Understanding the Effect of Job Resources and Moderating Role of Self-efficacy and High-Workload on Employee Engagement: A Study of Gen-Y Employees in the Malaysian Financial Sector

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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APRIL 2019

ABSTRACT

By 2025, the advent of Generation Y would have constituted 75% of the total workforce in the world. The Gen Y are described as "difficult", demanding and impatient with an attitude of leaving a job if their needs are unsatisfied. Hence, a high turnover among the Gen Y employees continuously becomes a battle for a human resource team to sustain the retention level, due to the fact that their engagement is relatively low. This study analyzes employee engagement which has emerged as a critical driver of business success in promoting retention, fostering customer loyalty and improving organizational performance. It is evident that the importance of employee engagement for Gen Y largely contributes towards organisation's performance and productivity. Therefore, employee engagement among the Gen Y employees is an essential topic to be studied as they are more prone to job hopping and tendency to change jobs frequently, which lead to lower retention and engagement levels.

The purpose of this thesis is to address the factors that lead to employee engagement among the Malaysian Gen Y employees or also known as "millennials", in the Malaysian financial sector. To achieve this objective, the study has adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods to understand the phenomenon of employee engagement in three different studies. The study also has adapted the concept of JD-R model as a fundamental theoretical framework to investigate the chosen variables in impacting employee engagement and the outcome of it.

The first study (qualitative) examines the meaning of employee engagement and the driving factors from the perspective of Gen Y employees by conducting semi-structured interviews with 10 respondents from financial institutions such as insurance

companies and banks. The study identifies various enablers found to be the important requisites to engage better. The data from Study 1 reveals that millennials find that good working environment and workplace communication are highly acknowledged as source of engagement. The second quantitative study with 232 Gen Y respondents explores the impact of job resources on employee engagement and the role of moderators in influencing engagement level. The findings from Study 2 shows that autonomy emerges as the strongest predictor of employee engagement, while reward and recognition were least endorsed in predicting engagement. Moreover, there was partial support for moderating effects of self-efficacy and high workload between the predictors and employee engagement.

Lastly, the third study investigates the impact of employee engagement on intention to quit. The result reveals that employee engagement negatively impacts the employees' decision to quit from the company. The existing literature on employee engagement, and a fundamental conceptual framework presented at the beginning of this research discusses the implications of these findings which may shape the direction for future research on the area of engagement and generational differences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This journey of my PhD is meekly dedicated to God for bringing me through the hardships and challenges which has humbled me and taught me the real meaning of perseverance, faith and dedication.

My utmost gratitude goes to my primary supervisor, Dr Hazel Melanie Ramos for her feedback and comments with great amount of encouragement to overcome my PhD hurdles. My appreciation also goes to my secondary supervisor, Dr Angeli Santos for her suggestions, comments and valuable time in refining my thesis. I am truly thankful to be blessed with two amazing supervisors that not only showed great support but also believing in my research.

My heartfelt thanks also dedicated to my lovely friends and fellow mates from Nottingham Malaysia, especially, Wywa for her comfort and assistance in many ways while I was enduring the journey of my PhD. The presence of supporting friends along the way has made me stronger and encouraged to complete the journey that merely seemed impossible.

Last but not least, my gratitude goes to my family members who provided moral support and words of encouragement that sustained me throughout the duration of my studies. To the rest of the individuals who were involved directly and indirectly in my thesis completion, my special appreciation goes to you. You know who you are.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the background of the research and the underlying problems that led to the motivation for pursuing this area of research. It also details the potential significance of the study and general contributions in the chosen area of research.

1.2 Background of the Research and Problem Statement

Generation Y or better known as Gen Y refers to the group of individuals born between the 1980s and early 1990s. They are mostly the children of Baby Boomers (Islam et al., 2012) and are the largest generation by population to enter the workforce. The Gen Y group represent approximately about one-quarter of the world's entire population and are regarded as the future leaders in management (Leask, Fyall, Barron, 2013). Interestingly, this generation is said to be different from previous generations in terms of work related characteristics and their impact on areas of recruitment and retention (Luscombe, Lewis, & Biggs, 2013).

Specifically, in Malaysia, the complex issues of Gen Y in the workplace have gained strong interest among leaders due to their attitudes at the workplace and lower retention rates (Anita, 2014). The problem of high turnover is prevalent among Gen Y employees, and Malaysia was among the countries to highlight this issue across many major newspapers (Queiri et al., 2015). Islam, Cheong, Yusuf, and Desa (2011) further stated that a common trait among Gen Y employees is their tendency to job hop which has created frustration among employers when it comes to retaining a talented workforce.

Downe, Loke, Ho, and Taiwo (2012) mentioned that the trend of job hopping and issue of high turnover among Malaysian Gen Y has led to an employment crisis whereby a shortage of a talented pool of workers is expected to occur if proper measures are not taken. In order to address this issue, organisations have actively sought help from their HR departments, which brings us to the concept of employee engagement. As said by Gupta, Archarya, and Gupta (2015), the solution to sustaining a competitive and high-performing workforce is through the cultivation of employee engagement. In order to develop engagement among the Gen Y community in the workplace, it is crucial for organisations to first understand the needs of this generation before implementing appropriate engagement strategies.

Although there have been many research studies on Gen Y individuals, there is a scarcity of literature relating to engagement and organisational behaviour for this generation (Meier, Austin & Crocker, 2012; Lim, 2014). While many engagement strategies have been developed and studied over the years, there is no evidence to show that current engagement strategies are capable of driving engagement among Gen Y employees (Lim, 2014). This is because most of the engagement strategies were developed on a general basis and not explicitly tailored for Gen Y (Lim, 2014). Therefore, the present research aims to address this gap in the research literature and further explore suitable engagement strategies that can be considered for the Gen Y cohort in Malaysia. Also, the Gen Y professionals in Malaysia tend to view their work from a different perspective and mindset from their superiors, and have different expectations that clash with engagement strategies that being practised (Asian Finance of Institute, 2014). Gilbert (2012) stated that generational gaps do exist in the context of employee engagement although these not been addressed by the existing body of research.

In an attempt to prioritise drivers of engagement, many organisations have failed to consider generational differences and have inadvertently assumed that all engagement strategies may be applied to all groups without segmenting the needs of each generation in the workforce (Robinson, 2012). Successful engagement strategies that have been previously implemented in past generations may no longer be useful, relevant or perhaps are in need of adjustment in order to suit the needs of Gen Y employees (Asian Institute of Finance, 2014). According to Dhesi (2014), Gen Y employees appear to be more intolerant at work and have a high tendency to quit if their needs are not fulfilled. Thus, organisations need to go beyond the usual tools of engagement by embracing the digital mindset and introducing specifically tailored programmes which consider the requirements of different generations (Aon Hewitt, 2017a).

The reason for choosing employee engagement as the subject of the present research is in part, because employee engagement has gained a great deal of attention and inspired a wealth of research among academics since its emergence in the consulting background (Rai, Piyali, Ragini, & Navin, 2017). The present research therefore aims to provide an insight into engagement through the lens of Gen Y and could ultimately benefit organisations that have a high number of Gen Y workers. Moreover, many organisations in Asia have started to realise the importance of employee engagement in retaining talent and how it could elicit positive outcomes to ensure long-term success for their companies (Lim, 2014).

In spite of in increasing trend in employee engagement in Malaysia since 2012, levels of employee engagement have declined from 61% to 59% in 2017 and was recorded as the lowest in the Asian region (Aon Hewitt, 2017b). It is this fact that has

motivated the researcher, herself a member of the Gen Y population, to examine the concept of employee engagement. In particular, this research will look into Gen Y employees who work in the financial sector in Malaysia. The strategic role of Malaysia's financial industry is expected to increase in importance in the coming years as the country moves towards integration with the international financial system for greater regionalisation and investment (Central Bank of Malaysia, 2012). Currently, 25% of total employees in the banking sector are Gen Y, albeit this percentage is expected to decline in the coming years due to high turnover and improper management of Gen Y workers (Dhesi, 20114). It is estimated that Malaysia's financial sector is in need of an additional 56,000 employees by the year 2020 (Central Bank of Malaysia, 2012). In order to achieve this objective, engaging the right pool of talents is essential, together with the implementation of suitable engagement tools that will fit the needs of the Gen Y population.

Taking into consideration these issues as a motivation to pursue the research, the present research intends to examine several aspects related to the concept of engagement, such as the drivers of engagement (potential factors that could drive employee engagement), the role of moderators (influencers of employee engagement) and lastly, the consequence of engagement (the impact of employee engagement on intention to quit). The succeeding chapters elaborate upon the scope of the study in detail through extensive literature reviews and justification for the elements chosen in this study.

1.3 Significance of the Study

With the high number of entrants into the Gen Y workforce, this research may help organisations to gain an understanding of the needs of Gen Y workers which will, in turn, help managers to elicit and reinforce positive behaviours among their Gen Y employees. This study will not only assist HR managers in identifying potential engagement strategies, but in managing and retaining their Gen Y employees for long-run. As indicated in Forbes magazine (2014), leaders and managers who inspire and continuously engage their employees can unleash the full potential of their workforce and bring out the best in them, maximising business performance and productivity.

Additionally, this research on Gen Y employees may contribute to positive organisational changes through its application in the workplace. The focus on Gen Y in this study may contribute to the effective development of Gen Y employees into future managers and leaders. As Gen Y are expected to fill most managerial positions in the coming years, this research could benefit Gen Y leaders to implement the appropriate strategies to manage their workforce. Similarly, the present research could have beneficial implications for the Gen Y workforce in terms of attracting and retaining talent, and creating a positive work environment a loyal and engaged workforce. According to Dehsi (2014), building a positive culture of employee engagement could benefit organisations with a Gen Y majority by improving individual and therefore organisational performance and facilitating organisational change during transition periods.

In practical terms, this study may contribute to a better understanding of Gen Y's work beliefs and engagement mechanisms to be considered for future implementation in HR policies. It may help organisations to better understand the concept of engagement and re-evaluate the potential engagement drivers that could assist in engaging Gen Y employees. From the perspective of the financial sector, the employment of Gen Y workers has been challenging over the years due to high turnover (Asian Finance Institute, 2014). Thus, the present research may provide HR departments with ideas for improving engagement among their Gen Y employees.

The overall findings from this study could provide practical advice for organisations in terms of implementing the right organisational practices for Gen Y employees. Few studies on the Gen Y population have been conducted in the Malaysian context (Lim, 2014), thus, the present research could provide useful insight into developing and promoting employee engagement among Gen Y employees in Malaysia.

1.4 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis consists of nine chapters in total, excluding the references and appendices. The content of each chapter is briefly explained below.

Chapter One

This chapter highlights the background of the research and the problem that led to motivation to pursue the research. The significance of the study is briefly explained.

Chapter Two

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion on employee engagement and the relevant theories associated with the construct. An in-depth review of literature is presented in order to analyse the meaning of employee engagement and the emergence of engagement theories from prominent academics, practitioners and management consultants.

Chapter Three

This chapter elaborates the theoretical framework of this study, beginning with a discussion of the JD-R model as the theoretical basis for the study, followed by an examination of the correlates of the JD-R which have been included in the present research. The chapter concludes with the research objectives, questions and hypotheses.

Chapter Four

This chapter outlines the context for the study. The chapter reviews the Gen Y cohort and the financial sector in Malaysia, and provides an overview of the research on employee engagement, albeit limited, in Malaysia.

Chapter Five

This chapter details the research design and methodological approach used in the study. The sampling strategy, methods, instruments, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations are also presented in detail.

Chapter Six

This chapter discusses the findings of the qualitative study. It covers the results derived from the interviews, highlighting the emergence of the major theme/sub themes, and the overall result findings through in-depth discussion.

Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight

These two chapters discuss the findings of the quantitative study. It includes the SPSS results (i.e. regression output, moderation output) and the interpretations. A detailed discussion of the study findings is presented.

Chapter Nine

The final chapter of the thesis summarises the research findings and provides a discussion of the theoretical and practical contributions of the research. The chapter concludes with limitations of the study and future research suggestions.

1.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has highlighted the background of the research by presenting the issues that revolve around the chosen area of research. In summary, the general contributions of the chapter are as follows:

1. Organisations are in dire need of suitable engagement strategies tailored to Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. It is hoped that these strategies will help financial firms to achieve organisational growth aligned with the government's vision to recruit and retain talents.
2. The present research hopes to provide individuals and organisations with a deeper understanding of the construct of employee engagement and how such an understanding is critical to the success of organizations.
3. Lastly, the present research hopes to provide insightful recommendations for improving employee engagement among Gen Y cohort, which will assist financial firms to adjust and tailor their current HR strategy to get the most out of their workforce. These recommendations can be applied to other industries with Gen Y in their labour forces.

CHAPTER TWO
AN INTRODUCTION TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the reader to the concept of employee engagement by providing a brief history of the concept. This is followed by a discussion on the differences between work engagement and employee engagement and their definitions. Lastly, psychological theories of engagement from three schools of thought are discussed.

2.2 Concept of Employee Engagement

The concept of employee engagement has existed for the last two decades and emerged as an exciting research area among many consulting firms and academic practitioners (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). The topic of employee engagement dated back to early 1990s (Xio Bing, 2003) and was gradually studied by many consulting firms and academics over the years (Wefald & Downey, 2009). Because employee engagement emerged from the field of consulting rather than more rigorous academic journals, the construct has been weakly conceptualised and defined, resulting in the misinterpretation of its meaning (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

The lack of a universal definition of employee engagement was seen as a drawback in the field of management (Sakovska, 2012). While the idea of engagement may seem compelling on the surface, the lack of clarity in the definition has trigged many academics to examine the concept through exploratory studies (Abu Bakar, 2013). Therefore, it is vital to understand how the concept has evolved in order to understand it. With no precise definition and shared understanding, strategies for improving

engagement are cluttered, unstructured, and less focused (Kular et al., 2008; Guest, 2014; Harley, 2016). Having a coherent and meaningful definition of employee engagement is important because of its practical application to human resource management and strategic management in organisations.

2.3 Difference between Work engagement and Employee engagement

Between 2000 and 2010, there was an increase in the number of publications and journal papers related to "work engagement" or "employee engagement" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2012). It is essential to understand that work engagement and employee engagement are not synonymous (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Work engagement refers to the relationship of the employee with his or her work, whereas employee engagement may also include the relationship with the organisation (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The notion of work engagement specifically relates to the relationship of the employee with their job, while employee engagement is a broader concept that includes the employee's relationship with the job, company, tasks, roles, and other factors (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). For this study, employee engagement has been adopted as a core concept because the researcher intends to explore the diverse range of variables that affect employee engagement, and not just on single aspect or job paradigm. Thus, the intention of the study is not simply to distinguish between work engagement and employee engagement, but to investigate the potential antecedents, consequences, and correlates of employee engagement.

2.4 Employee Engagement Defined

Numerous definitions of engagement are available from the research and practice-literature. It is challenging to define engagement and outline its scope in a clear manner (Schaufeli, 2013). As a result, there is no universal and precise definition of employee engagement (Berdakar & Pandita, 2014). In most cases, definitions have been developed based on interviews, consultations, and other qualitative studies with employees. The definition of employee engagement varies among different authors but also share similar ideas such as commitment, loyalty, emotional attachment, and intellectual connection of an employee towards the job, colleagues, and organisation (Schaufeli, 2010).

Robinson (2007) defined employee engagement as a positive attitude displayed by staff towards their organisation; by collaborating well with other work colleagues to enhance their job performance for the benefit of the company. According to McEwen (2011), employee engagement is described as a motivational factor that links to the continuous investment of employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional energy in their work. It is a type of positive emotion and cognitive connection that an employee has towards their company which leads them to demonstrate discretionary attitudes and behaviour at work (Kruse, 2012). Similarly, Bates (2004) described employee engagement as a mental attachment that involves emotion which employees display towards their work, organisation, and superiors. Scarlett (2015, pp.2) defined employee engagement as a "measurable degree of an employee's positive or negative emotional attachment to their job, colleagues, and organisation which profoundly influences their willingness to learn and perform at work".

The common terms used by many writers in describing employee engagement include discretionary effort, striving for the extra mile, value, and work passion with limited evidence of the engagement dimension (CIPD, 2014). Other perspectives on employee engagement have been developed over time by eminent researchers and practitioner (Anita, 2014). For example, Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) published one of the most prominent writings on employee engagement. In their conceptualisation, employee engagement is defined as an "individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work" (Harter et al., 2002, p. 417). From the reviewed literature, several definitions of employee engagement were identified, mainly derived from reputable academics and practitioners. Although each definition stems from distinct perspectives, the lack of coherence in the definition of engagement has led to misinterpretation. Some of the reputed definitions from the literature are listed below:

1. **Kahn, (1990), pp.694** - "Personal engagement is the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence, and active full role performances."
2. **Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001), pp.417** - "A persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment in employees characterized by high levels of activation and pleasure."
3. **Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker (2002), pp.74** - "A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption."

4. **Saks, (2006), p.602** - "A distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance."
5. **Macey and Schneider, (2008), pp.4** - "Employee engagement refers to positive feelings held by employees about their jobs and also the motivation and effort they put into work."

Based on the definitions above, a number of inconsistencies can be identified. First, it is a personal decision to be engaged by an individual. Every individual chooses to be engaged on one's own accord. This is reflected in the definition of engagement by a number of scholars (Kahn, 1990; Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006; and Macey & Schneider, 2008). Secondly, Maslach et al. (2001) and Schaufeli (2013) point out that engagement is a construct related to work and the organisation, rather than being individually-focused. These two academics view engagement as a concept that surrounds the nature of the job and one's identification with the organisation. Meanwhile, Shuck and Wollard (2009) state that employee engagement should concern individual feelings and is not related to any physical properties. Therefore, it can be observed that these definitions overlap with little focus on the individual and the outcomes of engagement.

The emergence of employee engagement by management consulting

The 1990s marked the beginning of research interest in employee engagement in consulting firms (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). One of the most evident uses of the engagement construct in industry and business was developed by the Gallup Organisation (Harter et al., 2002). The Gallup Organization has conducted several pieces of research on the topic of employee engagement since 2000 (Mann & Harter,

2016). It is not known when the term "engagement" was first introduced, but the Gallup Organisation is credited for coining the concept somewhere in the early 1990s. According to the Gallup Organization, the term employee engagement refers to an “individual’s involvement and satisfaction, as well as enthusiasm for work” (Harter et al., 2002, pp.269). This definition was abstracted from the Gallup Workplace Audit and developed based on employee perceptions of work characteristics (GWA, 1999). The tool to assess employees' perceptions in the workplace is known as Gallup's Q12 engagement questionnaire (Schaufeli, 2013). The questionnaire consists of 12 questions to measure employee engagement and its impact on business outcomes (Gallup Inc, 2012). According to Buckingham and Coffman (1999) and Welch (2011), engaged workers are those who could accurately answer 'yes' for all the 12 questions in Gallup's workplace questionnaire.

In a report by Gallup Daily tracking, 32% of employees in the U.S are said to be engaged while only 13% of employees worldwide are said to be engaged. Being engaged includes characteristics such as high involvement of oneself at work, being full of enthusiasm and being highly committed to their job/organisation. Many companies tend to focus solely on measuring engagement rather than finding strategies to improve engagement and neglect the necessity to make management changes to increase employee engagement (Gallup Inc, 2016).

In time, other consulting firms followed suit in their pursuit of research on employee engagement. Aon Hewitt, a globally established consulting firm that conducts annual engagement surveys across a variety of organisations views employee engagement as a measure of an emotional state and intellectual involvement (Aon Hewitt, 2015). The firm defined employee engagement as a psychological investment of an employee

towards their organisation (Aon Hewitt, 2016). More than 1,000 organisations around the world are surveyed by Aon Hewitt annually.

One such study was conducted in 2016 with more than five million employees from over 60 countries. Three regions were represented in the study - Africa, Europe, and Asia Pacific. The data is shown in the table below.

