manufacturing industry, due to the fact that this sector employs significant number of Gen Y workforce and relies heavily on them for business growth and success. Thus, the study on Gen Y employee job performance in Malaysian manufacturing industry is deemed appropriate. Literature reviews show that organizational performance relies heavily on employees' contribution to achieving and sustaining competitive advantage. Hence, manufacturing organizations' performance can also be measured by looking at the commitment and performance of its employees.

The Gen Y employees' commitment and performance towards their job are part of key factors to determine the organization success despite other factors such as business strategies plan and strong financial capability. It is known that Gen Y is the fastest increasing workforce segment (Glass, 2007). However, according to various sources (Islam, Md.A.; Teh, W.C.; Yusuf, D.H.M.; Desa, H., 2011), Gen Y employees are said to be least committed to stay with the same company relative to other generations. Employee commitment refers to an employee who is ready to accept the goals and values of his or her organization and who is willing to make an effort and desire to stay and work for the organization for the long term (Allen, N.J. & Meyer, J.P., 1990; Ng and Salamzadeh, 2020). Thus, it has impact on their job performance. Several surveys conducted in Asian Pacific region reported that Gen Y employees have the shortest job tenure among other generational workforce. Compared to other generational workforce which have 4 years of average job tenure, Gen Y employees just have eighteen months (Sheahan, 2008). According to Martin (2005), Gen Y's definition of long-term commitment is one year. Only one out of five anticipates tenure for six years or longer with the same company. According to Deloitte Millennial Survey (2018) to across 36 countries, when Gen Y (also known as millennial) were asking how long would they stay with their current company before leaving to join a new organization or do something difference, 43% of 10,455 Gen Y expected to leave their company within two years while only 28% said they would stay beyond five years. In other words, getting Gen Y commitment on their job performance has become one of the most difficult challenges faced by today's business organization and is something that organizations cannot afford to overlook if business owners would like to obtain great performance of its employee.

HR practices' most useful outcome is the creation of a highly committed workforce. HR practices have positive relationship with employees' commitment and performance (Latorre, et al., 2016). There has been researches that show employees' commitment is positively correlated with employees' job performance (Khan, 2019). In terms of work-related attitudes, Gen Y are different from other generations. Their managers need to adapt their approach to leading Gen Y to engage and attract them (Salahuddin, 2010).

On the other hand, leadership is a popular topic in today's academy and management. It is one of the important key factors for making an organization successful. Research found that leadership will still be one of the most influencing factor in spite of the fact that employees' commitment and performance may be highly affected by many other factors which may arising either from internal or external of the organization context (Islam, et al., 2011). Attaining employees' commitment shows that employees will work harder and go beyond their employment contract to achieve a high degree of their performance and company's goals. According to previous research on the subject of leadership styles shows that employees generally prefer transactional and transformational leadership (Bass, 1990). Bass (1990) states that a transformational leader focuses on empowering employees to move beyond their capability and tailoring leadership style towards them. While a transactional leader gives rewards when a particular activity is accomplished by the employees and punishment is used to correct unwanted behaviour (Northouse, 2001).

The current study is also examining the moderating impact of transactional and transformational leadership styles on the relationship between Gen Y employees' commitment and their job performance. According to Maxwell (2014), leadership is influencing others towards a common goal. Leadership style boosts employees' commitment and in return increases their job performance (Neuza Ribeiro, Daniel Gomes, Shaji Kurian, 2018). This shows why we have chosen our research questions and scope as shared before.

## Literature Review

### *Employees' Performance*

The Gen Y employees' performance is the dependent variable of this study and it will be affected by the independent variables in this study. An employee is expected by their employer to complete his or her task on time. Their performance will be assessed by their leader at a quarterly or annually based to assist them in identifying areas for improvement. When highperforming employees able to meet the deadline given, this mean they achieved organization goals. If the performance of employees is high, it means that they do their job effectively and it will boost the office's morale and organizations gain its competitive advantages (Bin Abdul Hamid et al., 2020). With respect to Gen Y job performance, there have studies show that Gen Y employees have no passion to their work, no sense of belonging to the organizations and are less responsible (Martin, 2005).

Every organization tries to foster employees' performance as the success of organization depends much on employees' performance. Refer to the definition given by Hafidz, Hoesni, and Fatimah (2012), employee performance is the "scalable actions, behavior and outcomes that employees engage in or bring about that linked with and contribute to organizational goals". While in Waldman (1994) study, employee performance is defined as the "behavior associated with the accomplishment of expected, specified or formal role requirements on the

part of individual organizational members”. Effectiveness measure on the result performed in relation to goals based on the employee performance. According to Ranaweera and Dharmasiri (2019), effectiveness is defined as the “evaluation of the results of an employee’s performance”. For example, if a sales manager met his sales target (goal given), it is easier to assess his performance.