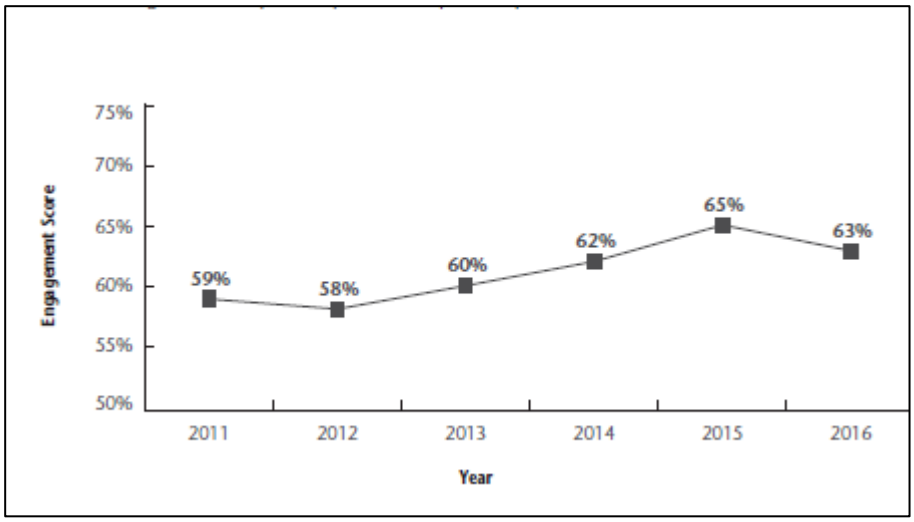


Figure 2.1 Global Trends in Employee Engagement

Source: Aon Hewitt, 2017

From the diagram above, employee engagement reached a peak in 2015 but falls by two-points in 2016, and the reason behind for the decline in the global engagement level is due to less satisfied employees in Asia Pacific region (Aon Hewitt, 2017a). The declining level of engagement in the Asia Pacific region has led to a net decline in global engagement. Thus, employee engagement should not be seen as a one-off event but rather as part of the wider organisational culture (Schaufeli, 2013). Nevertheless, many consulting firms that developed interventions to help achieve employee engagement often ascribe to definition engagement as a "persistent positive state" (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 4).

According to KPMG United Kingdom (2015), employee engagement is all about the measurement of an employee's connection and affiliation with the company, work

culture, and their positive connection with colleagues. Levels of engagement are said to either positively or negatively influence their motivation at work. Tower Perrin (2003) viewed the concept of employee engagement as the willingness and capability to add effort and contribute to the success of the company by investing extra time, knowledge, and endless energy to their career. Also, the Corporate Leadership Council (2004) defined engagement as a deep connection of an employee with his/her work or organisation and the positive attitudes demonstrated on the job. It must be stated however that majority of definitions crafted by consulting firms are proprietary, and hence not subject to any external peer review or observation which raises questions about their validity and transparency.

2.5 Theoretical Perspectives on Engagement

In order to understand the concept of employee engagement with greater clarity, there is a need to rely on several studies from an earlier date and understand the differences in the underlying terminologies of engagement. Several engagement theories have been developed by prominent academics and scholars to explain the construct in detail using a variety of different approaches.

2.5.1 Kahn's Needs Satisfying Approach (1990)

A number of researchers have contributed to the literature on employee engagement for two decades; the earliest literature on employee engagement began in 1990 with Kahn. The term employee engagement was first mentioned in the Academy of Management Journal article entitled "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work" (Kahn, 1990). Kahn defined personal engagement as the "harnessing of an organization's members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance" (Kahn, 1990, pp.694).

This definition of employee engagement necessitates that an employee be "present at work", and later, Khan added that in order to be engaged, an employee has to think, feel, and perform on the job (Kahn, 1990 as cited in Abu Bakar, 2003). When an employee is personally engaged, they can focus on the job role and, thus invest positive energy into their role behaviour, which is in turn reflected through better job performance (Stroud, 2009). By contrast, Kahn (1990) described personal disengagement as "the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances" (pp. 694). This means that a disengaged employee will

display behaviour that is entirely contradictory to the characteristics defined earlier by Kahn. Based on Kahn's (1990) definition, three psychological domains influence the engagement level of an employee; meaningfulness, safety, and availability.

Meaningfulness: Kahn (1990, pp.705) defined meaningfulness as the "sense of return on investments of self in role performance". According to Kahn, psychological meaningfulness is achieved when the employees feel acknowledged for all three elements of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy that they invest in their role performance at work. Examples of psychological meaningfulness rudiments that lead to engagement are job characteristics, rewards & recognition, job fit, role characteristics, and interactions gained in the workplace (Kahn, 1990). Employees tend to experience feelings of neglect or being taken for granted (Sakovska, 2012). Work meaningfulness is gained when employees have a clear direction of their job role that enable one to grow positively and respected at work. In return, employees may show a higher sense of responsibility towards their job and engaged more positively with it (Kahn, 1990).

Safety: This psychological element of safety is defined as the capability to exhibit oneself "without fear or negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990, pp.705). Kahn further added that a workplace that promotes a predictable, reliable, hazard free, and clear environment could lead to higher engagement among employees. There are four facets of psychological safety that endorse engagement, including interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, management approach and organisational culture (Kahn, 1990). When safety is high, employees feel comfortable, secure, and have high enthusiasm at work.

Availability: The aspect of availability is referred to as a "sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for investing self in role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). Stroud (2009) stated that psychological availability is universal and the most individual-centric component in Kahn's framework. This is due to the fragments being involved with an individual's mindset and thinking patterns towards their personal life and their work. Availability refers to the degree of employees' eagerness to engage and the challenges that are associated with their work mainly influence the verdict (Kahn, 1990). Examples of psychological availability include physical and emotional energy, insecurity, and outside lives (Kahn, 1990).

In 2004, May, Gilson and Harter conducted an in-depth study to examine Kahn's concept of engagement by exploring the three psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability. The results of the research showed that all three conditions are positively linked to promoting engagement at work (May et al., 2004). The outcomes of the study also indicated that job fit and job enrichment were positively related to meaningfulness, while rewarding co-workers/supervisors was the strongest predictor of safety and resource availability acted as a positive predictor for the domain of psychological availability. Overall, the study by May et al. (2004) does support Kahn's theory of engagement despite some of the elements such as co-worker norms, self-consciousness and outside life being regarded as negative predictors of engagement (May et al., 2004). According to Shuck and Wollard (2010), Kahn's engagement theory serves as a strong foundation for the future conceptualisation of engagement. This is because Kahn emphasises the adaptive needs of current modern organisations, suggesting that a passive business environment requires engaged individuals who could lead their efforts to reflect on what is necessary to create

sustainable changes for effective organisation success (Kahn, 1992; Macey & Schneider, 2008).

However, Kahn's concept of engagement does have its drawbacks. There was a lack of in-depth research carried out in identifying the three dimensions of psychological conditions (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Wefald, Mills, Smith, & Downey, 2012). Kahn was unable to precisely relate the three psychological conditions with the concept of engagement and the reason could be due to lack of literature available in that era (Abu Bakar, 2013). Moreover, Kahn's research is only concerned with one component of engagement which is personal engagement. Although his contributions have been influential, the element of 'personal engagement' cannot be applied to other forms of engagement at work (Welch, 2011). As such, this school of thought may lack a comprehensive understanding of what employee engagement is truly about (Abu Bakar, 2013).

Nevertheless, Kahn's definition demonstrates a holistic view of engagement by considering both personal and organisational resources in predicting personal engagement (Banihani, Lewis, & Syed 2013). The strength of Kahn's definition is its theoretical grounding in Goffman's (1961) role theory and Hackman and Oldman's (1980) job characteristics theory. This means that Kahn's concept is developed based on established management constructs and presented as a reasonable engagement ideology. Since Kahn's introduction of the construct, several other organisational theorists have come forward to expand the study of engagement and conceptualise multiple definitions and engagement measurements.

2.5.2 Work Engagement by Schaufeli et al. (2002)

While Kahn's definition of engagement remained influential, another significant definition of engagement originated with Schaufeli et al. in early 2002. They defined engagement as a "positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (pp.74). The three categorisations of engagement are said to present the most precise, accurate and comprehensive conceptualisation of engagement thus far (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli & Salonova, 2006). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) further suggested that highly engaged workers possessed closer attachment to their company than those who do not have a spirit of engagement. Engaged employees are inclined to show full vitality at work and able to cope with high job demands (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2006). As a whole, employees with high engagement possessed high levels of energy and were continuously enthusiastic about their work with engendered total concentration on their work, such that time passes quickly (May et al., 2004; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Vigour: Vigour refers to a high level of energy and mental spirit present at work, the willingness to show effort in the job and remain consistent, even during obstacles. It is classified as high levels of energy and mental stability while working, the willingness to contribute effort in work and continuous persistence during the time of difficulties (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). The extended definition of vigour often relates to the psychological capabilities of an employee to exercise willpower and seek substitute ways to aim for success work which demonstrate the characteristics of an engaged employee (Abu Bakar, 2013).

Dedication: Dedication refers to a sense of importance, enthusiasm, motivation, the pride of the work and challenges. Dedication is defined as a strong psychological involvement or identification with one's work (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2006) Dedication can be linked to job involvement (Kuntsi, 2014) however; dedication appears to be a broader phenomenon than job involvement because dedication contains feelings of enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge, while job involvement focuses strictly on the psychological importance of the job in an individual's life (Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007). Dedication or involvement in work also increases by confirming the importance of work objectives to which employees are personally attracted (Leiter & Maslach, 2010).

Absorption: Absorption refers to being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly, and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli, 2013). It is defined as being completely focused and positively involved in the job context (Schaufeli, 2002). The experiences of time passing quickly and forgetting one's surroundings are evidence of the absorption dimension (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001). Engagement may be an expression of employee commitment and other elements of satisfaction; however, commitment lacks a number of the qualities commonly associated with engagement, such as absorption and self-expression (Gallup, 2006).

UWES Engagement Scales

Another important contribution by Schaufeli et al. (2002) is the development of a short questionnaire known as the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) to measure work engagement. The questionnaire comprises a combination of three elements - vigour, dedication, and absorption which have been validated in several

countries for consistency (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). The psychometric properties of the UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) have been assessed by researchers in Europe, North America, Africa, Asia, and Australia (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Despite its prevalent use, many research findings involving the dimensionality of the scale remain ambiguous (Bruin, Hill, Henn, & Muller, 2013). According to Wefald et al. (2012), the three-factor scale of the UWES is unable to predict a range of outcomes when satisfaction and affective commitment are added as a controlled variable. He further added that the way the engagement is measured might be inadvertently flawed and combined with more established constructs of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This claim suggests that precaution should be exercised in interpreting the result findings of quantitative engagement studies. Thus, more research is needed to explore and distinguish the validity of the engagement scales for better interpretation.

All three elements focus on employees' experiences of work activity without emphasising the predictors or outcomes of these experiences. The primary distinction between Kahn and Schaufeli's constructs is that Kahn speaks more about cognitive and connection to work, while Schaufeli (2002) refers to engagement as an emotional and energetic connection to the individual's role. Both definitions are applicable for individual-centred practice, but Schaufeli's (2002) construct is noted for being the most complimentary and promising when it comes to defining engagement as it covers a broader aspect of engagement elements (Spreitzer, Lam, & Fritz, 2010 as cited in Bakker & Leiter, 2010).

2.5.3 Saks's Multidimensional Approach (2006)

Saks performed the first academic research to conceptualise and analyse the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement in 2005. Before Saks, most practitioners only focused on engagement drivers and their impact on employee engagement. Saks introduced the concept of engagement based on a multi-dimensional approach to separate job engagement and organisational engagement to form various types of employee engagement. Saks's concept provided an essential connection between previous engagement theories and practitioner literature. According to Saks (2006, pp.602), employee engagement is defined as "a distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance". This definition from Saks includes several elements from previous engagement literatures derived from cognitive (Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001), emotional (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990), and behavioural components (Harter et al., 2002; Maslach et al., 2001).

Saks further explored engagement by developing a three-component model (cognitive-emotional-behavioural) which he tested in 102 working students in a Canadian university. The result of the study indicated that antecedents of job characteristics and perceived organisational support are positively correlated as predictors of job engagement (Saks, 2006). Meanwhile, perceived supervisor support and reward and recognition were also analysed, but no statistical significance was indicated (Saks, 2006). Saks's (2006) study also suggested that antecedent variables such as procedural justice and fairness influenced the development of job engagement. Moreover, Saks argued that employees choose to repay to their organisation by exhibiting engagement at a certain level.

Other findings from Saks (2006) showed that although job engagement and organisational engagement are related, they are perceived as distinct constructs as findings showed that participants possessed higher job engagement than organisation engagement. The research further suggested that mode of engagement can be experienced emotionally and cognitively and demonstrated behaviourally. Related to studies by Schaufeli et al. (2002), Saks (2006) agreed to the view of engagement as absorption of employees' resources into their work performance. Thus, to foster engagement or absorption, employees need to be provided with physical, emotional and psychological resources to facilitate higher performance at work. In the absence of these elements, the psychological state of burnout is predicted, and employees will be disengaged from their work (Shuck, 2010).

Saks's contribution of the construct and recognition of the scarcity of the academic work on engagement have led to much inspired scientific research in the area of engagement (Welch, 2011). The definition of engagement often overlaps with similar constructs such as job satisfaction or organisational commitment and the current definition consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioural elements associated with employee performance (Saks, 2006). The obvious drawback of Saks's definition of engagement is the repetition of the engagement component from previous literature although Saks's studies have distinguished between the two types of engagement (Job and Organisational) through empirical evidence (Abu Bakar, 2013).

2.6 The Chosen Theoretical Approach in this Study

From all the arguments presented, this study contends that engagement is an independent term and should not overlap with any other constructs. Different schools of thought have defined employee engagement in various ways through multiple exploratory studies in order to differentiate the meaning of engagement. As noted earlier, the lack of agreement among practitioner and academics in establishing a stand in defining employee engagement has created crucial gaps in the research literature which warrant further exploration. Thus, it would be beneficial if more researchers would come forward to contribute in this research area and illustrate how the notion of engagement produces positive effects for management.

Schaufeli's view of engagement appears to be more comprehensive and coherent compared to other engagement constructs as it distinguishes engagement from other psychological states such as job satisfaction and job involvement. The three dimensions of engagement explained by Schaufeli appear to be precise, comprehensive and compelling to adopt (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004; Kim et al., 2009). The construct is easy to understand as the dimensions were well elaborated with a clear explanation of differences between each. Moreover, it is directly measureable by the UWES. Lastly, Schaufeli's definition is less ambiguous because it focuses upon positive and fulfilling aspects of work with a detailed scope of psychological traits to describe engaged behaviour (Abu Bakar. 2013). Given these attributes, the researcher has chosen the concept of engagement conceptualised by Schaufeli (2002) as the focus of the present research.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the background of employee engagement in detail. It covers early definitions of engagement from practitioner, academics and management consulting. Three main approaches from different schools of thought were presented to evaluate the concept of engagement in depth. Lastly, the chosen conceptualisation of engagement for the present research was presented and justified. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework for the study.

CHAPTER THREE
A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter aims to discuss the components of the theoretical framework with primary focus on the JD-R model as the theoretical basis for this research. It begins with a brief review of other engagement models before narrowing down on the adapted model for the present research. This is followed by a discussion of engagement drivers, engagement influencers, and outcome of employee engagement. Lastly, the research framework of the study is presented; concluding with the research objectives, research questions, and research hypotheses.

3.2 Models of Engagement

There are a number of established models of engagement in the literature that are used to explain and operationalise the concept of engagement. Some of the commonly used engagement models are discussed in brief before launching into an in-depth explanation of chosen model adapted in this study.

3.2.1 Saks Model (2006)

A strong theoretical model rationale for explaining employee engagement is found in the social exchange theory (SET) (Saks, 2006). The fundamental focus of the SET model is on trust, loyalty and equal commitments by following rules of exchange (Cropanzano & Mictchell, 2005). For instance, when an individual receives economic and socio-emotional resources from their company, they feel obliged to respond by being committed to the organisation (Saks, 2006).

The engagement model of Saks was developed through social exchange theory (SET) and the first one to classify engagement in two different states; 1) job engagement and 2) organisation engagement (Saks, 2006). Job engagement refers to the psychological presence of oneself in the job, while organisation engagement linked to the psychological presence of oneself in an organisation (Sakasvkava, 2009). According to SET theory, when a valuable element is offered to someone, this shall create an obligation on the receiving party to reciprocate in an amicable manner (Ahmed, Ismail, Amin, & Ramzan, 2012).

In the model, antecedents such as procedural justice and organisational support are identified as significant drivers of organisation engagement (Saks, 2006). Other antecedents used as independent variables to predict engagement include supervisor support and reward & recognition; however, no significant result was found to support the hypothesis (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). Saks (2006) also mentioned that individuals receiving greater organisational support are more likely to respond with a higher level of engagement in their job roles. In addition, job engagement and organisation engagement are seen as predictors of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and job quitting.

The Saks model provides a strong theoretical foundation for explaining employees' disengaged and engaged behaviours in their respective organisation (Saks, 2006). On the downside, the model is reductionist as the framework is limited to few engagement factors (As shown in Figure 3.1). There could be other elements that drive employee engagement besides the default mechanism mentioned in the model. As such, the model is said to lack flexibility in terms of adding other predictors of

engagement, and is thus not considered a viable option for the present research, given that the researcher intends to explore other variables in the study.



Figure 3.1 Saks Model of Antecedents and Consequences of Employee Engagement

Source: Saks, 2006

3.2.2 Zinger Model (2009)

The Zinger model of engagement (See Figure 3.2) was proposed by David Zinger in an attempt to balance organisational inputs, leadership traits, and individual characteristics in developing and fostering engagement. According to Zinger (2009), full engagement is achievable when discretionary efforts are transferred from organisations, leaders, and employees on a continual basis. Based on his extensive research on employee engagement, this model thoroughly looks into various aspects of employee involvement, determination, and engagement. The model provides organisations with 12 core keys to attain engagement that a manager should follow to achieve significant outcomes. Examples of some of the ultimate keys are as follows:

Get Connected: Managers must remain connected to their subordinates though problem sharing and provide feedback on their performance. Communication is the fundamental element in improving engagement and vital in every managerial process. Communication is the backbone of every management level.

Identify with Organisation: Employees tend to stay in an organisation longer if they feel connected and bonded to the organisation. Thus, management should understand that employee is their most important assets and prioritise their needs in the organisations.

Develop Personally: In addition to focusing only on attaining organisational goals, it is crucial for higher management to take care the overall development of an employee to ensure their career direction is at par with proper career advancement plan.

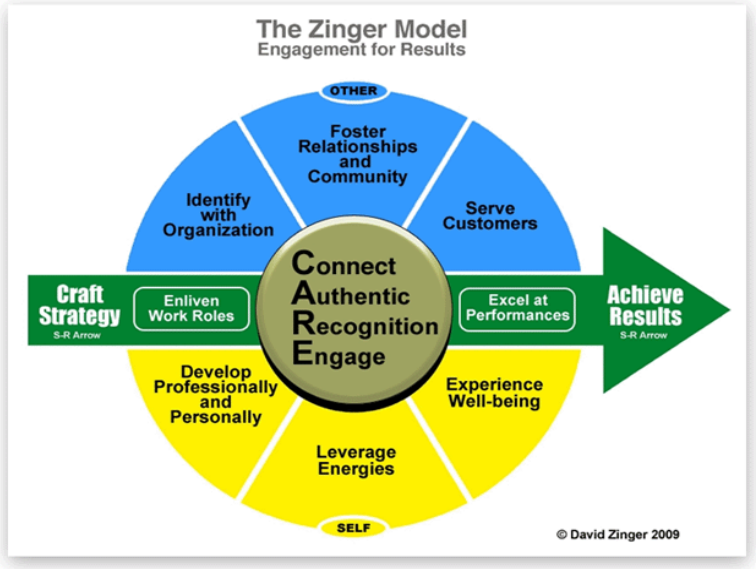


Figure 3.2 Zinger model of Engagement

Source: David Zinger, 2009

The drawback of the Zinger model is the absence of motivational factors as the model focuses on steps to achieving engagement and less emphasis on antecedents and outcomes of engagement (Albrecht, 2012). The model portrays a direct relationship between core values and employee engagement with no consideration for moderating variables that could affect engagement levels. Hence, the Zinger model is more feasible in developing solutions for managing engagement on a day-to-day basis.

3.2.3 JD-R Model (2008)

The JD-R model developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2008) has been widely applied to many contexts of employee engagement studies. The model has been adopted by many scholars to understand the antecedents of engagement and to study the strength of the relationship between job resources and engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). The model focuses on two dimensions of the work environment - job resources and job demands.

Job Resources – Job resources refer to those "physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job that are either/or: 1. functional in achieving work goals 2. reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs 3. stimulate personal growth, learning, and development" (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). As indicated by Kuntsi (2014), job resources enhance the working conditions of employees through accelerating commitment and engagement. A good job resource has been seen to reduce the impact of job demands and work-family conflict (Bakker et al., 2011). Demerouti and Bakker (2011) further argued that for job resources to be utilised effectively in enhancing positive outcomes, the employee must face job demands that are perceived to be a positive challenge. Components of job resources can occur in many forms such as career development, training, supervisor support, participative decision-making, or tasks oriented elements such as skill variety, autonomy, and more.

Personal resources - Personal resources are associated with high resiliency and the ability to impact a person's environment (e.g., optimism, emotional stability, morality, and self-efficacy) (Schaufeli, 2013). Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) stated that personal resources play a positive role in enhancing work engagement and employees with a

high level of personal resources tend to have more positive self-regard and are motivated to pursue their career goals and continuously perform well in their jobs.

Job demands - Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli (2001; p. 501) defined job demands as "aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs". Examples of job demands are time pressure, long working hours, emotional/physical strain, and physical demands that involved with heavy workloads (Cabrera, 2013).