In the past years, several frameworks and taxonomies have been developed to measure employee performance. Pradhan & Jena (2016) identified approaches to work performance and listed the key constructs (Pradhan & Jena, 2016). They mentioned that a clusters of employee performance behavior have relationship with the HR practices in an organization.

### ***Gen Y***

Gen Y is the most recent demographic group who have entered higher education and the world of work. Gen Y are those who born between the 1980’s and 1990’s and also known as Millennials (Weyland, 2011; Waterworth, 2013). They are the baby boomers’ children who have been highly child-centered, attentive and competitive parents. According to Weyland (2011), Gen Y have grown up in a rapidly changing technical world where change is taking place at a speed well beyond the predicted pattern history. Many authors have stated that Gen Y have different characteristics and expectations from the previous generations in the workplace (Broadbridge et al, 2007).

Gen Y has a different attitude than baby bombers and Gen X. According to Ferri-Reed (2010), Gen Y individuals are focused on a balance between their personal lifestyle and career. Gen Y also showed that they desired immediate merit increment and other rewards to maintain high levels of performance. Thus, in order to maintain a committed and performance Gen Y workforce, organization policies need to be more flexible. Companies can change their human resource policies to adapt to the new workforce in order to draw in and retain the most talented employees. In addition, it is said that Gen Y employees have a better relationship with their leader if leader spend more time understanding individuals (Dwyer, 2009).

### ***Employee Commitment***

The success of an organization is closely related to the efforts and motivation of its employees. Employee performance is considered as the product of their commitment towards work and organization. In another word, employees with a strong commitment are motivated to work at a higher level of performance. Thus, they can offer more contribution that is meaningful to the organization (Esra et al., 2013; Haider and Riaz, 2010). Thus, employee commitment is a very crucial topic for an organization to understand, especially Gen Y employees who are the key players in the workplace currently. Failure to understand these characteristics can lead to miscommunications, conflict and loss of employee satisfaction and performance.

Organization have had difficulty retaining Gen Y employees because they tend to change jobs more frequently than their baby boomer and Gen X colleagues (Ainsworth, 2009). When organizations losing a commitment employee and when they are leaving from the organization, organizations have to bear lots of costs such as hiring cost, training cost and productivity cost. Thus, this situation putting organization in business risk where it brings impact to the business daily operation activities and worst case create dissatisfaction customers.

It is further support by Vance (2006) study that committed employees give a competitive advantage to the organization besides their outstanding performance and lower turnover. If organization are to avoid having Gen Y leave their jobs after such a short period of time, the leaders need to understand and better meet the needs of Gen Y.

The employers always comment the attitudes and commitment given by Gen Y employees. To them, getting commitment from Gen Y is difficult as Gen Y are self-opinioned, lazy, and have little reverence for authority and their superior. Several studies reveal much of these opinions are based on the fact that Gen Y is simply different from their Gen X leaders and baby-boomer parents (Kultalahti S. & Viitala R., 2015; Luscombe et al., 2013; Martin, 2005; Raman et al., 2011; Solnet & Hood, 2008). Hence, it is a big challenge for a leader to manage Gen Y. As a result, human resource practitioners need to strategize a proper plan of action to manage Gen Y employees. Kultalahti S. & Viitala R. (2015), Raman et al. (2011) and Solnet & Hood (2008) argue that current human resources management have been constantly criticized as lagging behind in adapting to differences generations and employee requirements. According to Kultalahti S. & Viitala R. (2015), Gen Y stresses more on work-life balance compare to previous generations. Luscombe et al. (2013) and Yusoff et al. (2013) added, Gen Y employees ask for good workplace, demanding in salary, wishes to be praised and are difficult to please. The HR practices used for Gen X & Baby Boomers mostly are not effectively apply to Gen Y employees in view of Gen Y characteristics. As such, it is crucial to understand if Gen Y commitment plays as mediator role between HR practices and their job performance.

### ***Hypothesis Development***

Based on the theory (Social Exchange Theory) and the framework, several hypotheses have been developed.

#### ***Rewards***

Rewards has been viewed as one of the key forces to drive employees' commitment and job performance. According to Lawler (2003), most of the management experts believe that there has a strong correlation between rewards system and employee job performance. Reward is one of the key factors driving employees' job performance. Rewards is said to use to distinguish between highly and low performance employees. High performing employees are given high rewards than those low performers. Employees sacrifice and contribute their time and energy to fulfil their role as employee. From the amount of effort and time they invest in, they show their commitment to their work and organization. During the process, most of the employees expect something of reciprocation in exchange for their commitment, such as fair rewards. It is important in any organization to set up an effective reward system to meet the needs of its employees (Koskey, & Sakataka, 2015). Milkovich et al. (2002) viewed that reward systems as an exchange strategy. According to them, employees may see reward systems as a return in exchange between their employer and themselves. The way the employee views this exchange determines their levels of their commitment. Therefore, we believe that reward is able to foster employees' commitment, similar to their performance. Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

***H1: Rewards has a positive effect on Gen Y employee commitment.***

#### ***Training and Development***

Besides, training and development also will positively affect the Gen Y employee job performance. This is due to training can enhance employee ability in the workplace that benefits

the organization (Konings and Vanormelingen, 2010). Employees who received the necessary training is better and able to perform their job effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, training and development which provided by organization improves the ability of employees to perform the job efficiently and with excellence (Kulkarni., 2013). According to Hurtz and Williams (2009) in their research, employee development can strengthen organizational efficiency, assist employees maintain a competitive advantage over others and improve their overall job performance. Lee and Bruvold (2003) summarize the result of their study that training, and development is one of HR practices' most important functions.

Therefore, it can see that training and development approach is a necessity in creating a positive job performance among Gen Y employees. In this competitive globalized business market, it has created a greater demand among the organizations to become more flexible, responsive to change and be efficient enough through training and development. Many researchers have concluded that training and development has a positive relationship with employee commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1991; Kulkarni, 2013; Nkosi, 2015). This is true that organizations now constantly are attached with training and development needs that heighten Gen Y employee commitment (Humphrey et al., 2013). In a research (Egessa, 2015) in the department of children's services, the outcome of study concluded that training and development influenced employee commitment. Therefore, we believe that training and development will lead to in creating a positive commitment in the workplace. In that sense, we hypothesize that:

*H2: Training and Development has a positive effect on Gen Y employee commitment.*

### ***Work-Life Balance***

Earlier studies shown that there is a link between work-life balance and employee's job performance. A research in banking industry on Gen Y, the result shows Gen Y employees emphasizes to have a perfect work-life balance besides expect to have freedom and flexibility in their workplace (Hossain et al., 2018). Although Boselie et al.'s (2005) study of the high performance literature and the HR practices selected by researchers as constituting HRM within their studies suggested that the 'top four' practices were 'training and development, contingent pay and reward schemes, performance management and recruitment and selection', they also point out that the 'often cited core elements of HR practices that are also likely to be of benefit to employees seem to feature less in empirical research' and they suggest that such a list might include: 'good basic pay, discretion over work tasks, employment security, diversity and work-life balance'. It would be unfavorable for organizations to ignore Gen Y employees (who represent a growing share of today's workforce) their needs, desires and attitudes of this generation. Organizations have to adapt a strategy on work-life balance to attract and retain Gen Y employees and leads them to better job performance. A good worklife balance is vital in achieving personal and professional goals and ensuring employee commitment in organizations. Researches from different occupational have shown work-life balance outcomes and its consequences. According to Bong (2015), Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development provides flexible working schedules to fulfil the demands of employees towards work-life balance. Gen Y employees desire a work-life balance arrangement which provide them flexibility within their job no matter when and where they work as long as they can complete their task. A positive work-life balance result creates job satisfaction among Gen Y employees as well as their committed to work (Bani Hasan et al., 2017). As evidence from past

studies demonstrates a positive outcome due to organization practicing of work-life balance, we hypothesize that:

**H3:** *Work-Life Balance has a positive effect on Gen Y employee commitment.*

### ***Employee Commitment***

Employee commitment has become one of the popular studies by the researchers of the modern era. Employees who are committed to their organization, they are more likely to stay with the organization. They also make more efforts to show their performance and work towards organization success. Biljana (2004) reveals in his study that employee commitment is an important challenge to organization because it can be used to project employee performance. H4: Gen Y Employee Commitment has a positive effect on Gen Y employee job performance. A mediator is a third variable that connect and mediate effects of the independent variable on dependent variables (Creswell, 2014). In this study, Gen Y employee commitment is a mediator. The hypotheses H5a, H5b and H5c suggest that Gen Y employee commitment mediates the relationship between HR practices (rewards, training and development, work-life balance) and Gen Y performance. Many researchers examined commitment as a determinant of job performance (Meyer et al., 2004). Gen Y employee commitment can be used to examine the possible relationship between HR practices components and their impact on the Gen Y performance. As previous research shows a positive relationship between HR practices and employee job performance, we believe that in the context of manufacturing organization, employee commitment plays a key role in mediating HR practices to achieve employee's performance. As such, we developed the following hypotheses:

**H5a:** *Gen Y Employees Commitment mediates the relationship between Rewards and Gen Y Employees Job Performance.*

**H5b:** *Gen Y Employees Commitment mediates the relationship between Training and Development and Gen Y Employees Job Performance.*

**H5c:** *Gen Y Employees Commitment mediates the relationship between Work-Life Balance and Gen Y Employees Job Performance.*

### ***Leadership Styles***

Leaders should develop a favorable strategy to attract Gen Y employees. According to Vera and Crossan (2004), leaders need to provide infrastructure to foster employees for the success of organization. In this study, transactional and transformational leadership style are proposed as moderators on the relationship between HR practices (rewards, training and development, work-life balance) and Gen Y employees' commitment.