How the JD-R Model work?

The impact of job resources on work engagement becomes more salient and attains motivational potential when employees are exposed to high job demands. Basically, job resources are extrinsic motivational triggers which drive discretionary effort, thereby reducing job demands and fostering goal attainment. The revised version of the JD-R model has integrated personal resources because psychological approaches assume that human behaviour results from an interaction between personal and environment factors (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Personal resources are related to psychological characteristics that control and impact one's environment successfully. Similar to job resources, the role of personal resources is functional in attaining work goals and stimulates personal growth and development. Job demands can influence the impact of job resources on engagement. The latter implies that the higher the job demands, the greater the motivational potential of job resources on engagement. Job demands can also lead to job strain or burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Nevertheless, if job demands coincide with the availability of job resources, job demands are more likely to be experienced as challenges and not as job stressors. Hence, there are many ways in which the JD-R model could be applied to the study of

engagement, and the relative position of job demands, job and personal resources, are malleable.

Adapting the JD-R model

Upon reviewing other models of engagement, the researcher has decided to adopt the concept of JD-R model (See Figure 3.3) to the context of the present research. The adoption of the JD-R model is based on the following reasons. First of all, the JD-R model does not restrict itself to any specific job demand or resource, as it assumes that any demand or resource may affect the health and well-being of employees (Salanova, 2006). This flexibility enables the researcher to test any job resource that has the potential to drive engagement and make a significant contribution to the literature (Anita, 2014). As stated by Schaufeli (2014), the JD-R model represents a more flexible outlook and can be tailored to a variety of work settings which makes it appealing to researchers due to its flexibility and more inclusive approach.

Second, the field of research related to the concept of employee engagement has constantly adopted the Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) model as part of the measurement and prediction of engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2006). The JD-R model is an appropriate framework to understand the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement (Kuntsi, 2014). It is advantageous over other models as it provides a flexible and unambiguously clear framework surpassing other models that contain a pre-defined set of demands, resources and outcomes (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). As such, the scope of the JD-R model is much wider, and could fit all kinds of job resources and job demands and affords the researcher a sense of flexibility to include elements which are deemed suitable and appropriate for the context of this research.

On the downside, the conceptual differences between job demands and job resources are not clearly distinguished. This is because job demands can turn into positive resources that boost engagement rather than act as stressors. If job demands can be controlled and well managed by the employees, they are no longer deemed as negative, and are instead seen as a positive challenge by the employee. Second, although the variables for job resources could contribute to employee engagement, research on how engagement is measured or to what extent engagement is affected by job resources is limited and unclear (Rana, Ardichvili, & Tkachenko 2014). Nor are there specific measurements to determine the levels of engagement, whether the employees are highly or moderately engaged.

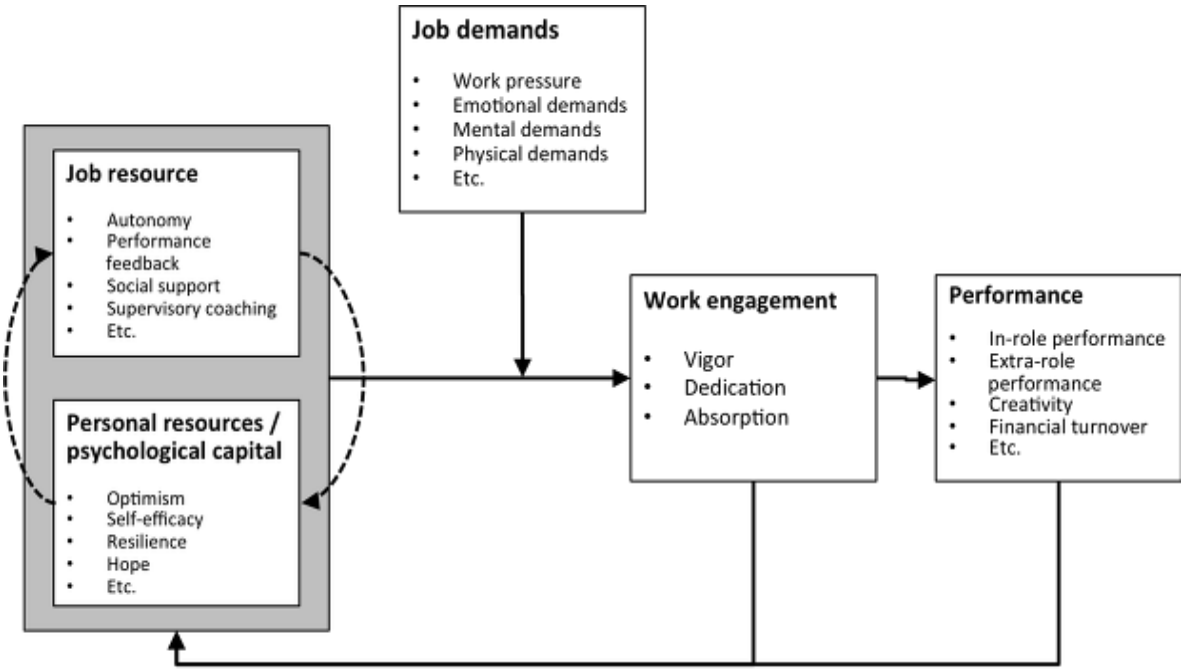


Figure 3.3: Example of JDR - Model

Source: Bakker et al. (2014)

The figure 3.3 showed an example of the JD-R model. In the present research, the elements of job resources is researched thoroughly and supported by relevant literature studies. The researcher reviews various organisational practices and potential moderating effect (influencers) to develop a coherent and holistic model of engagement. Although personal resources can be integrated successfully in the JD-R model and their effects may be substantial, it is still unclear which place they should occupy in the model (Schaufeli, 2017). For instance, they can be integrated as mediators, 'third variable' - moderator, antecedents of job demands and job resources, or any mixture of these (Schaufeli, 2017). Lastly, job resources have inherent motivational quality; they spark employee's enthusiasm and make them feel engaged, which, in turn leads to organisational outcomes (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). As said by Barnes and Collier (2012), one of the important gaps in the current engagement literature according to is to develop a more coherent understanding of engagement outcomes and how work engagement differs across different organisational settings. Herein, the researcher will incorporate consequence of employee engagement to constitute a possible outcome of employee engagement in the present research. The next section details the chosen variables in this study.

3.3 Drivers of Employee Engagement

The work habits of Malaysian Gen Y employees continue to be a hotly debated subject due their complex nature and high work expectations. The prevailing view in the literature suggests that Malaysian organisations are facing challenges in engaging and retaining their Gen Y employees. Hence, implementing the right engagement strategies is pivotal to driving engagement and improving retention levels.

According to Allen (2014), most engagement drivers are derived from organisational practices which can be either internal or external. Kastova and Roth (2002, pp.216) defined organisational practice as an "organization's routine use of knowledge for conducting a particular function that has evolved over time under the influence of the organization's history, people, interests, and actions". Examples of internal practices are recruitment and selection, compensation, training, performance management while external practices refer to customer base, suppliers, vendor, and markets. The researcher explored some of the commonly used organisational practices and upon rigorous consideration; seven internal organisational practises have been selected as job resources that have potential to drive employee engagement. Following are the organisational practices that deemed relevant to the context of Gen Y, together with brief justifications before focusing in-depth of the chosen variables in Section 3.3.1-3.3.6.

- **Work- life balance (WLB)** - Gen Y does not perceive their job as the centre of their life. They value leisure more than work-hard (Aydemir, Sait, & Caglar, 2016), trying to achieve a meaningful and satisfying life outside of work (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010).

- **Reward and Recognition** - The millennials view recognition as an important aspect of their work and expect their managers to acknowledge their contributions through immediate reward and faster promotions (Chawla, Dokadia, & Rai, 2017). Thus, benefits and rewards are another aspect related to work attributes that need to be cautiously examined and may lead to engagement.
- **Training -** Gen Y employees are seeking every chance to be challenged, demanding formal training and practical experience paired to heighten their career success (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Training helps Gen Y to acquire relevant knowledge and skills at work, which in return makes them to feel engaged (Kirke, 2012).
- **Career Development Program** - Professional development program has been a preference for the millennials to enhance their personal development (Terjesen, Vinnicombe, & Freeman, 2007) and develop their profession through consistent learning opportunities (Eisner, 2005).
- **Perceived Supervisor Support -** Empirical studies show that Gen Y employees seeks for feedback, supports and healthy partnership with their supervisor on a daily basis (Rai, 2012; Weyland, 2011). They are more efficient if the supervisor treats them with respect and provides regular comments regarding their performance (Jones, Brown, Zoltners, & Weits, 2005).
- **Job Characteristic (Task Identity and Autonomy)** - Gen Y employees tends to be independent and be flexible to do their work in their own style with minimal supervision and observation (Weyland, 2011). Hence, they appreciate greater autonomy in workplace due to self-confidence, self-reliance, and

ability to voice out their opinion (Anita & Aruna, 2016). Moreover, the members of Gen Y also seek for job tasks that are clearly defined and meaningful in order for them to feel accomplished (Westerman, 2010).

3.3.1 Work-life Balance (WLB)

The term 'work-life' balance was first introduced over 20 years ago, in conjunction with the trend in the 1970s and 1980s when both men and women began to prioritise work over family, friends, community affairs and other leisure activities (Stroud, 2010). Examples of WLB practices include flexible hours, efficient leave arrangements, childcare centres, and privileges to work-from-home (Muna & Mansour, 2007). Moore (2007) defined WLB as a condition where workers are capable of balancing between their work and other non-work commitments.

WLB programs are seen to have an impact on employees in terms of quality recruitment, retention/turnover, job satisfaction, absenteeism, productivity, and commitment (Abercromby, 2007). WLB programs are considered as an engagement tool to boost happiness at work which directly affects business performance. A lower rate of turnover improves productivity and reduces the cost of training new employees (Burke, 2000). Jawaharrani (2010) agreed that management that takes initiative in creating cultures that value work-life balance and help their employees to achieve a good work-life balance are rewarded with highly engaged workers. According to Lazar et al. (2010), WLB policies could be used by organisations to create a positive impact when it comes to organisational change or culture, as it is capable of reducing work-life conflict and increasing engagement during periods of transition. It is also said that work-life initiatives lead to positive employer branding, encourage organisational citizenship behaviour (Lockwood, 2003).

Additionally, Bird (2006) mentioned that WLB could lead to higher engagement levels and efficient customer service, while an imbalanced and stressed workforce can lead to a reduction in engagement levels. Interestingly, WLB has been seen as an important driver of employee engagement and the opportunity for employees to balance their time between work and family matters is viewed as a crucial element leading to increased performance at work (Berdakar & Pandita, 2014). Other studies (Woodruff, 2005; Rama Devi, 2009) have emphasised the importance of having organisational policies and procedures that encourage WLB such as flexible working arrangements as they could help to engage employees in the long-term. As stated by Brombacher (2014), organisations with strategic work-life balance programs will create a good opportunity to stimulate well-being which can lead to employee engagement. Achieving employee engagement should be a priority for organisations as engaged workers can lead to many positive business outcomes. McPherson (2007) has also agreed with this idea, claiming that companies that encourage continuous work-life balance principle will reap benefits through improved levels of productivity and higher levels of engagement.

On the other hand, millennials seek a healthy work environment which promotes work-life balance policies (Burke, 2000). This is mainly because Gen Y are less known to sacrifice their personal lives for work demands and have a high tendency to leave jobs that compromise their WLB (Eagle Hill Consulting, 2014). In 2013, research conducted in Hong Kong among 14,486 employees from various sectors revealed that almost 60% of employees acknowledged flexible working hours as an important factor when considering whether to join or remain in an organization. Fifty percent of Gen Y regarded flexible working hours as important compared to 22% and 27% for baby Boomers and Gen X, respectively (Tai, Pang & Chung, 2013). These

statistics indicate that WLB is perceived as a core value of work expectation among the Gen Y cohort (Parry & Urwin, 2011)

In a separate study, a Gallup poll revealed that millennials prefer flexibility in their schedules to pursue their hobbies and leisure activities outside of the workplace, while maintaining a high level of productivity (Myers, 2010). As a result, this generation presents a challenge to managers who continually have to motivate and encourage them by providing some flexibility in their jobs (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007). It is evident that in the current work environment, greater emphasis should be placed on WLB in the upcoming years as Gen Y aspire for good WLB (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000) in order to achieve professional satisfaction and personal freedom at work (Sayers, 2007). Rothmann and Baumann (2014) also added that future research should be considered to explore the impact of work-life balance on employee engagement in the context of different gender, generation, cultures and hierarchies in a company. Taken all this factors into consideration, WLB is chosen as an engagement driver to investigate its impact on employee engagement among the Gen Ys employees in the Malaysian financial sector.

3.3.2 Rewards and Recognition

The implementation of effective rewards systems and recognition programs can assist organisations in fostering higher levels of employee engagement (Limaye, Jalali, & Gupta, 2014). Employers who offer balanced and attractive reward and recognition initiatives could have a positive impact on engagement levels among employees. Rewards and incentives take on many forms such as cash, non-cash systems, incentive

travel packages, paid time-off and other recognition efforts in the form of praise, career advancement, optional assignments and many more (Schweyer, 2011).

Rewards may be intrinsic or extrinsic (Ozutku, 2012). Examples of intrinsic rewards are positive feedback gained from the employer, praise, compliments and personal satisfaction derived from the job itself - such as pride in one's work (Mahaney & Lederer, 2006). Mottaz (1985) stated that intrinsic forms of rewards are derived from the content of the job itself such as challenging and exciting work, being given equal responsibility to carry out the job through continuous opportunities to exhibit skills and capabilities, and effective feedback from superiors on accomplishments at work. Extrinsic rewards are regarded as an external form of tangible remuneration and may include job promotion, increased pay, fringe benefits, job stability, new office equipment, and social activities (Ozutku, 2012). Other extrinsic rewards include pay rises, annual bonuses, competitive salary packages, and claimable time-off (Mahaney & Lederer, 2006).

According to Ash & Kay (2012), employees should be recognised for excellent job performance. This will make them feel more appreciated and committed to their company, which means that recognition is a contributing factor in employee engagement. Many researchers conclude that recognition not only can assist in building levels of engagement but also lead to employee motivation (Ash & Kay, 2012). Appelbaum (2002) argues that corporate incentives should comprise of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that foster a long-term stake in the organisation. Nevertheless, both types of rewards are meant to enhance employee engagement as part of High-Performance Work Practice (HPWP) in organisations (Abu Bakar, 2013). Khan and Iqbal (2013) illustrated an example of employees from the banking sector, where a recognition system was adopted as a strategy to enhance performance,

and found that levels of engagement surpassed various business outcomes when employees were rewarded for their accomplishments and recognised for their efforts.

Based on Kahn's theory of engagement (1990), levels of engagement are dependent on the return employees receive in connection with their perceived investment in the job. This return or sense of reciprocity is not only derived from the meaningfulness of the job but also from external forces such as rewards and recognition (Ologbo & Saudah, 2011). This is supported by Sakosvka (2012) who found that employee engagement can be enhanced with an appropriate amount of reward and recognition provided from the organisation. Conversely, Maslach et al. (2001), suggested that burnout can occur when there is a lack of rewards and recognition, and thus, systematic rewards and recognition programs are highly essential in fostering employee engagement. Koyuncu, Burke, & Fiksenbaum (2006) also agreed that the type of reward and recognition plays a vital role in generating positive work experiences and a positive predictor of employee engagement.

In an earlier study by Maslach and Leiter (1997), rewards are one of the factors that contribute to engagement besides other elements such as workload, control, community, fairness and values. In a research study conducted with 736 employees of WorldatWork to investigate the effect of total rewards system on employee engagement, the outcome of the study showed that appropriate rewards programs and policies have an impact on employee engagement (Scott & McMullen, 2010). These findings suggest that companies able to offer rewards that are of significant value to employees, be it materially or psychologically, are more likely to motivate and engage their employees. Rewards and remuneration have existed for many centuries, and a balanced range of rewards with continuous remuneration programs are essential in fostering higher levels of engagement and performance (Schweyer, 2011).

Hence, implementing an appropriate rewards and recognition program is considered a vital weapon for achieving business success and survival during periods of economic downturn (Incentive Performance Central, 2008). With the arguments presented above, it may be said that there is a compelling argument to suggest that rewards and recognition are important drivers of employee engagement.

Nevertheless, these findings from the literature are contradicted by a study of Saks in 2006 in which there was no significant relationship between rewards and recognition and employee engagement. A study by Robinson (2007) concluded that there are other factors besides rewards that are more relevant in stimulating employee engagement. Research has shown that younger employees are more desirous to move up the career ladder quickly and have higher expectations of achievement and success than simply a high salary (Guest, 2014; Lim et al., 2014; Ozcelik, 2015a).

In a similar context, Hewlett, Sherbin, and Sumberg (2009) reported that Gen Y favoured recognition more than remuneration. This is due to their impatience in waiting for tangible rewards to be given as it can take times for HR departments to process such financial remunerations. Therefore, instant recognition such as praise and compliments are appreciated by this generation; thus, managers should be able to readily provide positive feedback for excellent work and performance (Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009). Additionally, retention rates for this generation have been positively associated with a work environment that provides fair remunerations as well as reasonable non-monetary rewards for their hard work and contribution to the company's success (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Hence, rewards and recognition was chosen as a potential driver of employee engagement in this study.

3.3.3 Training

Employees with the necessary skills, wisdom and expertise are highly sought after by organisations to ensure continuous business success. For this reason, companies have acknowledged the importance of implementing learning programs as part of their strategy to keep employees engaged and maintain a high competitive advantage (Kirke, 2012). According to Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), training programs are one of the best methods to stimulate employee productivity and work dedication as the skills and knowledge built through training programs can positively lead to engagement (2012). Investing in the right training programs for employees was ranked as the fourth most effective engagement tool (SHRM, 2012). It also plays an essential role in generating positive outcomes in driving employee engagement (Islam et al., 2012). Kirke (2012) further added that a well-designed training and development initiative could significantly increase employee engagement by encouraging employees to continuously acquire new skills that will enhance their performance at work.

Providing the right type of training and learning support for employees' skill development can enhance feelings of psychological meaningfulness at work. May et al. (2004) agreed that factors that are often associated with psychological meaningfulness at work include using one's strengths, work-role fit, social support and opportunities to learn new skills. In the case of millennials, a report published by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) showed that millennials ranked training and learning activities the highest with respect to what they would appreciate and value the most over the next five years in employment (Zemke et al., 2000). Moreover, 1/3 of the millennials surveyed chose training activities as a priority in their career over salary (Zemke et al., 2000). Hou (2014) suggests that one of the ways to promote

engagement is by giving adequate support for Gen Y and this can be achieved by providing relevant training sessions such as technology savvy programs for Gen Y to apply in the context of their jobs. Hence, implementing the right training and learning program can help in fostering engagement among Gen Y employees, and was thus chosen as a potential driver of engagement.

3.3.4 Career Development Program (CDP)

A career development scheme is a crucial element in fostering engagement and is said to be one of the most impactful ways to foster employee engagement after recognition programs (Conrad, 2013). The CDP approach differs from training as the latter is a learning activity focused on gaining specific knowledge or set of skills needed for a particular job or work tasks. For instance, a workshop on presentation skills is conducted to teach employees how to be an effective presenter. Development programs on the other hand refer to the continuous expansion of skills, knowledge, and capabilities aimed at long-term growth and career advancement (Reardon, 1999). Many organisations consider career development efforts as a tool to boost employee engagement and to increase retention rates (Human Capital Institute, 2011).

Career development initiatives are primarily implemented by companies to engage their employees, retain top talent, and provide equal opportunities for personal growth through career enhancement (Sundaray & Vihar, 2011). It is used by management to improve organisational skills for successful employee retention in the long-run (Khan, Rajasekar, & Al-Asfour, 2015). Offering career development opportunities as a core HR function through career counselling, strategic appraisal systems and opportunities for higher education can encourage employees to contribute to organisational growth

and success (Diriye, 2015). Effective career development enables employees to work towards their career goals and achieve career satisfaction (Lent & Brown, 2006).

The main idea behind implementing career development programs is to encourage their employees to perform better in their career and achieve their potential through engagement (Mustafa Kamil, Hamid, & Hashim, 2013). As mentioned previously, research has shown that millennials tend to have a strong desire to move up the career ladder quickly and possessed greater expectations of achievement and success (Guest, 2014; Lim, 2014; Ozcelik, 2015b). Millennials thus value career development opportunities over financial remuneration and are eager to demonstrate their capabilities and skills through career development initiatives provided by their organisations. In a report by Gallup Inc (2016), 87% of millennials mentioned that professional development is essential to their job advancement. Gen Y professionals are said to be highly ambitious and motivated individuals, and hence expect quick career progression. The Asian Institute of Finance (2014) suggests that managers should work closely with their Gen Y employees to develop clear career development plans that fulfil their professional goals as a means for increasing employee engagement (Shuck, Twyford, Reio, & Shuck, 2014). Based on the literature presented, it is conceivable that CDP could have an impact on employee engagement and was thus chosen as an engagement driver in the present study.