According to Stum (1999), the quality of the leadership reflected by employee commitment in an organization. This further explained in Truckenbrodt (2000) study, leader has the responsibility to inform to their subordinates that their contributions are vital to the organization success. Leaders have to build up a good relationship with their subordinates to heighten their commitment to the organization and together create business successfulness. Leaders use different techniques and strategies to boost employee commitment and performance.

Haider & Riaz (2010) state that transactional leadership focuses on exchanges between leaders and followers. According to Burns (1978), the first form of interaction between leaders and followers is transactional leadership. Transactional leader uses tangible rewards such as money

to motivate his employees. Leaders reward followers for their good effort and work compliance. Bass and Avolio (2000) described that transactional leadership use rewards to award their employees once the latter have achieved the goals that were set to. Therefore, the tangible rewards are the exchange of rewards for meets agreed goals. Transactional leaders can get things done by making and fulfilling promises of rewards and recognition for their employees who have performed well in the task they have assigned. Transactional leaders could therefore inspire their employees with a reasonable degree of loyalty, commitment and performance. Transactional leadership focuses on clarifying the role in which the leader helps the employees understand exactly what need to be done to achieve the goals of the organization. In summary, transactional leadership is a relationship of exchange involving the reward of effort putting in, performance and commitment (Ajay and Ramjee, 2013; Salamzadeh et al., 2019).

The transformational leader uses intangible rewards such as personal growth to motivate employees to drive their commitment while the transactional leader uses tangible rewards such as (Keskes, 2014). Transformational leadership is a specific leadership style applied by superiors who motivate their subordinates to perform at a higher level by inspiring them, offering them intellectual challenges and paying attention to their individual needs. Keskes (2014) states that from the past several researches, it concludes that transformational leaders influence employees' commitment by encouraging them to think critically and involve them in decision-making processes. Recognition and appreciation based on the different needs of each employees to develop each individual potential. In other words, HR practices have to consider each individual employee need when employees show their commitment at work. The research of Walumbwa and Lawler (2003) further support that transformational leadership can motivate employees' commitment by involving them in problem solving and understand their needs.

There has a several researches relate leadership style to employee commitment. Robins (2005) stated that the appropriate leadership influences subordinates in building confidence in management and commitment. Babalola's research finding (2016) confirms Wang, et al., (2005) assertion that leadership has major influence on work outcome like commitment. There is substantial evidence of a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment (Burns, 1978). The mechanisms by which leadership styles influence their employees have been studies in a systematic manner (Keskes, 2014). However, several researchers (Kark, R., Shamir, B., 2002; Conger, et al., 2000; Avolio, et al., 1999) have suggested that greater attention should be paid to understand how these influences processes operate in leadership styles on employee's commitment. Thus, this study attempts to investigate if it can be summed up that leadership styles moderates the effect between HR practices and employees' commitment towards their performance. Hence, the following hypothesis was developed:

**H6a:** *Transactional leadership styles moderates the relationship between Rewards and Gen Y Employees Commitment*

**H6b:** *Transactional leadership styles moderates the relationship between Employee Training and Development and Gen Y Employees Commitment*

**H6c:** *Transactional leadership styles moderates the relationship between Work-life Balance and Gen Y Employees Commitment*