3.3.5 Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)

Based on social exchange theory, the meaning of perceived supervisor support refers to the perceptions of workers on their relationship with their supervisor and their perceived reliability in terms of showing care and concern (Hsu, 2011). Gagnon and Michael (2004, p.173) defined perceived supervisor support as “the degree to which

an employee feels that they are supported by their supervisor". According to Gok, Karatuna, and Karaca (2014), managers play an important role in fostering engagement.

Perceived supervisor support also means the degree to which a subordinate feels supported, respected and able to receive the necessary help from their supervisor (Gok et al., 2014). Researchers have found that higher levels of engagement were correlated to managers who exhibit a good relationship-oriented attitude and supportive of their subordinates (Kahn 1990; May et al. 2004; Saks 2006). This statement suggests that the duty of care provided by the direct line manager or supervisor is critical to fostering engagement.

In research conducted from a sample size of 177 employees in three service sectors in South India, results showed that perceived supervisor support and psychological empowerment strongly influenced levels of employee engagement (Jose & Mampilly, 2015). It was found that support from supervisors had significant positive influences on vigour, dedication, and absorption (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). It is also suggested that employees tend to develop a sense of belonging to their organisation when they receive constant support from their leaders (Shantz, Alfes, Truss, & Soane, 2013). According to Shuck and Herd (2012), leaders and supervisors that make an effort to engage their workers also promote a positive work environment. Moreover, leaders are responsible for serving as role models of behaviours that could, in turn, affect engagement such as being supportive and demonstrating a clear vision about the company direction (Taran, Shuck, Gutierrez, & Baralt, 2009).

The prevailing view in the literature suggests that the interaction between the supervisor and employees is an exchange shaped by a supervisor's ability to encourage two-way communication and foster a healthy culture at work (Eisenberger, et al., 2002). Conversely, incoherent management styles could lead to injustice in the workplace and create disengagement among employees (Maslach et al., 2001). It has become increasingly apparent that there is a lack of mutual understanding between the Gen Y employee and their Gen X or Baby Boomer manager when it comes to organisational rules and processes and work ethic. This is due to different mindsets and work expectations. For instance, Baby Boomer leaders tend to work hard and may sacrifice their personal lives or emotions to attain their career goals. This can be an area of conflict because they expect the younger generation to have a similar work ethic which contradicts the values of Gen Y employees (Eisner, 2005). Hence, leaders that are able to provide support and guidance are at an advantage in terms of achieving an engaged workforce since the picture of an ideal boss for the Gen Y employee is a manager who understand, supports and coaches them on a frequent basis (Arsenault, 2004).

Although previous literature supports that PSS helps in fostering engagement, there is no sufficient evidence of this claim in a non-western context (Agrawal, 2015). As (May et al., 2014 & Saks, 2016) mentioned, there is a lack of consensus in the academic literature on the direct relationship between PSS and engagement. It is this gap in the research which has led to the selection of PSS as a potential driver of engagement in the present study.

3.3.6 Job characteristics - Task Identity and Autonomy

The motivational potential of job resources is underpinned by Hackman's and Oldham's (1980) job characteristics theory (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The original job characteristics model (JCM) was developed by J Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham in 1976 and again was restructured in 1980 (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The model comprised of five elements which are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and job feedback. The JCM is an illustration of the relationship between job characteristics and the perception of the employees towards their work (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Faturochman, 1997).

Lawrence (2001) stated that skill variety, task identity and task significance are important contributors to experiencing meaningfulness at work; autonomy leads employees to experience responsibility; while job feedback establishes appropriate knowledge from work results. According to Mugo, Wario, and Odhiambo (2014), job characteristics have been shown through many research studies over the years as a as a strong driver of employee engagement. Job characteristics play an essential role in engaging employees as employees tend to put more effort into their jobs when given enough resources (Saks, 2006). Certain features of job characteristics contain essential elements of work characteristics that predict engagement (Saks, 2006; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

In a study conducted among employees of state corporations in Kenya examining job characteristics and employee engagement found that four of the five job characteristics had positive significant relationship with employee engagement and accounted 95.2% of the engaged employees are documented using the aspect of job characteristics (Mugo et al., 2014). As supported by Kahn (1992), jobs that have

positive job characteristics will foster higher motivation levels, leading to higher levels engaged employees.

Another study by Fairlie (2011) explained that the existence of meaningful work characteristics was seen as a strong predictor of engagement and other positive outcomes. Additionally, the job characteristics model is believed to assist in enhancing the meaningfulness aspect of the job and contribute to a sense of responsibility for job outcomes. This, in turn, will help to build positive employee attitudes and desired work outcomes such as job satisfaction, productivity, and increased retention and engagement levels. A study by Krishnan et al. (2014) with 428 nurses in a government hospital in Malaysia showed that there was a significant relationship between job characteristics (autonomy, feedback, task significance) and employee motivation and engagement. The findings show that job characteristics was not only a predictor of employee engagement, but employees who experienced challenging job roles feel obligated to portray higher levels of engagement at work (Sakovska, 2012).

On the other hand, the relationship between Job Characteristics and the Job Demand Resources (JD-R) models is not clearly defined. Job characteristics may function as demands as well as resources simultaneously (Johari & Yahya, 2016). For instance, challenging tasks may contribute to high productivity as well as cause stress for employees. Thus, it is difficult to categorise job characteristics into job demands or job resources as the effects of job characteristics are tied to one's individual interpretation of that characteristic (Mäkikangas, Kinnunen & Feldt, 2004; Kuntsi, 2014). Nevertheless, whether job characteristics could function as job resources could be an interesting area of research. Two job conditions (task identity and autonomy)

from the JCM were tested as drivers of employee engagement among Gen Y employees in the financial sector.

3.3.6.1 Task Identity

Task identity refers to the timeline to complete a given task from the start it is distributed (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). For example - does the employee aware of what he/she needs to do or when it has to be completed? Task identity provides a bigger picture of the task direction from the beginning to end with visible outcome, as opposed to doing only a portion of the job (Bakker & Costa, 2014).

According to Trope and Liberman, (2010), it would be challenging to maintain consistent levels of energy and engagement when employees are only exposed to fragmented pieces of larger tasks. A task that comes with high task identity is perceived to be more meaningful than lower-identity task because the employee will have a clear sense of the overall purpose of the task at the end (Sonnentag, 2017). Conversely, lower task identity means actions to complete the tasks are not visibly embedded in the overall task, and therefore it may appear to be less meaningful to the employee. Therefore, it asserts that context of the work does gives identity to the employees when the task is properly designed from a holistic point of view and not for its components.

This is because task identity allows the employees to experience meaningfulness when they are involved with the entire process of the job, from start to finish where the outcome is clearly predicted and visible (Choge, Chepkiyeng, & Chelimo, 2014). Specifically, Gen Y employees feel contented when their job could contribute to company success as they prefer to work on tasks that allow them to experience

meaningfulness (Westerman, 2007). Hence, task identity was selected as a potential driver of employee engagement in this study.

3.3.6.2 Autonomy

Autonomy is the amount of freedom an employee has in order to complete the tasks given. Examples include the ability to work from home or find an effective way to complete the task fast. The provision of autonomy in the workplace provides momentum to employees to experience a sense of belonging and exhibit engagement in their job (Yong et al., 2013). According to Saks (2006), employees have a tendency to withdraw and subconsciously disengage themselves from their roles when organisations fail to implement proper job characteristics or provide the right resources to perform tasks. It is assumed that job autonomy is positively linked to engagement (Saks, 2006; Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes, & Delbridge, 2013) and serves as an antecedent of commitment; however, the latter is dependent on their engagement level (Yong, Suhaimi, Abdullah, Rahman, & Nik Mat, 2013).

In Malaysia, employees remain sceptical in accepting autonomy as a result of traditional work culture and the need to follow standardised operating procedures in completing a task. Similarly, employers are reluctant to provide autonomy to their employees (Lin & Ping, 2016). Based on a study conducted by Yong et al. (2013) in the Malaysian private sector, the presence of autonomy at work encourages a sense of reciprocity through higher levels of engagement in their jobs. Gen Y, in contrast, prefer to express their individuality in their work and often refuse to comply with traditional work standards and routines that do not allow them to show off their capabilities (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2007). They constantly seek autonomy in their job context (McEwan, 2009) and are happy to be in charge at work (Islam et al., 2011).

As a result of this contradiction between the traditional work culture in Malaysia and millennials' need for autonomy, autonomy has been chosen as potential driver for engagement.

3.4 The Moderating Effects of Employee Engagement

The presence of the moderating variable may modify the existing relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Zhang, 2010). Butler (2005) stated that a moderating variable has the capability to change the strength of the relationship, decrease the strength or entirely change the direction of a relationship between two variables. This thesis concentrates on two moderating variables (self-efficacy and high-workload demand). The rationale behind for choosing the two moderators is as follows;

1. The popularity of self-efficacy as a research topic is evidenced by empirical studies in the field in relation to organisational performance, engagement and other organisational outcomes (Carter, Badham, Nesbit, & Parker, 2016). However, there have been few rigorous studies of employee engagement among Gen Y employees that have considered individual characteristics such as self-efficacy and other proactive behaviours.
2. High workload can cause psychological stress, both mentally and physically if the employees are unable to cope with work overload. In the financial sector, heavy workloads are a norm. However for the Gen Ys, they may not handle it well due to their fun seeking nature. The presence of high workload may affect their engagement even if they have been provided with a good job package. Therefore, incorporating element of high workload in the present study would

be an interesting research area to explore since there has been little research on high workload in the context of Gen Y group.

The next section (3.4.1-3.4.2) goes in-depth in explaining each of the moderators chosen in this study.

3.4.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as beliefs of an individual in their capabilities to evaluate and perform the course of actions needed in order to achieve favourable results and valuable achievement (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy also refers to one's ability to organise and deliver the appropriate results for a given task (Bandura, 1997). Few studies on personality traits and organisational outcomes have revealed that an individual's characteristics play an influence on his or her work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction and job engagement (Monzani, Ripoll, & Peiro, 2015).

Personal characteristics such as self-efficacy, optimism, and pro-activeness could have an impact on how an individual perceives their job and the extent to which they would like to engage or disengage in their task performance (Fleck & Inceoglu, 2010; Rana et al., 2014). Based on the studies of employee engagement, individual characteristics can have an effect on engagement levels (Zhang, 2010). Efficacious people believe they have the abilities to achieve success and produce expected results because they are able to regulate their efforts to pursue their goals. Thus, they are more persistent when faced with difficulties and stressful situations (Stajkovich & Luthans, 1998). In recent years, self-efficacy has gained substantial interest in the context of the organisational behaviour literature (Tierney & Farmer, 2011).

Previous empirical studies have shown that employees that possess higher self-efficacy experience greater confidence levels and present a positive attitude towards their work even during difficult periods (Bandura, 1986; Haddad & Taleb, 2014; Erdem, 2015). In a study conducted by Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2007), results showed that engaged employees tend to possess a higher level of self-efficacy compared to other personality characteristics. Additionally, self-efficacious employees have a healthier work style, are more engaged and experience lower stress levels and anxiety (Liu, Cho, & Putra, 2016). These findings thus indicate that there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and engagement.

Moreover, self-efficacy can reduce the tendency of employees to be plagued by negative attitudes and emotional upsets and thus, employees with higher self-efficacy will be more engaged in their work (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). A piece of research conducted with a group of Dutch employees from different careers revealed that engaged staff have more energy and self-efficacious attitudes (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001). As suggested by Liu et al. (2015), employees with self-efficacy traits are less likely to be affected by external factors such as lack of organisational support because high levels of self-efficacy can compensate for such flaws (Liu et al., 2015). Saks (1995) further suggested that efficacious employees possibly not need as much of organisational support to maintain work engagement while less efficacious employees will tend to surrender easily if the work situation turns unfavourable.

In a similar study conducted by Xanthopoulou et al. (2007), three personal resources (self-efficacy, organisational-based self-esteem, and optimism) were examined in predicting employee engagement, and results showed that engaged employees are highly efficacious and believe that they could meet the work demands in a broad array of contexts. Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting that the research on employee

engagement is lacking in terms of documenting the specific role of individual differences in the job resources-engagement relationship because the primary focus has been on predictors of engagement rather than potential intervening variables (Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2012; Park & Gursoy, 2012; Xanthopoulou et al., 2017). Hence, individual characteristics such as self-efficacy could be a potential moderator to the relationship between the chosen antecedents/drivers and employee engagement (CIPD, 2007).

Thus, this study has incorporated self-efficacy as a moderator variable in the relationship between job resources and employee engagement in order to gain a better understanding of the role of individual characteristics in influencing organisational outcomes. Because Gen Y employees are known to possess high self-confidence and self-esteem (Lau, 2014a), together with a strong motivation to perform and impress their manager (Rius, 2015), makes self-efficacy an interesting variable to consider in the job-resources – engagement relationship.

3.4.2 Job demand - High Workload

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, pp.296), job demands refer to "physical, psychological, social, or organisational factors that require “sustained physical and/or psychological” effort on the employees’ part and therefore are thought to be associated with certain physiological or psychological costs". Job demands can present in the form of emotional overload and high workload which could be a strong predictor of burnout (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2006). It consists of the quantity and time pressures of their work, including how fast one must work, how hard one must work, whether there is enough time to complete the work, and

interceptions to the work (Thirapatsakun, Kuntonbutr, & Mechinda, 2014). One of the elements of job demand is high workload demand.

Essentially, perceived workload refers to an employee's perception of their workload when they encounter too many tasks (Leiter & Marie Durup, 1996) or inadequate time to complete the required tasks (Greenglass, Burke, & Moore, 2003). Most studies associate high workload demands with stress (Frankenhaeuser, 1986) evoked either by a substantial amount of duties or high complexity of the tasks (Shaw & Weekley, 1985). Extremely high workload could distract employees from working productively leading to reduced efficiency in their performance at work (Bruggen, 2015).

High workload can negatively impact vigour and energy levels including perseverance, mental resilience and engagement (Tomic & Tomic, 2010). According to Upadyaya, Vartiainen, and Salmela-Aro (2016), high workload was positively associated with depression, poor performance and burnout and negatively related with life satisfaction and engagement. That being said, an increase in one's workload may result in being overworked and having less time to perform the job (Portoghese, Galletta, Coppola, & Finco, 2014).

On the contrary, job resources tend to become meaningful when employees are confronted with high demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Hakanen, Bakker, and Demerouti (2005) tested this hypothesis with a group of Finnish dentists employed in the public sector. The result showed that job resources such as peer support and professional skills are most beneficial in accelerating engagement under conditions of high job demands such as workload. Merelman (1997) also suggested that workload could act as a positive accelerator to drive performance and it can be achieved by providing a certain level of stress or challenge to make the employee perform at their

best. However, there must be a fair balance between achieving organisational goals and employees' needs for sufficient time to complete the work within the specific time frame (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

From the reviewed literature, high workload has the potential to moderate the relationship between job resources and employee engagement. Although Gen Y employees like a challenging job to exhibit their capability, they also tend to give up easily if the job does not provide any meaning to them (Othman & Lembang, 2017). Thus, high workload demands could either increase or decrease the level of engagement of Gen Y employees. To test this assumption, high workload was chosen as a potential moderator of the relationship between the job resources and employee engagement.

3.5 Intention to Quit as a Consequence of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is regarded by organisations to impact various business and individual outcomes (Rana et.al., 2014). Companies are keen to drive their employees towards engagement to ensure continuous business success and performance. Hence, many studies have been conducted with evidence to support the association between employee engagement and various outcomes such as performance, productivity, retention, job satisfaction and other positive outcomes that are beneficial to the current turbulent business environment. An early research by Mobley (1977) viewed intention to quit as the culmination of a decision process whereby the employee initiates the process by evaluating his or her current situation, followed by several stages (for example, evaluating the usefulness of the job search; evaluating the cost of quitting; intending to and searching for alternatives, and then evaluating alternatives compared to the present job) until a firm intention to quit decision is reached.

Brown (1996) defined intention to quit as the vigour of an employee's personal point of view whether or not they want to stay with their current employer which adds the element of demeanour and perception to the definition. Intention to quit is also defined as a process whereby the employees evaluate their current position and have thoughts of leaving their job (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Bothma and Roodt (2012) regarded intention to quit as a withdrawal condition associated with disengagement with work. Employees tend to quit their job when their needs are unmet and a lack of resources available to perform the best in the organisation (Yong et al., 2013).

According to Robyn and Du Preez (2013), an engaged employee has a greater attachment towards their company and is less likely to quit their job. Markos and Sridevi (2010) agreed that organisations with engaged workers have a higher retention

rate as a result of reduced turnover and lower intention to leave the company. Engaged employees are more likely to stay with the organisation, perform 20% better than their colleagues, and act as advocates of the business (Smith & Markwick, 2009). Prior research on engagement revealed that employee engagement is highly related to positive organisational outcomes such as increased productivity, increased profits, increased retention and low intention to quit (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Employee engagement is thus negatively related to intention to quit. Employees who are engaged in what they are doing experience better physical and psychological well-being than those who are less engaged and do not intend to quit their jobs (Meyer & Gagne, 2008).

Bandura and Lyons (2014) suggested that many organisations have started emphasising employee engagement as part of their business strategy to improve retention and reduce staff turnover, which leads to reduced employee replacement, since engaged employees are not expected to seek alternative employment. Thus, engagement is seen as essential to retaining employees for better business performance in the long run (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). In a case study by Shuck, Reio, and Rocco (2011) of a healthcare company invested an amount of US10 million to raise engagement levels through training and development programs, the outcome of investment showed a positive return of a retention rate of 96% just one year after implementation. This result signifies that engagement has a significant impact on employee retention and organisations that continuously look for ways to make their employees happy through engagement can expect higher retention levels (Pritchard, 2008).

Rathi and Lee (2015) mentioned that lower employee involvement at work and high turnover are contemporary challenges that almost all organisations face. As such, leaders have been focusing on various engagement strategies such as allowing employees to participate in the decision-making process, encouraging equal opportunities for growth and development, providing recognition programs, implementing work-life balance polices and other rewards benefits. In the current competitive environment, organisations need to integrate the importance of employee retention into their philosophy and practice because a highly engaged workforce is an indication of healthy organisation regardless of its size, location establishment and economic variance (Devi, 2009).

Furthermore, Andew and Sofian (2012) suggested that employee engagement positively influences employee retention, fosters loyalty and increases overall productivity levels to contribute to organisational success. A report by Tower Perrin (2003) revealed that 66% of engaged staff have firm intention to remain with their current organisation compared to only 12% of disengaged who stated otherwise. In another study conducted on generational work engagement and turnover rate showed that engaging employees is vital, especially for millennials, and can be achieved through incorporating their work expectations and core values (e.g. sense of fulfilment and meaningful job tasks) into actual human resource policies (Park & Gursoy, 2012). Furthermore, employee turnover rates have attracted attention in most organisations during years of economic recession. As a result, employee retention has become part of organisational strategies and involves taking the necessary measures to encourage employees to remain firmly in the organisation for the long term (Balakrishnan, Masthan, & Chandra, 2013).

The researcher became interested in investigating intention to quit as a consequence of employee engagement for several reasons. First, companies around the globe are dealing with the high costs of turnover, particularly in Malaysia, where the turnover rate associated with Gen Y employees is at the alarming state and unprecedented (Wan Yusoff, Queiri, Zakaria, & Hisham, 2013). According to Johanim et al. (2012), Malaysian employers are facing greater challenges in retaining millennials due to several factors such as job hoping, indifferent work expectations and lack of organisational loyalty. Almost 70% of Malaysian employers have reported that employee turnover is a serious issue in their company (Lin & Ping, 2016). A report by Corporate Leadership Council (2008) mentioned that highly engaged organisations have better potential to reduce staff turnover by percentage of 87%, while disengaged ones are four times more likely to leave the organisation than any regular average employee.

Second, it is suggested that an average Gen Y employee remains in one organisation for only two years, as this group will continue to search for greater job fulfilment (Asian Institute of Finance, 2014). According to Sheahan (2008), several surveys have shown that Gen Y employees from the Asia Pacific region have the shortest job tenure compared to other generations, such as Gen X and Baby Boomers. A recent survey by an online job platform on 15,000 Malaysian youth aged between 18 to 35 years old revealed that 26.6% of them were unsure about their current job and thinking about exiting from the company for various reasons such as feeling bored, unmatched needs and seeking better opportunities (Othman et al, 2017).

From the reviewed literature, it can be seen that lack of engagement may be a factor contributing to employees' attrition rate. This research will investigate the impact of all the three dimensions (vigour, dedication, and absorption) of engagement on

intention to quit. That being said, this research aims to provide an insight into intention to quit as an outcome of engagement among Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector.

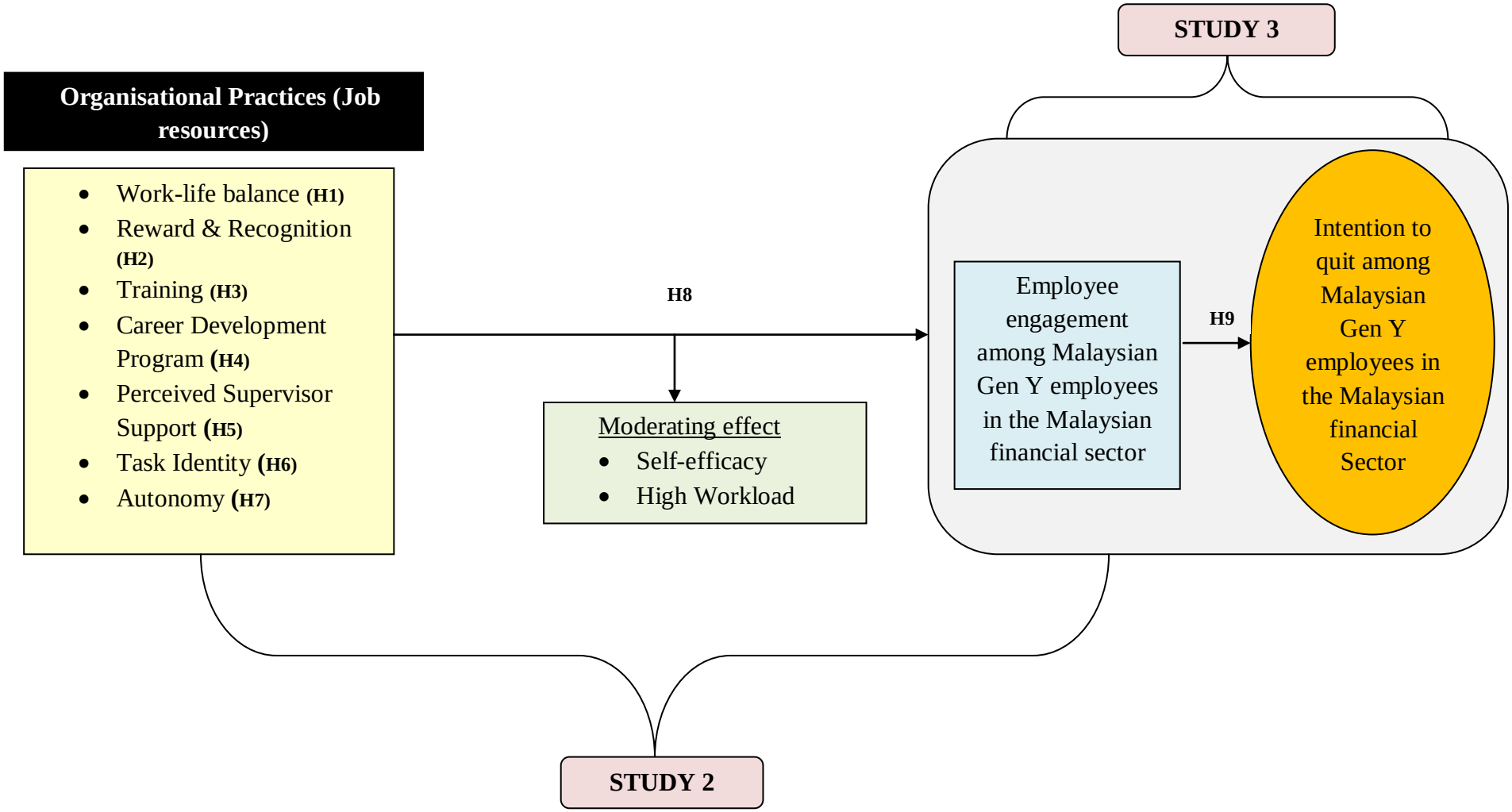


Figure 3.4 Research Framework

3.6 Research Objectives and Research Questions

Based on the review of relevant literature in the preceding sections of this chapter, several research questions have emerged which the present research aims to address. The following section presents the research aims and their corresponding research questions, segregated in three main studies.

Study 1

The term employee engagement is commonly used by HR personnel and rarely well-known to employees across an organisation (Queiri et al., 2015). Thus, the ambiguity of the term engagement among employees has sparked the interest of the researcher to know more from the perspective of Malaysian Gen Y workers. The researcher is also keen to identify the corresponding factors that could lead to feelings of engagement based on their experience at workplace. To achieve these two objectives, Study 1 has used qualitative approach (interviews) to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Malaysian Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector perceive the meaning of employee engagement?

2. What are the factors that could lead to feelings of engagement among Malaysian Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector?

Study 2

Based on the research framework (See Figure 3.4), seven organisational practices were selected as job resources to investigate their impact on employee engagement. As previous literature has showed support for the relationship between the chosen independent variables and dependent variables, this research aims to examine the relationship between job resources (Work-life Balance, Rewards, and Recognition, Training, Career Development Program, Perceived Supervisor Support, Task Identity, and Autonomy) and employee engagement among the Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. As the study has included moderators to understand the effect on engagement level, the researcher is keen to examine the influence of self-efficacy and high workload in the relationship between job resources and employee engagement. The following research questions emerged from the proposition. To answer these research questions in Study 2, a quantitative study in the form of a survey was utilised.

3. What is the relationship between work-life balance, rewards and recognition, training, career development program, perceived supervisor support, task identity, and autonomy in fostering employee engagement among Malaysian Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector?

4. Do self-efficacy and high workload moderates the relationship between work-life balance, rewards and recognition, training, career development program, perceived supervisor support, task identity, autonomy and employee engagement among Malaysian Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector?

Study 3

The prevailing view in the previous literature suggests that retaining employees continues to remain a challenge for organisations to overcome shortages in talent due to high turnover among millennials. Study 3 aims to understand the impact of employee engagement on intention to quit among Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector with the following research question.

5. How does employee engagement impact on intention to quit among Malaysian Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector

Using the similar method as Study 2, survey was used to gather data from the respondents. An in-depth explanation about the research design and methodology is further explained in Chapter 5 of the thesis.

3.7 Research Hypothesises for Study 2 and Study 3

Based on the literature reviews and research framework presented (See Figure 3.4), several hypotheses can be drawn based on Studies 2 and 3. Please noted that no hypothesises were developed for Study 1.

H1: Work-life balance is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector.

H2: Reward and Recognition is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector.

H3: Training is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector.

H4: Career Development Program (CDP) is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector.

H5: Perceived Supervisor Support is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector.

H6: Task identity is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector.

H7: Autonomy is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector.

H8: Self-efficacy and high workload moderate the relationship between the job resources and employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector.

H9: Employee engagement negatively relates to intention to quit among Gen Y employees working in the Malaysian financial industry.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the components of the theoretical framework adopted in the present study. First, engagement models were reviewed in turn, followed by a focussed discussion of the JD-R model, as the base theoretical framework for the present research. This is followed by a discussion on the drivers of employee engagement that have been chosen as part of the current research. The role of two potential moderators, self-efficacy and high workload were discussed as influencers of employee engagement. Lastly, the role of intention to quit as an outcome of employee engagement was elaborated upon. To summarise, a research framework was presented in order to illustrate the interrelationships between the study variables and the direction of the study. The chapter was concluded with the presentation of the research aims, research questions and hypotheses. The following chapter sets the context for the present research, and includes an in-depth discussion of Gen Y and the financial sector.

CHAPTER FOUR
GEN Y AND THE MALAYSIAN FINANCIAL SECTOR

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter focuses on the target context of the study. In the next few sections, information about Gen Y is presented in detail to highlight the background of Gen Y and the Malaysian financial sector. Lastly, literature related to employee engagement in the financial sector in Malaysia is briefly explained.

4.2 Brief Introduction to Generation Y

Gen Y or millennials began as early as 1980 and ends as early as 1996 (Erikson, 2008). This generation is optimistic, highly sociable and have extraordinary expectations for themselves and often looking for meaningful and challenging work in which longer time is needed for them to land a job (Princetonone, 2012). They are also confident, expressive, open-minded, jovial and open to new ideas and ways of embracing life (Main, 2013). According to NAS Recruitment (2014), Gen Ys are the largest population after Baby Boomers, with a total of 76 million people and representing over 20% of today's population. In 2014, this generation comprised nearly 63 million of the total workforce (NAS Recruitment, 2014). By 2020, the Gen Y population is expected to equal Gen X and become the largest population by 2025, which means that this generation will soon dominate business and job opportunities (See Figure 4.1). In the next 10 years Gen Y will likely comprise 75% of the workforce and are likely to hold the most senior positions in industry, since they are known to climb the leadership ladder faster than previous generations (Rius, 2015).

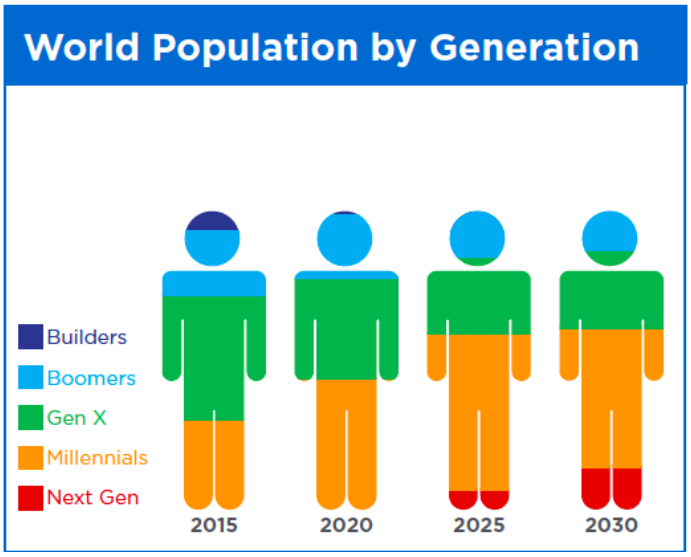


Figure 4.1 Populations by Generation

Source: U.S Census Bureau, 2015

Gen Y employees join the workforce with knowledge of the technical aspects of IT, a bright outlook and incredibly high expectations than previous generations. They are known to be less focused on career ambition and more focused on personal pursuits that meet their overwhelming needs (Smith, 2008). According to Leung (2003), millennials are not categorised by demographic factors alone but with a mixture of values, life experiences and consumer behaviour attitudes. Moreover, they are known as the first generation not to seek approval from authority in order gain access to information, which has resulted in being labelled as an enterprising group of workers (Ordun, 2015). The positive attributes of Gen Y are that this group of workers are trustworthy, more tolerant, well-travelled, and have a keen interest in social service and social responsibility (Furlow, 2011).

Hunter (2012) described Gen Y as having a high sense of entitlement, with high expectations and standards for their employers. These are the group of workers have much curiosity for everything that is happening around them including work tasks and constantly seek flexibility in their jobs (Tempkin & Lucas, 2013).

Compliments and recognition are highly valued, and work-life balance is deemed an absolute necessity when looking for prospective job opportunities (Hunter, 2012). Moreover, the need for career flexibility and the freedom to work less while taking on challenging jobs are what make Gen Y an exclusive group of workers (Lloyd, 2007).

The Gen Y employees usually prefer not to work long hours to complete quality work and are not as devoted as their employers (Lloyd, 2007). Because of rapid advancements in technology, this generation believes that flexible modes of working are equally effective in producing quality work tasks (Lloyd, 2007). Gen Ys are prone to change jobs frequently if the organisation no longer caters to their needs (Brown et al., 2013), and may seek new opportunities with higher levels of appreciation and a better work environment that meet their expectations (Cruz, 2007).

Because Gen Y employees hold a unique mindset from the previous generation, they tend to find flaws with traditional business models and approaches, and often propose technology-driven alternatives if given a chance (Fenn, 2010). According to Jerome, Scales, Whithem, & Quain (2014), Gen Y value the concept of reinvention of traditional practices for better results, and are said to be highly adaptable, creative, and open to change with an energetic attitude. Gen Ys are likely to make deals with similar-minded people, especially when working on a project or business idea. The latter however should not be seen as a lack of confidence or pessimism but a means for them to get inspiration from people who share a similar mindset as themselves (Weyland, 2011). Fenn (2010) argues that in order to predict the future brand of leadership in an organisation, it is prudent to understand how current Gen Y employees behave at work. The working styles of Gen Y are reflections of themselves as future leaders. Typically, Gen Ys are defined based on their personality alone and not through their employment as they identify less with their organisations but are

more inclined toward the job itself (Brown et al., 2013). In terms of work behaviour, they are proactive in solving problems and committed to working for their company's success provided sufficient rewards are offered for their hard work and contributions (Alexander & Sysko, 2013). This indicates that Gen Y employees take their careers seriously and their personalities are clearly evident in the work that they do.

Gen Y are able to express their intelligence in dealing with things differently, are tech-savvy, highly responsive, and great at multi-tasking, although this may not be the most efficient use of their time as they constantly need to be well-managed (Islam et al., 2011). In order to establish a sense of career direction, Gen Y employees actively seek feedback and advice from their superiors as a result of their strong ties and guidance from their parents (Cruz, 2007). According to BSG Concours (2007), millennials gain confidence at work by seeking direction from their leaders on their job performance and recognise the role of knowledge in career advancement through continuous learning.

Accordingly, team collaborations are also regarded as part of Gen Y's work habits. Spiro (2006) stated that team orientation by Gen Y refers to the attitude of coordinating and sharing of information with other group members while maintaining their individualism, which includes the desire to be mentored and coached as individuals. As Gen Y employees are keen to work in teams, whether through group work or virtual projects, organisations should utilise team approaches as a means to allocate tasks and execute business plans for this group of workers (Barton & Skiba, 2006). As Gen Y workers continue to enter the workforce in large numbers, it is crucial for organisations to explore the ways to develop this generation into a robust workforce that will compliment business outcomes.

It is also fundamental for business leaders to acknowledge the distinct attributes of Gen Y workers in order to build a foundation that will promote a positive work environment and a more engaged workforce (Deloitte, 2017). Hence, by understanding their unique generational differences in organisations will be able to develop strategies and plans that get the most of the workforce. Ideally, generational differences should be considered as part of business and human resource strategies to engage, inspire and motivate employees over the long term (Forbes, 2016).

4.3 The Gen Y Population in Malaysia

In Malaysia, Gen Y comprised 11 million people as of 2014, which is 40% of the total of Malaysia's population. The number continues to fluctuate (San et al., 2015). Based on the recent statistics of Malaysia, Gen Y currently makes up 50% of the workforce and imminently predicted to occupy senior management positions (Lau, 2014b), as baby Boomers and Gen X gradually exit the workforce. In 2014, the Department of Statistics of Malaysia revealed that approximately 50% of the labour force is aged 34 years and below, while Baby Boomers are fast approaching retirement and 20% of Gen X are predicted to retire from the workforce by 2025. Ironically, the number of Gen Y employees is expected to increase to 75% in the next few years (Mohamad & Roslin, 2016). In 2009, PriceWaterhouseCoopers conducted research on their Gen Y employees in Malaysia and their expectations at the workplace. Below are the summary of the findings.

Table 4.1 Malaysian Gen Y's perception at Work

Fact 1	Corporate Responsibility (CR) initiatives play a big role when it comes to choosing their employer with 86% millennial tend to select employers that shares the same value of CR and 77% stating that they may leave their company if the values no longer matched to their expectations.
Fact 2	98% of millennial mentioned that strong coaches and mentors are important to their personal development at work.
Fact 3	58% of Gen Y prefers to shift from traditional Asian work practices to flexible working hours and 57% of them regard flexi-hours as the most highly valued employee benefit.
Fact 4	49% value cash bonuses as one of the most preferred employee benefits.
Fact 5	Malaysian millennials do expect a higher degree of job mobility with 36% saying they would like to experience a variety of different roles and fields within a variety of organizations.

Source: PWC, 2009

The table above (4.1) shows that Gen Y expects various forms of benefits from their employers for them to stay longer with a company. For examples, CSR activities, mentoring from leaders, flexi-hours, cash rewards, and task varieties. Moreover, data collected from a group of participants in a training workshop with three generations to view the different core values and beliefs are shown in Figure 4.2 below.



Figure 4.2 Core values and beliefs of Generations in Malaysia

Source: Lau (2014a), the Star Online

Based on the info above, there are several similarities and differences among all three generations in Malaysia. Baby Boomers appear to be the trendsetters of how work should be performed while Gen X employees have learned to follow and adapt in order to achieve personal and organisational success (Lau, 2014b). Collier (2012) states that Gen X holds a different type of work ethic compared to Baby Boomers, as Gen X thrives on diversity, challenge, sense of responsibility, creativity, and honesty, while Baby Boomers tend to be more rigid and results-oriented. As for the Gen Y, an over-structured and rigid way of dealing with tasks is unbearable, as they prefer to break away from such tradition by creating different methods with great speed and the use of technology and often cross boundaries to achieve things which may not be accepted by older generations (Lau, 2014a). In the workplace, Gen Y tends to seek personal growth, meaningful careers, and leaders who encourage and stimulate their professional development. Constant motivation and opportunities for development are considered a necessity for them to develop their skills (Ho, 2015). They like to explore different career choices and select jobs based whether a particular organisation will meet their needs; and as a consequence, do not tend to stay in one particular job for very long time (Collier, 2012).

Research conducted by the Asian Institute of Finance in 2014, however, showed that despite Malaysian Gen Ys appearing to be disconnected from their working lives, engagement levels for this group remain high with 68% of employees perceiving their organisation as a great place to work and 64% moderately motivated to contribute to the organisation's success. However, the same report also indicated that those who were not fully engaged were likely to leave their jobs within two years.

Consequently, organisations are in a crucial situation to experiment with new ways of working and managing its people in order to achieve business continuity and sustainability (Asian Institute of Finance, 2014). The Asian Institute of Finance (2014) also concluded in their report that organisations need to constantly engage, empower and enhance Gen Y employees by providing them with a clear career plan which demonstrates how they can continue to grow and develop alongside the company's own goals and direction. This involves creating challenging and meaningful jobs/tasks that will give them a chance to prove their capabilities and make meaningful contributions to the organisation. Therefore, by recognising Gen Y's priorities at work and effectively integrating these into HR practices is a key to retaining a productive Gen Y workforce (Asian Institute of Finance, 2014).

4.4 The Gen Y in the Context of Engagement and Retention

Developing strategies to engage the Gen Y could be a challenging task and organisations that are able to build a healthy Gen Y labour force are more likely to have a distinct advantage over their competitors (Weyland, 2011). Employers need to make constant adjustments in their strategies for promoting engagement strategies and re-evaluate their current practices to match the needs of future generations of workers, or risk the loss of talent to competitors may occur (Rius, 2015). Gen Y employees are commonly known to be very selective about employment opportunities. It is thus crucial for potential employers to manage, attract and retain them to create a stronger workforce for the future (Crow & Stichnote, 2010). The retention of Gen Y can be improved by involving them in their own performance management, providing guidance on their career progression, aligning their work tasks with their respective career targets, acknowledging their hidden potential and including them into the

company's long-term business plan (Hou, 2014). It is the time for organisations to think in advance on the future course of actions in engaging the Gen Y and that would be to re-assess their organisational processes, current practices and protocols to match with the needs of this generation who value connectivity, openness and innovation (Rai, 2012).

Retention of Gen Y is achievable with a proper recognition program aligned with the needs of the generation. By acknowledging work efforts through recognition or rewards incentives, Gen Y employees are more likely remain motivated and committed as a sense of appreciation is provided to them (Hou, 2014). Although engaging and developing Gen Y may be tedious, organisations able to understand the impetus behind Gen Y's expectations are more likely to have a great advantage over their competitors and reduced intention to quit (Weyland, 2011). Based on Aon Hewitt Best Employers research, however, company rewards are no longer sufficient for employees to stay in their jobs. Employee retention is now influenced by career opportunities, leadership and recognition (Aon Hewitt, 2017b). Kelly Services (2007) stated that the vibrant energy levels and skills of Gen Y have made employers value them only in the beginning. However, as time goes by, leaders face difficulties to understand, retain and motivate them in the long run. Retention has become a greater challenge than recruitment, as Gen Y tend to leave organisation faster than expected (Kelly Services, 2013). Westerman and Yamamura (2007) mentioned that constant misunderstandings and miscommunications can occur when the needs of the new generation entering the workforce are not well acknowledged, which may lead to high absenteeism, lack of commitment level and high turnover.

The difference of attitudes and working habits of Gen Y compared to Gen X and Baby Boomers are relatively distinct and thus issues such as disengagement and turnover may arise if necessary steps are not taken (Ozcelik, 2015b). Thompson (2011) further added that organisation can opt to implement more team oriented tasks and provide support to cultivate engagement at work. As such, employee engagement should be a top priority for any organisations that wish to retain their workforce in the long-run.