**H7a:** *Transformational leadership styles moderates the relationship between Rewards and Gen Y Employees Commitment*

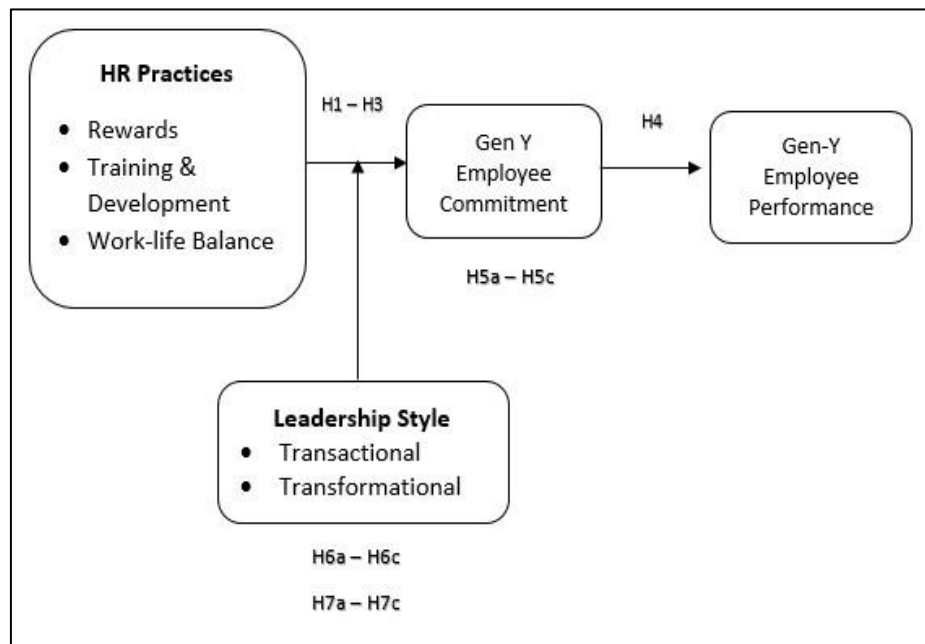


**H7b:** Transformational leadership styles moderates the relationship between Employee Training and Development and Gen Y Employees Commitment

**H7c:** Transformational leadership styles moderates the relationship between Work-life Balance and Gen Y Employees Commitment

### Research Methodology

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of human resources practices via employees' commitment as mediator towards their job performance and the leadership styles moderating human resources practices and employees' commitment. The following research framework as shared in figure 1, is employed.



**Figure1: The Research Framework**

### Measurement of Constructs

Items measuring Gen Y employee job performance were adapted from Ali and Hamad (2016) and Wright et al. (1995). Items measuring rewards were adapted from Spector (1994), training and development adapted from Tahir (2014) and work-life balance adapted from Hossain et al. (2018) respectively. While questionnaires on employee commitment were adapted from Willoughby et al. (2014) and Akhigbe et al. (2014). Some of transactional leadership style questionnaire were adapted from Bass and Avolio (2000) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and some were adopted from Oino and Asghar (2018). This similar to transformation leadership style where the questionnaires items were adapted and adopted from Oino, I., & Asghar, S. (2018).

### Sample and Data Collection

This study used convenience sampling and employ a quantitative survey. Data is collected by using questionnaires. The sampling method that was used in this study is convenience sampling because this is a non-probability sample study. Gen Y employees who have at least diploma qualification and working in manufacturing companies in NCER Malaysia (Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Pahang) were the unit of analysis. The questionnaire's link to the online survey was distributed through email to 80 Human Resources personnel from the contact list. From there,

the participants forwarded the link to the targeted respondents. Using G-Power, we calculated the sample size equal to at least 178. However, we managed to collect 203 useful responses for this study. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is used with the software Smart PLS (Ringle et al., 2014).

## Result

### *Measurement Model*

Closer  $\alpha$  value to 1, the greater the reliability of the measurement. All the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) values are above 0.8. Since these values are above the acceptable level of 0.7 (Henseler, J. and Chin, W.W, 2010), these constructs are deemed to display adequate reliability.

The convergent validity of constructs was assessed according to the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2019). Results show that the composite reliability (CR) values of all variables indicated scores more than 0.7 with factor loadings above 0.5. The average variance extracted (AVE) values were found to be more than 0.5 for all constructs. So, the measurement model results demonstrate satisfactory reliability and convergent validity.

We tested the discriminant validity using HTMT. Gold et al. (2001) and Hair et al. (2019) suggested that a threshold value of HTMT < 0.90 for structural models with constructs that are conceptually very similar. In current research, the HTMT values are revealed to be less than 0.90, confirming the discriminant validity of all given variables.

### *Structural Model*

For the structural model analysis, PLS-SEM is used to measures how well the hypothesis relationships are predicted in this research. Analysis of bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples test is used to produce path coefficient, t-value and p-value. This is to analyze the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

The proportion of variance explained was used to determine the accuracy of the model's predictions. In this study, the R2 values of employee commitment increased by add in moderator, from 39.6% to 41%; the R2 value increased further to 43.6% with the whole interaction (Table 1). These R2 values show that the level of acceptance is moderate and increased if add in moderator role (Hair et. al. 2019). Further to this, predictive relevance was measured by calculating the Stone-Geisser Q2 (cross-validated redundancy) value. The results show that the Q2 values for employee commitment without moderator (0.207), with moderator (0.214) and with the whole interaction (0.222) were all increasing and greater than zero (Chin, 2010).