4.5 An Overview of the Malaysian Financial Sector

The financial sector of Malaysia is well-diversified and includes banking intermediaries, insurance companies and capital market intermediaries with overall owned assets nearly close to 400% of Gross Domestic Profit (GDP) as of the end of 2013 (International Monetary Fund, 2013). The Central Bank of Malaysia is the ultimate body that supervises and regulates the operations of all banks and insurance companies. The principal role of Central Bank is to facilitate the economic transformation and growth via various forms of economic development phases (Central Bank of Malaysia, 2012).

Table 4.2 Number of Registered Financial Institutions in Malaysia

Financial Institutions in Malaysia	
Banking Institutions	*As of 2012*
Commercial Banks (Local)	8
Commercial Banks (Foreign)	17
Investment Banks (Local)	15
Islamic Banks (Local)	10
Islamic Banks (Foreign)	9
Development Financial Institutions	6
Total	**65**
Insurance Companies	*As of 2012*
Insurance Companies (Local)	26
Insurance Companies (Foreign)	21
Takaful Operators (Local and Foreign)	15
Total	**62**

Source: Financial Sector Blueprint 2011-2020, Central Bank of Malaysia, 2012

In a study conducted by the Asian Institute of Finance (2014) with 600 employers across the financial services institutions in Malaysia, it was that revealed that 76% of organisations indicated that they are facing a shortage of reliable talent in their companies. Even with a growing number of graduates and an increase in the number of companies that continue to downsize, organisations continue to battle when it

comes to recruiting talented workers to fill various job opportunities. Hence, financial institutions that make an extra effort to focus on future talent retention will emerge as winners in the context of talent management (Asian Institute of Finance, 2015).

Another report compiled by the Asian Institute of Finance (AIF) through a survey of over 3,000 finance professionals in Malaysia showed that only 33% were highly engaged and keen to stay with their current employer r long-term (Ang, 2016). This is worrying news given that Gen Ys are expected to fill the employment shortage in the financial industry. Dr Raymond Madden, Asian Institute of Finance (AIF) chief executive officer stated that the Gen Y workforce is expected to rise from 25% to 50% within the next nine years in the banking industry (Dhesi, 2014). Currently, Gen Ys make up around 40% of the financial industry and this is expected to increase to 75% within a short period in the next few years (Dhesi, 2014).

4.6 An Overview of Employee Engagement in Malaysia

In Malaysia, retaining talent in organisations has become a growing issue of concern over the years and one that calls for immediate attention. The recent economic recession and unstable political conditions have led to an unfavourable job market and an overall decrease in the skilled workforce (Asian Institute of Finance, 2014; Kannan, 2010). As Malaysia struggles to address the issue of talents, the key challenge for many HR leaders is to develop strategies for promoting an engaged workforce. A recent study conducted in Malaysia which involved 25,000 top management employees including CEOs and HR directors revealed that organisations that invested in engagement programs tend to achieve higher revenue growth in the long run compared to ones that did not place engagement as their priority (The Star Newspaper, 2014).

According to the Global Employee Engagement Report by Aon Hewitt (2017a), Malaysian employees are ranked equally as Singaporeans in being the least engaged compared to other major Asian markets. The engagement scores for India are at 69%, followed by China, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia (See Figure 4.3). Overall, the engagement scores for the Asia Pacific region dropped from 65% in 2015 to 62% in 2016. According to Aon Hewitt, the reasons for variations in engagement level are driven by economic, political and cultural differences. This profound have developed the researcher's interest to explore employee engagement from the context of Gen Y employed in the financial sector.



Figure 4.3 Employee engagement percentages across Asia region

Source: Aon Hewitt 2017 Trends in Global Engagement Report

However, engaging employees in the financial industry appeared to be tougher compared to other industries as hindrances such as disengagement, high turnover and absenteeism are commonly faced in this sector (Achievers, 2015). The financial industry continuously faces global business challenges which have affected economic outcomes in terms of people, performance and other aspects of operations (KPMG, 2017). This condition has increased awareness among top management for the need to look beyond financial performance and consider other factors such as employee engagement and customer satisfaction as part of their performance indicators (Fabro et al., 2014). Moreover, companies that are endowed with an engaged workforce will not only maintain a competitive advantage but also create a convivial working atmosphere within the organisation (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Each industry has a different composition of workers who may exhibit unique work characteristics and job motivators to retain and engage their employees (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Thus, understanding what naturally drives engagement could

potentially assist the financial services industry to maintain a competitive edge over other industries and retain the right pool of talent to sustain an ever-evolving industry (Decker, 2013). Employee engagement has rapidly emerged as a crucial priority for many organisations in recent years but is especially crucial to the financial sector because of increased turnover and poor retention rates (Jogi & Srivastava, 2015).

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the industry will continue to grow and expand rapidly in the next few years (Yong et al., 2013). For this reason, it is important for this industry to take an earnest attempt to engage and retain their employees (Connor, 2017). This research has chosen the financial sector because the industry is a significant fraction of a country's economic system and development, and hence engaging millennials employees should regarded as a necessity and not as an option.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the study context of the research. It began with brief introduction to Gen Y cohort and the population of this generation in Malaysia. It also covers the state of employee engagement in Malaysia and the financial sector. The next chapter details the research design and methodology that have been chosen to investigate the research questions presented in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

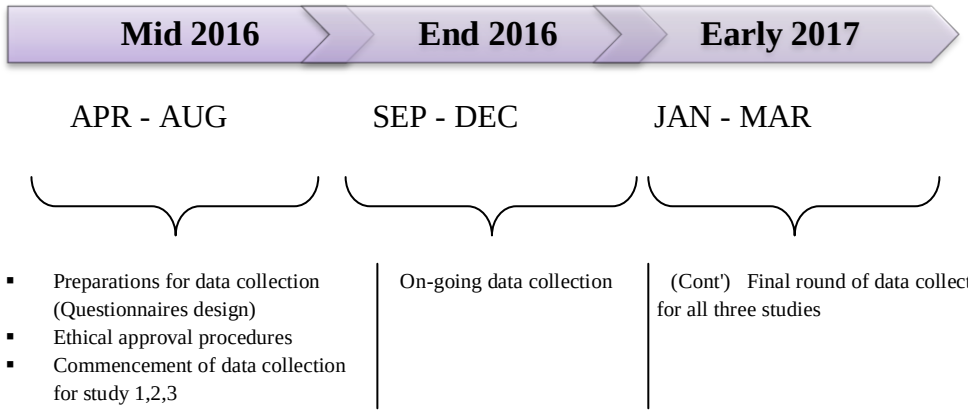
5.1 Chapter Overview

Chapter five details the underlying rationale for the research design and the methodology chosen to investigate the research questions. This is followed by a discussion of the sampling strategy, description of the sample, type of instruments used and how the data were collected and analysed. The chapter concludes with research ethics protocol adopted in the study.

5.2 Research Design: The Rationale Behind

Research design refers to the strategy that is chosen to integrate components of the study in a precise and logical manner in order to avoid pitfalls during collection, measurement and analysis of data (De Vaus, 2001; Creswell, 2014). The research consists of three separate studies comprised of interviews and survey forms. The diagram below illustrates the study timeline for data collection.

Table 5.1 Study Timeline



From the above timeline (See Table 5.1), the whole process of data collection was carried out in a span of one year. The researcher adopted qualitative and quantitative methods to address the research questions presented in Chapter Three. Study 1 was conducted on a purely qualitative basis, while Study 2 and 3 involved a quantitative survey combined in a single data collection. In research designs, Molina-Azorin (2007) identified two factors in data collection (priority and implementation) as shown in Table 5.2. 'Priority' refers to the type of research focus, whether it is equal or domination of one method. In this study, the thesis gives different priority to both the qualitative (qual) and quantitative (QUAN) studies. Data for the study was collected sequentially, with qualitative followed by quantitative. Priority is given to the quantitative study to obtain relevant data to investigate the phenomenon of the study. The reason is because the sample size for the quantitative study was substantially larger and makes a substantial contribution in terms of addressing the research questions outlined in Chapter Three. Moreover the qualitative phase was mainly designed to support and inform the subsequent quantitative phase.

Table 5.2 Type of Research Methods Design

		Implementation	
		Simultaneous	Sequential
PRIORITY	Equal	QUAL + QUAN	QUAL → QUAN
			QUAN → QUAL
	Different	QUAL + quan QUAN + qual	**qual → QUAN** QUAL → quan quan → QUAL QUAN → qual

Source: Molina- Azorín (2007)

***Note:** The primary method of data collection shown in uppercase letters (QUAN, QUAL); while the complementary method is in lowercase (quan, qual).*

According to Bryman (1988), both qualitative and quantitative should be used to get the most out of research outcomes. This concept is known as a pragmatic or mixed methods approach, whereby both techniques are used by the researcher to investigate a phenomenon of a study (Creswell & Clark, 2018). A complementary mixed methods approach was chosen in order to elaborate and cross validate the findings from one method with the findings from another method (Bhattacherjee, 2012). This strategy was adopted in order to increase the interpretation of results, improve meaningfulness and overall validate the purpose of the study (Abu Bakar, 2013).

In sum, this study aimed to understand the interpretive meaning of employee engagement by using a qualitative approach followed by a quantitative exploration of the associations between the predicted variables and levels of employee engagement. Hence, both methods have been adopted to understand different facets of the same social phenomenon (See Figure 5.1). The underlying rationales for adopting both qualitative and quantitative methods in this study are explained briefly below:

I. The interpretation of the research findings would be more meaningful by using two different methods of data collection within the same study phenomenon. The data collected from both approaches could complement each other to produce more comprehensive research findings and contributions.

II. Most employee engagement studies have primarily been conducted by using quantitative methods and few qualitative studies exploring the context of employee engagement have been conducted (Abu Bakar, 2013). Majority of research studies on engagement are conducted by predicting the antecedents and the outcomes of engagement (Saks, 2006). By adding the qualitative element to this study, it is hoped that knowledge of employee engagement

from various different points of view would provide added value and insight, together with the findings from the quantitative study.

III. Lastly, mixed methods were adopted to gain insight into a different dimension of employee engagement. The qualitative interviews allowed the researcher to gain an in depth understanding of the meaning of employee engagement from the perspective of Malaysian Gen Y employees and the factors that lead them to feel engaged at work, whilst the quantitative study enabled the researcher to investigate the relationships between those variables that were deemed to be important in Study 2.

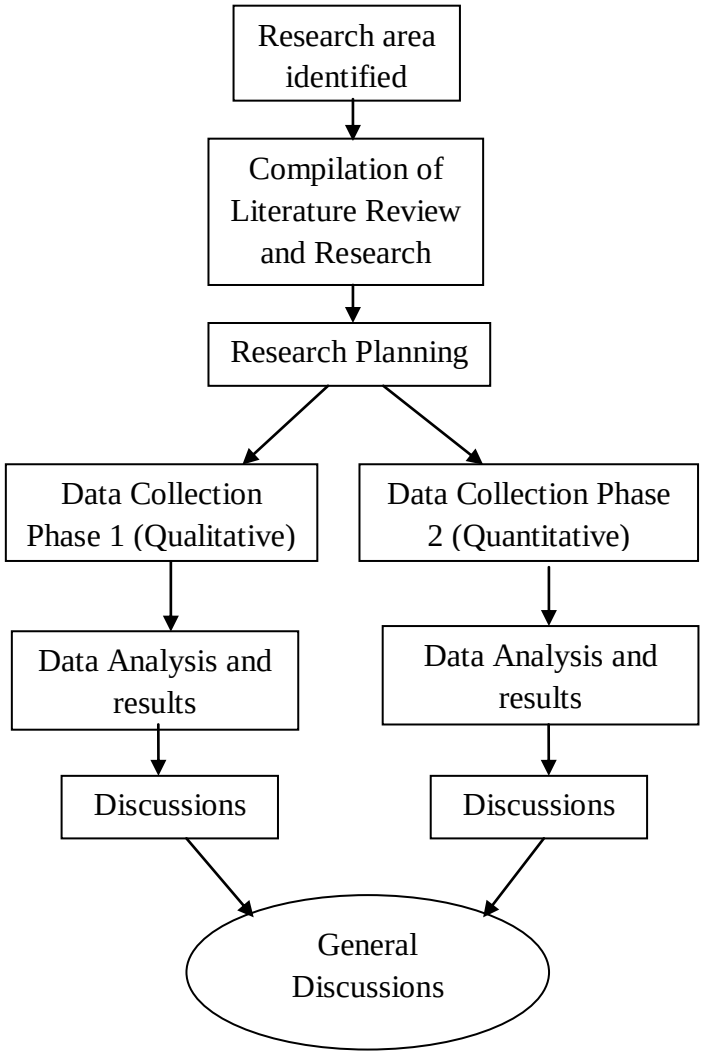


Figure 5.1: Research methodology of the present study

5.3 Participants

The participants chosen for the study were from Gen Y cohort born between 1980 to 1996, and currently working in the Malaysian financial sector. Some of the practical reasons for choosing the particular sample were briefly pointed below:

- The talent crisis in the financial services sector is an ongoing concern which is expected to rise in the coming years due to the Gen Y cohort comprising 25% of the workforce in the financial sector (Asian Institute of Finance, 2014). The Gen Y workforce in the financial sector is expected to increase from 25% to 50% within the next ten years (Asian Institute of Finance, 2014). For this reason, research relating to Gen Y in the workplace could make an important contribution to HR departments in terms of formulating effective engagement and retention strategies. Overall, the proportion of Gen Y workers in the Malaysian workforce stands at approximately 40%, which is comparable to other Asian countries (Ho, 2015).
- The financial sector is one of the largest and most influential contributors to Malaysia's GDP and is expected to grow at annual rate of 8-11% by the year 2020 (Central Bank of Malaysia, 2018). As stated by Trotsenburg (2013), the financial sector holds an important position to regulate the country's economic system; therefore, employing the right talent is extremely vital in terms of the sustainability of financial services industry and the nation.

5.3.1 Sampling Strategy

The sampling technique for each study is explained in detail based on Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Study Method

Study	Method
1	Qualitative
2	Quantitative (Single data collection)
3	

5.3.1.1 Study 1

A non-probability sampling technique was used to obtain data for Study 1. Under this technique, a homogeneous purposive sample was adopted whereby respondents share similarities in terms of age, cultures and job nature. This type of sample also shares a specific set of characteristics or groups, and it is vital to focus on the chosen traits to relate to the topic being researched (Etikan, Musa, & Al-Kassim, 2015). For this study, Gen Y employees working in the financial sector were recruited to participate in the qualitative study. Ten individual interviews were conducted on ten separate occasions. Eight out of ten participants were recruited using the snowballing technique and the remaining two participants were from the researcher's personal network. The snowballing technique is a method of non-probability sampling which relies on referrals from existing study subjects and acquaintances (Katz, 2006; Johnson, 2014).

The first step taken to recruit the potential participants was by contacting the researcher's acquaintances that were currently employed at financial institutions. Since the target sample required the participant to be from the Gen Y cohort, the researcher only attempted to contact those who were born between 1980 - 1996. Having identified the suitable candidates for the interview, the researcher then

obtained referrals from the identified candidates until the desired number of participants was achieved for this study. In total, ten Gen Y participants were successfully interviewed.

5.3.1.2 Study 2 and Study 3

Adopting a similar method as Study 1, data for Study 2 and Study 3 were collected using non-probability sampling (purposive sampling), mainly because the target sample needed to be Gen Y employees from financial institutions. Firstly, organisations listed as financial services were gathered by the researcher from the Central Bank of Malaysia website. This included commercial banks, insurance companies, brokerage firms and Islamic banks. The purpose of generating the list was to identify a few potential financial institutions to approach for data collection. It was impossible for the researcher to approach all the listed institutions due to tight time constraints and varied locations of the institutions.

Potential institutions were contacted directly via e-mail to the HR personnel and a follow-up call was made to briefly explain the purpose of the study. Upon gaining verbal approval, an invitation letter was sent out. Out of the nine organisations that were approached, only three responded with positive response to allow the research to be conducted. However, one organisation decided to withdraw their participation for undisclosed reasons. As a result, only two organisations were used for the quantitative study. In order to maximise the number of responses, the researcher also shared the questionnaire with acquaintances employed in financial institutions. Participation was completely voluntary.

5.4 Description of the Sample

The following section details the sample obtained for each study and the demographic background of the participants involved in the study. The demographics information were mainly used to add context and setting for the sample who participated in the study.

5.4.1 Study 1

Ten interviewees were interviewed from August 2016 until end of November 2016. It took approximately 4.5 months to complete all interviews excluding pilot interviews which was carried out earlier in July 2016. 80% of the final interviewees were female and the remaining respondents were male. The targets were selected based on the snowball technique and therefore the distribution of gender ratio was uneven. Table 5.4 showed the summary of the sample distribution.

Table 5.4 Sample Distribution

Item	Group	No. of respondents
Gender	Male	**2**
	Female	**8**
Age	Between 25-30	**4**
	Between 31-35	**6**
Job Position	Junior Executives	**2**
	Senior Executives	**3**
	Manager	**5**
Years of Service	< 1 year	**1**
	Between 1-2 years	**1**
	Between 3-4 years	**3**
	5 years and above	**5**
Industry	Banks	**6**
	Insurance	**4**

The respondents' names and the identities of the company were kept anonymous to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents. All respondents were full-time employees based in the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, where most major banks and financial firms are situated.

5.4.2 Study 2 and Study 3

Respondents for Study 2 and Study 3 were recruited in a single data collection through online self-administered survey platform. Single data collection strategy was used in order to save time to gather responses without the need to distribute two different set of questionnaires separately. A total of 309 responses were received and after omitting responses from non-Gen Y and non-Malaysian, the number was reduced to 279. Further data cleaning processes were performed and the final number of usable surveys reached 232 responses.

Both male and female respondents were marginally equal, with a difference of 0.8%, which indicates a good balance of gender distribution (See Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 Gender Frequency

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	117	50.4
Female	115	49.6
Total	**232**	**100.0**

51% of the respondents were single and the remainder were married (44%) or divorced (5%) (See Table 5.6).

Table 5.6 Marital Status Frequency

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	119	51
Married	101	44
Divorced	12	5
Total	**232**	**100**

Based on table 5.7, most respondents who took part in the survey possessed a basic undergraduate degree (61.2%), followed by master's degrees or equivalent. The rest of the respondents were Diploma holders and below (15.9% and 3.4%).

Table 5.7 Education Background

Education Background	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Secondary School and Below	8	3.4
Diploma/Professional Cert	37	15.9
Bachelor's degree	142	61.2
Post Graduate Degree (Masters and etc)	45	19.4
Total	**232**	**100.0**

For job ranking (See Table 5.8), the vast majority of the respondents in the study were assistant managers and above (34.9%). This was followed by senior executive and junior executive (33.2%, 18.5%). Non-executive and entry-level employees were only 6.9% and 5.6%, while employees at the top management participated least in the survey (0.9%). In Malaysia, executive employees can be divided into two levels. Junior executive has less than two years of work experience while senior executive is between three to four years.

Table 5.8 Job Ranking

Current Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Entry level (No experience)	13	5.6
Non-executive	16	6.9
Junior executive	43	18.5
Senior Executive	77	33.2
Assistant Manager and Above	81	34.9
Top Management (Director and above)	2	0.9
Total	**232**	**100.0**

As for income range, most respondents were earning above the average income (> RM4500). This is due to the fact that most respondents were senior executives and above (See Table 5.9).

Table 5.9 Income Range

Income Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below RM 1500	3	1.3
Between RM 1501 - RM 2500	29	12.5
Between RM 2501 - RM 3500	37	15.9
Between RM 3501 - RM 4500	51	22.0
Above RM 4501	112	48.3
Total	**232**	**100.0**

The majority of the respondents were from private firms (69.8%), followed by public institutions (18.1%). Government-linked financial institutions were least participated in the study (See Table 5.10).

5. 10 Organisation Category

Organisation Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Private	162	69.8
Public	42	18.1
Government-linked financial institution/organisation	28	12.1
Total	**232**	**100.0**

5.11 Age of the Respondents

Age	Number of employees
22	3
23	5
24	3
25	16
26	12
27	14
28	25
29	19
30	27
31	17
32	32
33	20
34	18
35	18
36	2
37	1
Total	**232**

As the targeted respondents were Gen Y employees, ages ranged between of 22 and 37 (See Table 5.11). The Gen Y employees' ages ranged from 22 to 37 years old (s.d = 7.6).

5.12 Total Years of working

Total number of years working	Number of employees
0.58	1
1	12
1.5	1
2	13
3	13
4	9
4.5	2
5	20
6	31
7	21
8	24
9	24
10	41
11	6
12	3
13	3
14	4
15	3
17	1
Total	**232**

Table 5.12 shows the total number of years working including the current employment. Most respondents had worked on average between five to ten years. The shortest tenure was less than a year and the longest tenure was recorded at 17 years of work experience.