**Table 1: Coefficient of Determination**

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>	Relevance
<b>Without Moderator, R Square</b>				
<b>39.6%</b>				
Employee Commitment	0.396	0.387	0.207	Yes
Employee Job Performance	0.254	0.25	0.106	Yes

**With Moderator, R Square****41.3%**

Employee Commitment	0.413	0.398	0.214	Yes
Employee Job Performance	0.254	0.251	0.106	Yes

**With Interaction, R Square****43.6%**

Employee Commitment	0.436	0.404	0.222	Yes
Employee Job Performance	0.254	0.251	0.106	Yes

Based on the bootstrapping results, although rewards (R) ( $\beta=0.395$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and work-life balance (WLB) ( $\beta=0.279$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) had a positive effect on employee commitment (EC), training and development (TD) ( $\beta=0.096$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) had no effect. The relationship between employee commitment (EC) and employee job performance (EJP) was supported ( $\beta=0.504$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). According to the results (Table 2 and Figure 2), the moderator effect of transactional leadership (TRS) and transformational leadership styles (TRF) were not supported (all values of  $p>0.05$ ). To test the mediation effect on rewards, training & development and work-life balance through employee commitment on employee job performance, the bootstrapping indirect effect method was utilized (Preacher, K.J. and Hayes, A.F., 2008)(Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008)(Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008)(Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008)(Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008)(Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008). The bootstrapping analysis (Table 3) demonstrated that the indirect effect was significant for H5a ( $\beta = 0.199$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and H5c ( $\beta = 0.141$ ;  $p<0.01$ ).