5.13 Years working at the current organisation

Number of years working at current organisation	Number of employees
0.5	3
0.58	1
1	37
1.5	2
2	53
3	30
4	19
5	30
6	25
7	17
8	7
9	1
10	5
11	1
12	1
Total	**232**

Most of the participants had worked between 1 to 7 years in their present company. Longest tenure was 12 years (one respondent) while four respondents were newly joined (< less than 7 months) at the time the survey was taken.

5.14 Number of times - Switching jobs

Number of times of switching jobs	Number of employees
0	48
1	28
2	58
3	52
4	30
5	11
6	2
7	3
Total	**232**

From the table above, participants in the study had changed their jobs on average between 0 - 4 times. A plurality of employees had switched their job two times (58 employees) while the fewest had switched six times (2 employees).

Table 5.15 Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Malay	63	27.2
Chinese	76	32.8
Indian	84	36.2
Others	9	3.86
Total	**232**	**100.0**

Lastly, the ethnic distribution was diverse. All three major ethnicities in Malaysia participated in the survey (Table 5.15). In sum, detailed descriptions of participants have been presented for each study. The next section details the instrument used for the present research.

5.5 Instruments

The instruments used in this study consisted of semi-structured interview (Study 1) and survey from established scales (Study 2 and 3).

5.5.1 Study 1/ Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used to minimize undesirable information and encourage freedom of speech from the participants. Every interviewee was allowed to share their experiences and opinions without being judged and prejudiced. Some of the questions were designed and phrased at the time of the interview. This is a common phenomenon, as most of the interference questions tend to emerge during the interview itself, allowing both parties to experience flexibility to probe for further details or discuss the issues in depth (Creswell, 2014).

Each interview session began with general demographic questions such as the profile of the participant and their employment background. It is important to make respondents feel comfortable and at ease with the interviewer by asking more about themselves to break the ice. Next, interviewees were asked about the concept of employee engagement and their understanding of the term in their own words. The following sets of questions were mostly related to their job nature, supervisor, the company HR policies, and the environment of the organisation. To further measure the receptiveness of the financial sector's role in HR practices, certain questions about training, reward systems and performance appraisal were asked.

By abstracting this information, the researcher was able to link to factors that might lead the interviewees to feel engaged and finally assessed their level of engagement towards their organisation. However, questions varied according to the position level of the participants. For example, managers were asked in detail about their

management style towards their subordinates to understand the importance of infusing engagement within a team.

Pilot study

A pilot study for Study 1 was conducted in early July 2016 prior to actual data collection to assess the suitability of the interview questions. The agenda of a pilot study is to ensure the relevancy of the questions is maintained, cross-check of the language delivery and the transparency of the questions. Five respondents participated in the pilot study to review the semi-structured questions to identify any gaps that occurred. Interview duration was also recorded and additional questions were seen to be needed to extend the interview time to ensure more information will be gathered when the actual interview takes place. Comments from participants were noted and necessary amendments were made to the questions after the pilot study. A list of finalised questions is attached in Appendix 5

5.5.2 Study 2 and Study 3/ Surveys Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was developed based on the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Three. The questionnaire had a total of 74 items and was comprised of five sections;

1. Demographic information
2. Drivers of engagement (job resources)
3. Employee Engagement
4. Intention to quit
5. Potential moderators: self-efficacy and high workload demand

The survey was created in an online survey tool called Qualtrics.com which was provided by University of Nottingham. The 5-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire (Strongly Disagree-1, Disagree-2, Neutral-3, Agree-4, and Strongly Agree-5). The survey link was created for sharing purpose with the participating organisations and potential respondents (See Appendix 6 for full version of the questionnaire). A simple cover note was included to brief the purpose of the study before the respondents agreed to survey participation.

5.5.2.1 Measures and Reliability Coefficient

Work-life Balance (WLB)

WLB was measured using a three-item scale developed by Marks and MacDermid (1996). The scale measures the extent of overall level of enjoyment, satisfaction and management of all life's roles, including work and family roles (Valcour, 2007). Initially, the original scale contained only one single item *('Nowadays, I seem to enjoy every part of my life equally well').* Two additional items were added afterwards *('I am satisfied with my work–life balance, enjoying both roles' and 'I manage to*

balance the demands of my work and personal/family life well'). Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2005) noted the extra modification as being particularly helpful to measure the overall level of satisfaction, enjoyment and management of life. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was 0.80 (original scale). The reliability score for the present study is 0.710.

Reward and Recognition

The scale used to measure reward and recognition was developed by Demo, Neiva, Nuness and Rozett (2012). The scale is used in managerial practice to diagnose employees' satisfaction towards the rewards system to evaluate and optimise employees' performance and productivity (Demo et al, 2012). The study conducted by Demo et al. (2012) has used both the qualitative and quantitative method to develop the scale. There are five items in the scale. Some of the items include: *('In the organization where I work', 'I get incentives such as promotions, commissioned functions, awards, bonuses, etc' ; 'the organization I work for offers me a salary that is compatible with my skills, training, and education'; 'in the organization where I work, my salary is influenced by my results').* Demo et al. (2012) created the scale to validate the HRM policies and practices scale by conducting the study with a sample size of 632 employees from various organisations and background. The scale reliability was assessed by psychometric parameters such as Conbrach Alpha, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Principal Axis Factoring (PAF). The reliability coefficient were 0.81 (original scale) and 0.714 (present study).

Training

The scale for training was adopted from the same study as reward and recognition by Demo et al. (2012). The scale consisted of six items *(e.g.: 'In the organization where I work',' training is evaluated by participants', 'the organization I work for stimulates learning and application of knowledge')*. The reliability coefficients are 0.81 (original scale) and 0.670 (present study). An alpha score above 0.75 indicates a scale of high reliability while alpha score of 0.5 to 0.75 is generally accepted as a moderate reliable scale (Spector 1992; Hinton, Brownlow, McMurray, & Cozens, 2004). Therefore, the Cronbach Alpha of the present study is accepted with moderate reliability.

Career Development Program

The career development scale was adopted from Coachline's Career Development Survey (http://www.orghealth.com/cdn/). This scale has been used in a number of studies related to career planning, career development and job satisfaction. Sample of items includes: *('A formal process to attain career development is important to me'; 'I understand the need for continuous career development')*. The scale has five items in total and was used in a study conducted with 550 bank employees in Nigeria to investigate the link between career planning and career development, and in turn, with job satisfaction and career commitment. The reliability score attained in that study was 0.9. The Cronbach Alpha for the present study was 0.704.

Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)

The PSS scale was measured by four items of Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli (2001) which had been adopted from the original 36 item of perceived organizational support scale of Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa (1986). The shorter version of the original scale has good internal reliability score and is used to measure employees' well being and relationship with their superior (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2001).

Sample items from the scale are: *('My supervisor cares about my opinions, 'My work supervisor really cares about my well being.')*. The Cronbach Alpha of the original scale and the present study were 0.88 and 0.716, respectively.

Task Identity and Autonomy

To measure task identity and autonomy, Oldman and Hackman's Job Diagnostic Survey (1974) was used. The survey was created based on the Job Characteristics Model (1980) which measures five elements of job characteristics individually (Skill Variety, Task Identity, Autonomy, Task Significance and Job Feedback). The original Job Diagnostic Survey questionnaire consists of 87 questions and is divided into eight sections. For the present study, two job characteristics were measured individually (Task Identity and Autonomy). Sample items from the scale include *(Task Identity: 'I do a complete task from start to finish, the results of my efforts are clearly visible and identifiable'; 'I make insignificant contributions to the final product or service', Autonomy: 'I make insignificant contributions to the final product or service'; 'I make insignificant contributions to the final product or service')*. The Cronbach Alpha values of the present study were 0.650 (Task Identity) and 0.708 (Autonomy).

Engagement

Employee engagement was measured by using the 17-items Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker (2002). The scale consists of three subscales (vigour, dedication and absorption). Earlier psychometric studies have suggested that the scale has rational construct validity and was distinct from the concept of burnout (Schaufeli et al. 2002). Vigour was assessed by six items (e.g., 'At my job, I am very resilient, mentally'; 'I can continue working for very long periods at a time'). Dedication was measured by five items (e.g. *'I am enthusiastic about my job'; 'My job inspires me'*). Absorption has

six items (e.g. *'I get carried away when I'm working'; 'I feel happy when I am working intensely'*). The Cronbach Alpha of the original scale was 0.93 and 0.820 for the present study.

Intention to Quit

Intention to quit scale was developed by Jenkins (1993) and Kransz, Koslowsky, Shalom, and Elyakim (1995). The scale has three items and has been used in studies related to turnover intention to understand employees' intention to leave the organisation (Randy & Francesco, 2003). Sample items from the scale include: '*Presently, I am actively searching for other job'; 'I intend to leave the organisation in the near future'*. The Cronbach Alpha values were 0.93 (original scale) and 0.825 (present study).

Self-efficacy

Self Efficacy Survey (SES) is based on the socio-cognitive theory of perceived self-efficacy proposed by Bandura (1997). The self-efficacy scale was designed to evaluate ten functional areas of life: intellectual, educational, family, religious, professional, moral, health social, life standard, and erotic. The original scale of Bandura was revised multiple times to fit into various area of research. For the current study, the researcher adopts Bandura's 6-items scale from a study by Saragih (2011), who used the scale to investigate the relationship between job autonomy and work outcomes (job performance, job satisfaction and job stress) with self-efficacy as a mediator in a sample of 190 banking salespersons in Indonesia. Examples of items from the scale are as follows: *'I feel confident that my skill and abilities equal or exceed those of my future colleagues'; 'I feel I am overqualified for the job I will be doing'*. The Cronbach Alpha was 0.868 (Saragih study) and 0.863 (present study).

High workload

High workload was measured by using the Karasek et al.'s (1985) Job Content Survey. The scale was developed for users to access work related demands which could affect job satisfaction and employee's well being at work place (Rehman, Khan & Ullah, 2011). The original scale of Karasek has 16-items under the dimension of physical demands. This is further divided into four sub-scales consisting of qualitative demands, workload demand, employee demands, and conflict demands. The workload demand scale has four items and example of items includes: *'The job involved a lot of repetitive work'; 'The job involved an excessive amount of work'*. The reliability coefficient for the present study is 0.751.

5.6 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection for Studies 1, 2, and 3 were discussed in detail in the following section.

5.6.1 Study 1

Participants were officially contacted in late July 2016 after gaining ethical approval from the faculty. All participants were contacted through phone calls and followed up by an email to confirm their attendance for the scheduled interview session. Date, time and venue were arranged individually with each participant at their convenience. Reminder phone calls were made a day before the interview session. It took approximately thirty minutes to one hour for each interview to be completed by the researcher. Each interview was recorded by using a digital recorder for easier transcribing.

It is essential to explain the objectives of the interview in detail before the interview begins and the type of measurements that have been taken by the researcher to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants (Kumar, 2011). As such, a number of steps have been implemented to ensure the whole interview process went smoothly:

Step 1: Participants were informed in advance through a brief phone call about the purpose of the interview before starting the interview process.

Step 2: Interviews were arranged in a venue that was considered safe, comfortable, private and free from distractions and noise.

Step 3: Participants were given a consent form and interview protocol sheet to read before the interview session. Participants were also informed that their participation was absolutely voluntary, and they were allowed to withdraw at any stage during the study. In the event of withdrawal, the data would be disposed of safely.

Step 4: Upon completion of the interview, a thank you email was sent to each participant to thank them for their contributions. Contact details were also provided for further enquiries about the research.

5.6.2 Study 2 and Study 3

For the current study, an online self-administered survey was used to gather responses. Approval to obtain data from the respective organisations was granted and two organisations agreed to endorse the study. The questionnaire link was sent out in Mid-Oct 2016 via an e-mail to an assigned HR representative who assists the researcher to forward the link to their employees. All respondents were given approximately 14 days to respond. A snowballing technique was used to get more

responses by sharing the survey link to acquaintances that work in the financial firms. After 14 days, an e-mail reminder was sent to the relevant liaison staff to assist in follow-up with the respondents.

However, the initial number of 90 responses was not sufficient enough to proceed with the analyses. Therefore, more time was given to respondents to complete the survey. After two months, the numbers were still relatively low (198 responses). Thus, a second email reminder was sent in the 10th week to boost responses. In the fourth month, the researcher decided to speak with the relevant HR liaison to address the issue of incomplete responses. Upon discussion, the researcher was given access to contact the division managers to follow-up with their staff to complete the survey. First, the researcher directly contacted the managers through phone calls to find out the real cause for the incomplete responses. It was revealed that most employees did not take the survey on a serious note and ignored the survey email. After explaining the purpose of the survey and how it could help the organisation to understand their Gen Y employees better, the managers were supportive and agreed to encourage their staff to complete the survey on voluntary basis. Fortunately, this strategy has helped boost the responses rate further. The survey took in a total of six months to complete due to low response rate in the first three months. Ultimately a total of 309 surveys were received (before data cleaning) and 232 (after data cleaning).

5.7 Data Analysis Procedure

The procedures for analysing the data were explained in detail for Study 1, Study 2, and Study 3 in the next section.

5.7.1 Study 1

The first step in qualitative data analysis is to decide on the transcription method for converting the recording into text. According to Psathas and Anderson (1990), data collected through audio or video should be processed by verbatim transcription which involves coding process to create relevant themes. In the present study, all responses from the participants were transcribed verbatim for content analysis and processed by using the NVIVO software Version 21. All recordings were transcribed as in the original context without any modification to ensure the originality. Rubin and Rubin (2004) suggested that it is fundamental to include the defects that found in the recording into transcripts such as mispronunciation, mixed languages, grammatical errors, and non-verbal tone for accurate interpretations and analysis.

Method of Analysis

Adapting Creswell's qualitative data analysis procedure (2003) (See Figure 5.2), the analysis process is comprised of categorisation and themes. The first step is reading all the transcripts carefully to understand the context, followed by coding the data accordingly. NVIVO software (Version 21) was used to export the transcripts for easier identification of the descriptive texts and labelling the nodes accordingly. Next, the identified nodes or sub-themes were further segmented to form the main themes of the study based on the research questions.

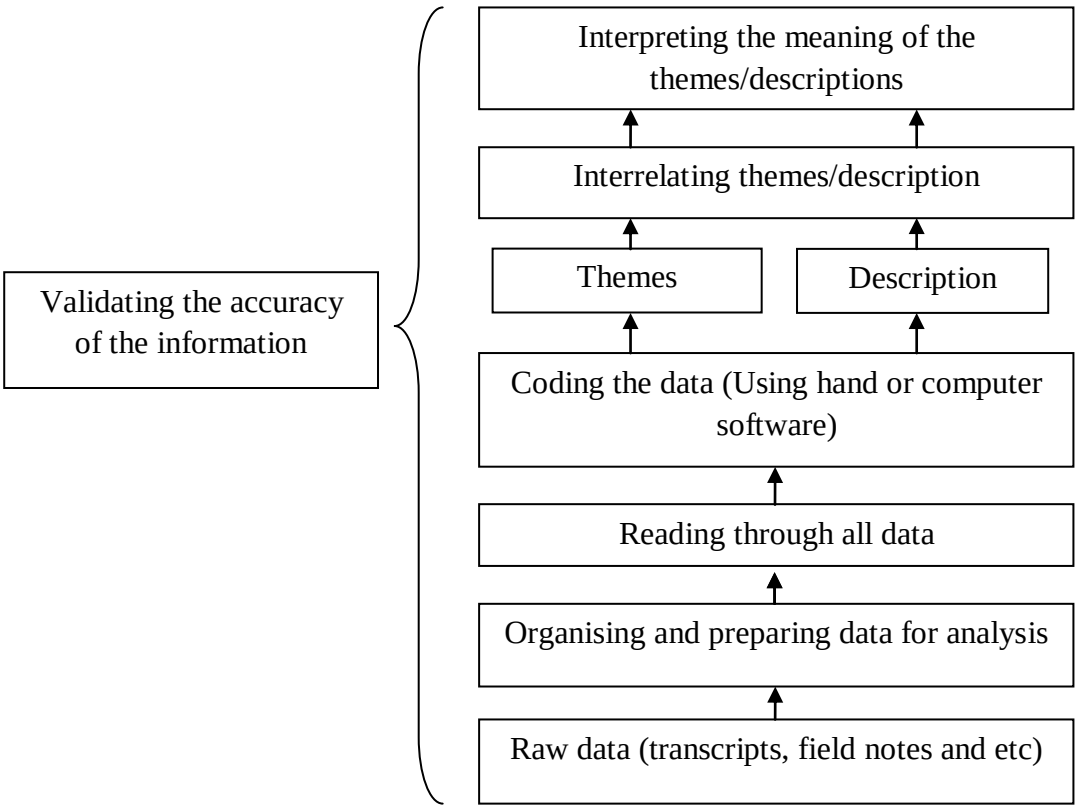


Figure 5.2 Steps in Qualitative Data Analysis

Validity and Reliability

A few simple steps were taken to enhance the quality and accuracy of the interview findings based on Gibbs (2007):

- Transcripts were checked through to ensure it does not contain any errors or miswritten during the process of transcription.
- Avoid inserting misleading codes so that the data do not drift from the actual meaning. This can be avoided by matching the data with the codes precisely and recording simple notes about the codes and its definitions.
- All codes or sub-themes emerged from the transcribed interview were cross-checked with an acquaintance of a similar research background to ensure the contents were coded correctly and do not overlap with other constructs. This step is crucial to maintaining the reliability of the data.

Reflexivity

All participants involved in the interview process were well-informed about the purpose of the interview in advance. Therefore, the process of collecting data was smooth and received full co-operation from all the participants. However, there were several challenges during the qualitative data collection process due to the fact that the employees were from financial institutions, as participants were reluctant to share information pertaining to company policies and management issues. Hence, the researcher assured the confidentiality and anonymity of the information collected to reduce scepticism effect during the interview session. Providentially, there was no issue of incomplete information as most respondents expressed full support, although they were slightly reserved in the beginning. As the respondents and the researcher were both Gen Y, this has helped to break the ice and make the conversation ease. Generally, the participants were open in sharing their opinions about their work

experiences and often blunt in expressing their views which have assisted the researcher to attain the required information for the interview.

5.7.2 Study 2 and Study 3

Data analyses were carried out with SPSS version 24 for study 2 and study 3 by the following principal methods as below;

Data Cleaning/Screening

To start, the raw data were cleaned by removing non-Gen Y employees, non-Malaysian, and missing values from the data set. As for data screening, data were tested for violation of statistical assumptions. Normality tests through P-plot were computed to find out if the samples are normally distributed. The P-plot results showed that the samples were normally distributed. Second, skewness and kurtosis tests were conducted to measure the degree of symmetry in variables distribution. All variables were well fit within the range of -2 and 2 cut-offs as per suggested by George and Mallery (2010). Next, multicollinearity tests were conducted as part of the requirement for regression analysis by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) score. VIF score that greater than or equal to 1 is considered acceptable while VIF values above 10 indicate the presence of multicollinearity (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). All variables in the present study have revealed VIF values above 1 and less than 2.5 which is good and there was no issue of multicollinearity. Lastly, removing extreme scores is crucial to ensure that there is no problem of outliers. Z-scores were used to identify outliers with standardized residual values above 3.3 and less than -3.3 (Hair et al., 2010). Few outliers were found, and these were removed from the data set.

Common Method Bias

Common method bias (CMB) occurs when the variations in responses are caused by the instrument rather than the actual predispositions of the participants that the instrument attempts to discover (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, & Lee, 2003). One of the simplest ways to test if CMB exist in a study is to use Harman's single factor score, in which all the items are loaded into one common factor. It was suggested that total variance for single factor should be less than 50% to ensure that CMB is not an issue (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

For the current study, all variables were entered into a factor analysis, extracting 17 factors accounting for 89.5% of the total variance (Study 2). The first factor accounted of 9.7% of the variance. As for Study 3, 51% of total variance was extracted from four factors, and the first factor accounted of 23.5%. It can be concluded that this data set was free from CMB because no single factor accounted for majority of the variance (Podsakoff et al., 2002).

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

CFA is commonly used to test the suitability of the existing and established scales for the sample population in a study (Koch & Harrington, 2008). CFA is a statistical technique used to verify the factor structure of a set of observed variables. CFA allows the researcher to test the hypothesis that a relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs exists (Hair et al., 2010). All measurements used in the present study were from established scales and unmodified. A detailed discussion of the CFA scores for each scale was presented in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8.

Regression Analysis

For Study 2, hierarchical multiple-regression was used to test the relationship between the independent variables (job resources) and the dependent variable (employee engagement), after controlling the effects. All three dimensions of employee engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) were tested individually as well.

Study 3 was aimed to examine the impact of employee engagement on intention to quit. Similarly, hierarchical multiple-regression was used to test the impact of employee engagement on intention to quit, after controlling the effects. To determine the strongest predictor of intention to quit, all three dimensions of employee engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) were tested individually by using the same method.

A detail explanations about the result finding is presented in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 respectively.