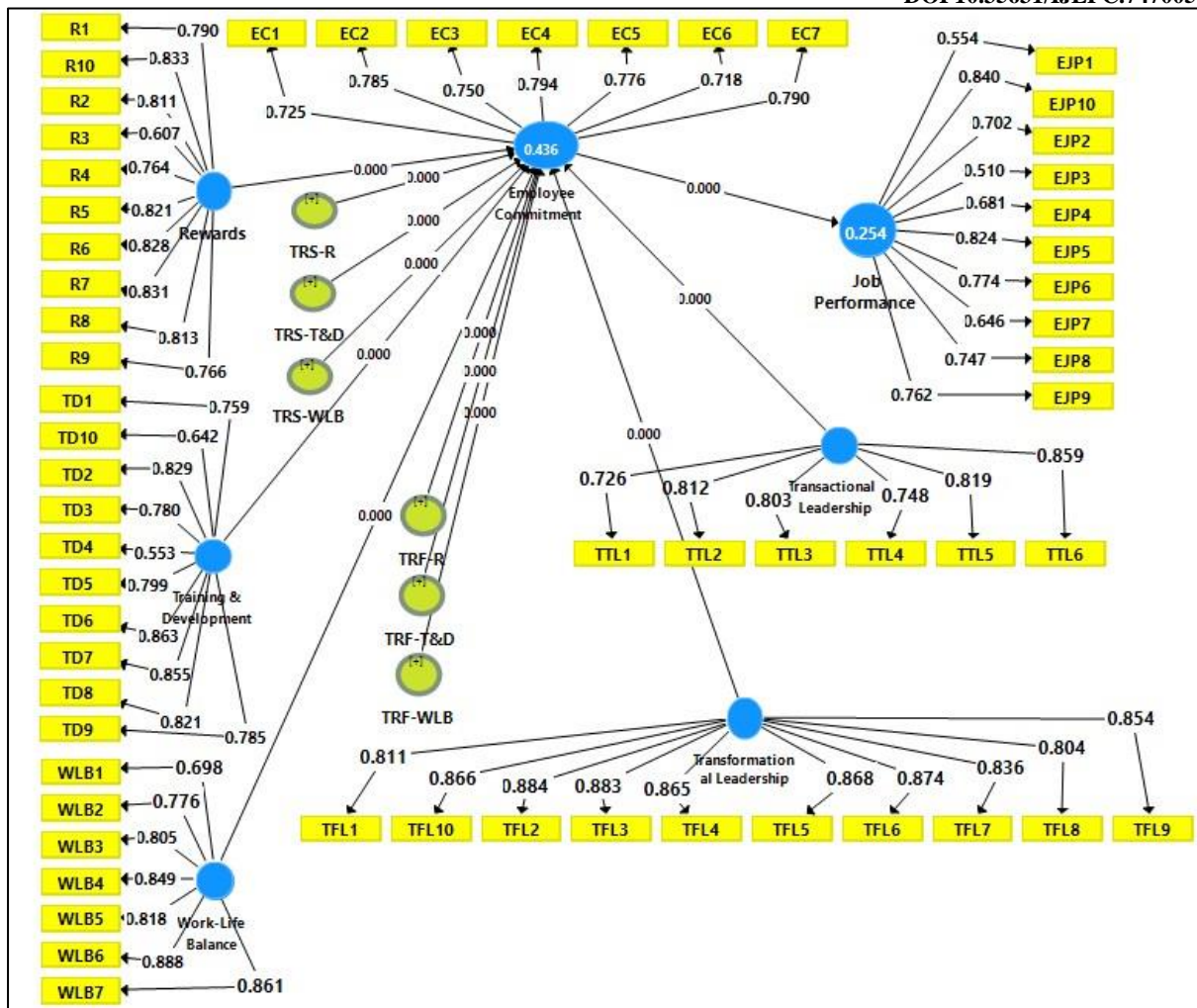


Figure 2: Structural Model

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing for Direct Effect

Hypotheses	Relationships	Path Coefficients	T Values	P Values	Decision
H1	R --> EC	0.395	4.574	0.000***	Supported
H2	TD --> EC	0.096	1.150	0.125	Not Supported
H3	WLB --> EC	0.279	3.602	0.000***	Supported
H4	EC --> EJP	0.504	6.060	0.000***	Supported

Moderating Effect of Transactional Leadership Style

H6a	R --> TRS --> EC	0.092	1.410	0.079	Not Supported
H6b	TD --> TRS --> EC	-0.059	0.619	0.268	Not Supported
H6c	WLB --> TRS --> EC	-0.104	1.014	0.155	Not Supported

Moderating Effect of Transformational Leadership Style					
H7a	R --> TRF --> EC	0.036	0.566	0.286	Not Supported
H7b	TD --> TRF --> EC	-0.039	0.432	0.333	Not Supported
H7c	WLB --> TRF --> EC	-0.068	0.700	0.242	Not Supported

Note: \* $p < 0.05$   $t > 1.645$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$   $t > 2.327$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ,  $t > 3.092$  (One-tailed)

**Table 3: Hypothesis Testing for Indirect Effect**

Hypotheses	Relationships Values	Path Coefficients	T Values	P	Decision
Mediating Effect of Employee Commitment					
H5a	R --> EC --> EJP	0.199	3.343	0.001**	Supported
H5b	TD --> EC --> EJP	0.048	1.096	0.273	Not Supported
H5c	WLB --> EC --> EJP	0.141	2.687	0.007**	Supported

Note: \* $p < 0.05$   $t > 1.96$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$   $t > 2.58$  (Two-tailed)

## Discussion and Conclusion

### *Direct Effect*

Hypothesis 1 (H1) and hypothesis 3 (H3) suggested that rewards, and work-life balance respectively has a positive effect on employee commitment. The result of the study supported the hypotheses, and it was accepted. This is corresponding to the finding of Milkovich et al. (2002) and Koskey & Sakataka, (2015) in the context of rewards has correlation with employee commitment. A positive work-life balance result creates job satisfaction among Gen Y employees as well as their committed to work (Bani Hasan et al., 2017). This is further elaborate by Fayyazi and Aslani (2015) who refer work-life balance as equality of commitment and time allocation to work and personal life issues and to be in the center of the continuum. Gen Y employees' perception of work, family and self-related concerns have become issues of interest to organizations. Moreover, many researches outcomes show that work-life balance continuously to be a priority of concern for Gen Y employees (Januszkiewicz, 2014; Tovey, 2016).

Many researchers concluded that training and development has a positive effect on Gen Y employee commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1991; Kulkarni, 2013; Nkosi, 2015). Humphrey (2013) added that this is true that organizations now constantly are attached with training and development needs that heighten Gen Y employee commitment. However, the result of this research paper indicates that training and development had no positive effect on employee commitment, it does not support the hypotheses H2 and it was not accepted. As such, this is not corresponding to the finding of previous researches as mentioned in the context training and development has positive effect on employee commitment. Besides, the result also shows

that employee commitment does not mediate the relationship between training and development and Gen Y job performance (H5b). This result is not consistent with the findings of Allen & Meyer (1991), Kulkarni (2013) and Nkosi (2015) who found that providing training and development was an effective way to build up commitment among Gen Y employees. As such, this is not corresponding to the finding of previous researches and the research question as mentioned in the context training and development has positive effect on employee commitment. This research may not be supported in NCER Malaysia manufacturing context among Gen Y employees. It is suggested for future researcher to increase the sample size to get more data from Gen Y employees in manufacturing industry in whole Malaysia.

Hypothesis 4 (H4) implied that employee commitment has positive effect on employee job performance. The result of the study supported the hypotheses 4, and it was accepted. This is corresponding to the previous study of Biljana (2004) that employee commitment is an important challenge to organization because it can be used to project employee performance.

### ***Mediating Effect***

The hypotheses H5a, H5b and H5c suggest that Gen Y employee commitment mediates the relationship between the three independent variables of rewards, training and development, work-life balance and dependent variable Gen Y performance. Many researchers examined commitment as a determinant of job performance (Meyer et al., 2004). Gen Y employee commitment can be used to examine the possible relationship between HR practices components (rewards, training & development, work-life balance) and their impact on the Gen Y performance. However, the result shows that H5b was not supported as discussed before.

This study indicates that employee commitment shows a significant effect in mediating rewards (H5a) and work-life balance (H5c) and Gen Y employee job performance. There is a connection between rewards systems and employee commitment, it must be seen as one of the pieces for employee performance in a complex puzzle. This is further explained in Parker & Wright (2001) research that without a comprehensive rewards strategy, organization will fail to gain the commitment of employees and later maximize their performance. Gen Y seems to desire a work-life balance. According to Bani Hasan et al. (2017), the work-life balance program is related to employee's commitment which leads to better job performance.

Besides that, training & development is not significant on Gen Y employee commitment, employee commitment also could not play a key role in mediating the relationship between training & development and Gen Y employee job performance. The characteristics of Gen Y tell us that they find traditional teaching methods dull compared to their experience with digital technology. According to Fausto-Sterling (2000), Gen Y's learning styles are no longer same as their colleagues – Baby Boomers and Gen X. Gen Y was said lack of patience for classroom training and given step by step instruction. This study responds to open a new direction for future researcher to explore new perspectives to find out what kind of training and development program which Gen Y are interested, perhaps explore on Gen Y learning styles and approaches.

### ***Moderating Effect***

Babalola's (2016) finding confirms Wang, et al. (2005) assertion that leadership has major influence on commitment. There is substantial evidence of a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment (Burns, 1978). However, Hypotheses H6a, H6b, H6c, H7b and H7c which suggested that both transactional and

transformational leadership styles moderate the relationship between the three HR practices (rewards, training & development, work-life balance) and Gen Y employee commitment were not supported by the result of this study and were not accepted respectively.

This study is aimed to answer the extent of both leadership styles moderating the relationship between the three HR practices and employee commitment. The results show that both transactional (H6a-H6c) and transformational (H7a-H7c) leadership styles as a moderator role were not supported although previous researchers' outcome show that appropriate leadership influences subordinates in building commitment. Our sample consists of 86% in the executive level, middle and senior level manager position. These three groups of respondents' position mostly have subordinates reporting to them. It may contribute to the hypotheses of H6a-H6c and H7a-H7c not supported.

Even though these hypotheses were rejected, but the results of R2 values show that the level of acceptance is moderate and increased by add in moderator role. Thus, confirming the predictive relevance of the endogenous variables in this study's objective that the transactional and transformational leadership styles moderate the relationship between HR practices and Gen Y employee commitment in this survey context. Several researchers (Kark, and Shamir, 2002; Conger, et al., 2000; Avolio, et al., 1999) have suggested that greater attention should be paid to understand how these influences processes operate in leadership styles on employees' commitment. The influences processes could involve other factors which leaders could apply to gain the employees commitment. As such, the attempts of this study to investigate if it can be summed up that both leadership styles moderate the effect between HR practices (rewards, training & development and work-life balance) and employees' commitment can be further studied by future researchers.

The strong relation between the rewards and employee commitment, work-life balance and employee commitment, employee commitment and employee job performance show the importance of measuring employee commitment, which leads to increase of employee job performance that is crucial for the success of an organization and HR strategies implementation. As hypotheses H2 was not supported, the result of this study showed that hypotheses H5b employee commitment mediates the relationship between training & development and employee job performance was also not supported. Thus, we believe that in the context of Malaysia manufacturing organization, not only training & development is not significant on Gen Y employee commitment, but employee commitment also couldn't play a key role in mediating the relationship between training & development and Gen Y employee job performance. The characteristics of Gen Y tell us that they find traditional teaching methods dull compared to their experience with digital technology. According to Fausto-Sterling (2000), Gen Y's learning styles are no longer same as their colleagues – Baby Boomers and Gen X. Gen Y was said lack of patience for classroom training and given step by step instruction. This study responds to open a new direction for future researcher to explore new perspectives to find out what kind of training and development program which Gen Y are interested, perhaps explore on Gen Y learning styles and approaches.

For this research paper, we have to acknowledge that other measures such as bigger sample size, more variables and the respondents' context may have effect on outcome variables which have to be taken into consideration (DelCampo, et al., 2011). Hence, future research might want to look on these measures to get more data to support the hypotheses H6a – H6c and H7a

– H7c. Both transactional and transformational leadership styles as moderators need to be explored further in relation among these three HR practices (rewards, training and development and work-life balance) to gain the commitment of Gen Y employee. It is recommended that further research investigate more variables of independent variables of HR practices such performance review and talent retention program to close the gap of this research.

By examining all these factors, it is hoped that both scholars and practitioners will have a more comprehensive understanding of factors that could affect employee commitment and job performance among the Gen Y.

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