Moderation Analysis

The PROCESS Macro by Hayes is a modelling tool in SPSS to test the direct and indirect effect of multiple mediators and the interaction in moderation analysis (Hayes, 2013). In study 2, the PROCESS method was used to test the interaction effects of self-efficacy and high workload in strengthening the relationship between job resources and level of engagement.

5.8 Research Ethics Compliance

Permission to conduct data collection for the qualitative and quantitative study was applied for by the researcher to the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus in April 2016 and July 2016. Approval was granted on June 2016 (QUAL) and August 2016 (QUAN) respectively. To facilitate the effectiveness of the data collection process, the researcher sought to comply with the Code of Ethics and Conduct of the British Psychological Society (BPS) and the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011) published by the British Educational Research Association. The focus was given to the following areas;

Privacy and Confidentiality

To protect the confidentiality of communications, data, personal details, reports and privacy of the all the parties involved directly or indirectly in the research, the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were guaranteed. All records of the study were kept confidential and in all reporting, participant identities were not be revealed. Personal details such as the name of the participants were not requested in the questionnaires and their names were not disclosed in the report.

Honesty, Openness and Candour

Honesty policies are important in all area of communications. One should practice honesty in reporting data, findings, methods, procedures and other relevant research chronology that takes place and never attempt to fabricate, forge or misinterpret the data at any event. They must strive to keep promises and agreements, act with sincerity to ensure the process of conducting research has fulfilled the necessary criteria and aim to avoid prejudice element in collecting data, analysing the data, interpretation of results, peer review and reporting real-life experiences in the

research. It is important to avoid bias and judgement in extracting information and data from respondents.

Competence

It is important to maintain and constantly improve the professional image, competency level, and expertise of a researcher throughout the study by continuous learning and developing oneself for better research progression.

5.8.1 Storage

All data and records collected from the study were kept confidential and participants' identities were not disclosed under any circumstances. The researcher was the only authorized person to retrieve all the data, which was uploaded into the Dropbox account with a secure password to ensure the safety of the data. All data from both qualitative and quantitative study will be stored for a duration period of 7 years after the final completion of the project in accordance with the University's policies and Data Protection Act (2010).

5.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter described in detail the rationale behind for adopting the qualitative and quantitative method to answer the research questions. The sampling strategy for each study was presented, followed by a description of the sample. The instruments used in the study were duly explained. Data collection and data analysis procedures were discussed in detail for each study. Finally, to conclude the chapter, ethical considerations were discussed. The following chapter proceeds to present the qualitative findings (Study 1).

CHAPTER SIX
STUDY 1: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

6.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the emergence of the themes and sub-themes, followed by the identified themes and sub-themes with supporting quotes from the interviewees. Lastly, a discussion of the findings is presented for each research questions.

6.2 Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the meaning of employee engagement and the factors that drive engagement among Gen Y employees. The interview data were obtained from ten Gen Y employees at various financial institutions in Malaysia through the semi-structured interview. Open-ended questions were used to enable the interviewees to provide sufficient input that was relevant to the topic (See Appendix 5 for the full version of the questions). To recap, the following research questions are presented as discussed in Chapter Three;

1. How do Malaysian Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector perceive the meaning of employee engagement?

2. What are the factors that could lead to feelings of engagement among Malaysian Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector?

Interview Process and Flow

The process of conducting the interviews began with basic enquiries about the background of the interviewees to break the ice and make the process of gathering information to be more ease and comfortable. Upon completion of each interview session, the data was stored safely to be analysed by using NVIVO software version 21. The data was later transcribed and an iteration method was then used to analyse the interview content. This is done by reading the transcribed document manifold times to identify the emerging nodes and themes. Iteration is a method of repeating a process multiple times to create a flow of outcomes to achieve a desired result or target (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

6.3 The Emergence of the Themes and Concepts

The themes and sub-themes derived from the interviews were examined and explained individually. The structure of the themes was discussed based on two aspects; (1) Number of sources (the employees) who point out about the sub-themes, (2) Number of references made to the sub-themes. The compilation of the sub-themes is what forms the main themes of the study.

Every sub-theme was supported by quotes from the interviewees to back-up the formation of the theme. The sub-themes illustrate the essence of the main theme and further validate the outcome of the research questions. The next section examined the themes and the sub-themes for each research questions individually.

6.4 The Meaning of Employee Engagement: The Gen Y perspectives

The first research question in the thesis is looking at the perspectives of Gen Y in perceiving the meaning of employee engagement. For this research question, three main themes have emerged from the sub-themes to form the meaning of employee engagement. Ten respondents shared their thoughts about what employee engagement means to them and all the feedbacks were recorded and transcribed to form relevant themes.

Table 6.1 shows the number of sources and number of coded references that were comprised each theme. The number of employees quoted the sub-themes signifies the importance of the main themes from the strongest to the weakest theme. The total numbers of references made to the sub-themes represent the numbers of times the attributes were mentioned by the interviewees within the context (sub-themes).

Table 6.1 Theme and Concepts - Meaning of Employee Engagement

Theme	Total No. of Sources	Total No. of References	Sub-themes	Key Finding	Example Text
Affective Commitment	9	18	Commitment and connection; Higher sense of security with the intention to stay	Gen Y perceive engagement as a feeling of commitment which derives from their job, organisations, and leaders. Commitment is linked to attachment to stay longer in the company when engaged.	"It's all about members of the organisation giving their best each day and their commitment towards the goal and values of the organisation." (Senior Sales Executive, 5 years tenure) "Employee engagement in my understanding is about commitment to work and toward the company. They stay longer with the company." (Customer Service Manager, 12 years tenure)

Vigour	6	13	Willing to go the extra mile for the company; Feeling motivated at work; Positive energy and mindset at work.	Interviewees described employee engagement as a vigorous energy to perform extraordinarily for the sake of the company	"Employee engagement to me is also means that they are keen to contribute more in their work, helpful, willing to go extra-mile in doing anything." (Junior Telemarketer, 1 year tenure) "They love their job unconditionally and willing to go extra mile to give the best." (Treasury Manager, 5 years)
Dedication	4	6	Passionate about the job; Contribute time and effort to complete tasks.	Based on the interview, Gen Y refers passion and willingness to invest of oneself unconditionally as the meaning of engagement. Being passionate at work in the sense of showing their interest at every aspect of their job without the hesitation of contributing their time and effort is linked to feeling of employee engagement.	"Employee engagement is...urrmmm..have integrity in their job and basically always enthusiasm about the work that they are doing." (Business Analyst Manager, 3 years tenure) "Have integrity in their job and basically always enthusiasm about the work that they are doing." (Business Analyst Manager, 3 years tenure)

6.4.1 Affective Commitment

Affective commitment has the highest coded of sources and references. Two sub-themes emerged to form affective commitment as a meaning of employee engagement. The sub-themes were :

1. Commitment and connection
2. Higher sense of security with the intention to stay

From the interview findings, the Gen Y employees described the meaning of employee engagement as a feeling of commitment and connection. They shared that the feeling of commitment and connection were mainly toward their job, organisational goals, colleagues, and leaders. First, it is perceived that engagement is linked with the desire to commit willingly and to perform the best at work under any circumstances. Engaged employees generally will demonstrate full commitment in their job scope and enthusiastic to complete it even if they have to sacrifice their personal time. For instance, one Gen Y employee commented;

> "*When you talk about employee engagement, it's about committing yourself to the work and you will go all the way to complete the tasks even if you needed to stay back.*" *(Senior Business Analyst Executive, 3 years tenure)*

Similarly, employee engagement was described as the employee's commitment toward his or her job, in which they clearly understand that their responsibility and the expectations of their company. By understanding their job role well, they strive to contribute to their organisation's goal and core-values. Hence, engaged workers will tend to put extra effort into every aspect of their job when they are fully committed.

As mentioned by an interviewee:

> "*Employee will be committed; they understand clearly their role and the expectations from the company. He/She always wants to give the best in contributing to the organisational goal and values.*" *(Senior IT Executive, 2 years tenure)*

The Gen Y employees described engagement as a reflection of a bidirectional relationship between employee and the employer. Engaged employees are more likely to establish a relationship with their employer through positive connection when they are engaged. Employees create a connection with their employer out of willingness built upon various reasons such as the organisation's culture, the positive working environment and team support. For example:

> "*It's about relationship and connection between the employee and employer in positive context where the employee engage themselves willingly and it could be some factors that makes them to feel engaged like the organisation culture, working environment, their colleagues and so on.*" *(Training Manager, 3.5 years tenure)*

Moreover, nine Gen Y interviewees associated employee engagement with the feeling of connection toward the company and other areas such as the job, teammates, supervisor and the organisational goal. Interview findings showed that when the employees feel happy with their company's surrounding and the elements within the company, they will be driven to connect with their organisation and their job on a consistent basis.

For the Gen Y employee, engagement is about establishing a connection and attachment on every aspect of their work. For instance, two Gen Y employees shared their opinions:

> "*Engagement makes you to feel connected not only towards the company but also every aspect like your job, your team, your manager and also the organisational goal and values.*" *(Senior IT Executive, 2 years tenure)*

> "*Ok, how I look at employee engagement would be is how the employees attached to the piece of work that they are working on, their job tasks, apart from that is how engage are they with their colleague and corporate objectives and goals.*" *(Finance Manager, 7 years tenure)*

The next corresponding sub-theme under the main theme of affective commitment is a sense of job security that led to intention to stay. Employee engagement was described as a higher sense of job security that enables the feeling of loyalty towards the company. When employees feel secure with their job, they will have more self-confidence to demonstrate loyalty and commitment, which in turn promote engagement at work. As one Gen Y participant stated:

> "*To me, employee engagement means they have more sense of security, grow together with the company and envision themselves longer in the company.... they would be more loyal towards the company because they feel valued. They tend to stay longer in the company because they are committed and engaged*." *(Senior Underwriter, 5 years tenure)*

In overall, employee engagement is associated with the employee's commitment and connection toward his or her job; organisation's goals, peoples' and the surroundings that lead to a higher sense of security to stay longer in the company. Although there are distinct differences between commitment and employee engagement, most interviewees assumed that employee engagement is commitment and do not view it as a separate construct. More explanations about the differences were discussed in Section 6.6.

6.4.2 Vigour

Vigour is the second most discussed theme with thirteen references coded by six respondents. Three sub-themes have emerged describing how vigour is perceived by the interviewed participants and they were as follows:

1. Willing to go the extra mile for the company
2. Feeling motivated at work
3. Positive energy and mindset at work

Interviewed participants relate the meaning of employee engagement to a willingness to go the extra mile for the sake of the company. The feeling of engagement drives the employees to put aside any obstacles and give the best they could for the organisation to complete the given tasks. Participants identified employee engagement as the feeling of love for oneself toward his or her job to the extent that they do not mind to go further than expected. Besides, engagement is linked to the willingness to accept and face challenges at the workplace. Gen Y employees described engagement as the readiness of the employee to face obstacles and demonstrate limitless effort to achieve organisational goal. It was further discussed that engaged employees have the perseverance to go all the way out for their company and overcome any barriers that stand in between them.

As shared by the Gen Y respondents when asked to interpret the meaning of employee engagement in their opinion, here is what they said:

> "*To me, employee engagement also means they will love their job and willing to go beyond than expected.*" *(Senior Sales Executive, 5 years tenure)*

> "*Ready to accept and faced challenges in any situation given, you will ready to put in your best effort to make sure the organisation succeed in achieving their company goal and growth.... They will be ready to accept whatever*

> *challenges thrown at them and remain calm. This is employee engagement to me.*" *(Senior Business Analyst Executive, 3 years tenure)*

Additionally, few interviewees relate the feeling of motivation at the workplace as employee engagement. As vigour represents positive emotions and energy at the workplace, the feeling of motivation has been associated with employee engagement. Motivation is said to enable the employee to enjoy their job every day even if the task does not seem appealing. As one participant described:

> "*I'm 100% motivated with my work flow... Basically, you will enjoy your work on daily basis even the job can be boring at times because you are engaged.*" *(Senior Business Analyst Executive, 3 years tenure)*

Besides acknowledging motivation as a feeling of engagement, the Gen Y respondents felt that employee engagement also means feeling optimistic with a positive outlook toward work. For instance, exhibiting positive self-values such as perseverance, energetic and agile when the situation is not favourable, indicate their strong engagement. Further comment revealed that:

> "*Engaged workers would be great team player and they always have positive mindset when things get tough at work.*" *(Senior Business Analyst Executive, 3 years tenure)*

Similarly, employee engagement was referred to having a proactive behaviour such as being energetic and having a happy mindset when at the workplace. This behaviour is said to occur when the employee is engaged and pleased to perform simple duties that are considered as administration tasks. In other words, employee engagement means the employee shows interest in all areas of their job, even if the tasks may not be exciting. As quoted by one participant:

> "*They will be energetic, and obvious sign is they will be happy in whatever they are doing, it can be a simple job like photocopying or doing filling.*" *(Senior Sales Executive, 5 years tenure)*

To conclude, three sub-themes have emerged to support the theme vigour with thirteen references from nine Gen Y employees. Six participants have discussed pertinent concepts to relate vigour as the meaning of employee engagement. That being said, it is known that vigour is one of the elements as one of the definitions of engagement, as discussed by Schaufeli (2013). According to Schaufeli et al. (2010), vigour is a combination of high levels of energy and mental resilience to invest effort in one's work willingly with high persistence even during the phase of difficulties. That said statement of Schaufeli matches to the points made by the Gen Y interviewees in describing the meaning of employee engagement.

6.4.3 Dedication

Dedication has emerged as the least discussed theme with two sub-themes identified to form the meaning of employee engagement among the Gen Y interviewed. Four Gen Y employees contributed to the formation of the theme with six references made to the sub-themes. The following are the sub-themes:

1. Passionate about the job
2. Contribute time and effort to complete tasks

According to the interviewees, they defined employee engagement as the level of passionate of oneself towards the nature of the job and how excited are they in performing the job tasks. The feeling of passionate towards the job encourages great diligence and the need to perform the best. They believed that when employees feel intrigued and excited about their work, it means that they could possibly be an engaged worker. The outcome of being passionate is reflected by being dedicated in their work by giving out the best to complete the task. As two Gen Y respondents commented:

> "*How passionate they are in their job indicate engagement... Very enthusiastic about their job.*" *(Junior Telemarketer, 1-year tenure)*
>
> "*They will be diligent at their work and constantly strive to be the best in everything they do and assigned to them.*" *(Treasury Manager, 5 years tenure)*

Moreover, dedication is also related to contribution of time and efforts to complete tasks. During the interview, the Gen Y employees shared that employees demonstrate their dedication by showing endless efforts. They also sacrifice their time to meet the deadlines or to complete a task given to them. Dedicated employees tend to focus on contributing necessary inputs into the tasks to produce an excellent piece of work at the end. As mentioned by one participant:

> "*Well, engaged workers will produce quality piece of work. They will contribute a lot in terms of their time, effort and resources to get things done and motivated to become a better employee to the firm.*" *(Female, 28, Treasury Manager, 5 years tenure in a bank)*

In conclusion, four participants contributed to the formation of the dedication theme by relating work passion and contribution of time and effort to the meaning of employee engagement. As discussed in the literature review, dedication is one of the elements that is commonly discussed in the literature of engagement by Schaufeli (2013) to describe the meaning of employee engagement. Schaufeli (2013) described dedication as being robustly involved in one's work by experiencing enthusiasm, pride and the willingness to take up challenges to complete the tasks given. The definition of dedication by Schaufeli (2010) has matches to the descriptions provided by the Gen Y employees during the interview.

6.5 Factors Contributing to Employee Engagement

The second research question in the qualitative study is looking at the factors that could lead to the feelings of engagement among the Malaysian Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. Five main themes emerged to explain the factors that foster engagement. Ten Gen Y respondents provided their opinions about factors that make them feel engaged and gave their suggestions that could improve employee engagement. Based on the information gathered, few factors were identified in fostering employee engagement. Overall, most respondents were seen to be engaged at the time the interview was conducted.

Similar to the previous section, Table 6.2 illustrates the number of sources and number of coded references that were made to each theme. The number of sources, or employees, quoted the sub-themes signifies the importance of the main themes from the strongest to the weakest theme. The total numbers of references represent the different views on the factors that led to feeling of engagement among the Gen Y.

Table 6.2 Theme and Concepts - Engagement Factors

Theme	Total No. of Sources	Total No. of References	Sub-themes	Key Finding	Example Text
Good working environment	7	9	Work-life balance; Social Events	Gen Y favours good balance of work and personal life with exciting social events. This helps them to feel welcomed and be part of the organisation which enables the feeling of engagement. Most companies do provide basic WLB initiatives and internal events such as town hall sessions and staff annual dinners as part of the company's engagement activities.	"I think work-life balance is important because we can't just focus on our work but also our personal life. Spiritually and emotionally, we have to look after. Otherwise, we will lose half-way and tend to get into sickness and mental disorder." (Senior Sales Executive, 5 years tenure) "The continuous effort from the HR team in organizing activities for us makes me to feel comfortable and engaged at work." (Customer Service Manager, 12 years tenure)
Workplace communication	7	8	Communication with team-members; Knowledge Sharing	Interviewees regarded communication with fellow members act as a bridge to overcome	"A place where there is communication is considered healthy as we can share our

				conflict and improve relationship at the workplace. Effective communication is highly encouraged to build a friendly and positive workplace.	problems freely without prejudice. All team members talk to each other and being supportive can make a huge difference to our working environment as we will feel welcomed and safe. It's all about creating a workplace that is cheerful and happy." (Junior Telemarketer, 1 year tenure)
	Reward and Recognition	4	9	Monetary and Non-monetary rewards	Gen Y employees appreciate the presence of rewards for their hard work and effort shown in their job. Although rewards were quoted as the third highest factor of engagement, it is still regarded as an important element when it comes to boosting motivation and feeling of appreciation.	"Other reason would be the financial reward for achievement like bonuses, promotion and incentives do motivate me as well. I feel appreciated for my work and get rewarded for my great work, so in the long run I feel more and more motivated." (Business Analyst Manager, 3 years tenure)
	Perceived Leadership Support	4	7	Supportive Leadership	Gen Y employees were seeking for a supportive leader that able to motivate, guide and provide emotional support for the subordinates in the	"I think coaching makes wonder and leader's motivation is so much important to build our confidence and make us to engage at

				times of need. For example, coaching is one of the ways that could lead to employee engagement.	work." (Senior Sales Executive, 5 years tenure)
	Self-characteristic	2	2	Conscientiousness by nature	A small number of Gen Y employees in the study do not rely on any engagement strategy to feel engaged. They are self-driven to be engaged due to their personality. Even in the absence of any activities related to engagement, these individuals were able to demonstrate full focus and dedication on their task without any external factor.	"I think I am engaged because of who I am. My nature and my mindset. I choose to be engaged because of my work and the responsibility given to me to delivers the tasks. I would rate 9/10 for my engagement level. It's more on the individual choice to be engaged rather than the company. My contribution to engagement is solely on my personality." (Business Analyst Manager, 3 years tenure).

6.5.1 Good Working Environment

Good working environment emerged as the most discussed theme with the highest number of sources and coded references. Under this theme, two sub-themes were identified from the interview to form a good working environment:

1. Work-life balance (WLB)
2. Social events

Gen Y employees in this study have perceived the importance of WLB to feel engaged. The presence of WLB such as flexi-hours, work-from-home, and other programs were highly sought-after by this cohort to stay put with the demanding long working hours and heavy workload in the financial industry. Having a work-life balance provides a platform for employees to feel relaxed, be healthy and focused at work. Work-life balance helps them to feel appreciated and valued by their organisation because their needs and well-being are being considered, which in return, makes them feel engaged.

> "*I think work-life balance is very important as it keeps me sane (laughs). Work-life balance is a way we can have engage workers. When employees have balanced lifestyle, they feel appreciated and valued by the company.*" *(Customer Service Manager, 12 years tenure)*

Similarly, the interviewees believe that WLB is essential in achieving a healthy lifestyle and good mental state. The financial sector is a robust and fast-moving industry with high rivalry tension. Therefore, employees are constantly in the race to meet the targets and demands of the job. That being said, WLB is a necessity in every organisation to ensure employees get the right amount of time to look after themselves. This is a fundamental step to get rid of sickness and maintain a healthier emotional state.

As shared by the respondents:

> "*Work-life balance is a must in every company to make sure the mental state of the staff is well taken care of.* " *(Finance Manager, 7 years tenure)*

> "*Work is your priority but having a healthy and balanced lifestyle is equally important if you want to achieve happy life.*" *(Senior Underwriter, 5 years tenure)*

Fortunately, most financial institutions in Malaysia have been providing basic WLB initiatives as part of their engagement programs, and employees were encouraged to make use of it. According to Abercromby (2007), organisations deliberately use WLB not only to reduce absenteeism and increase the productivity level but also to improve the retention rate. During the interview, it was agreed that WLB programs could help in reducing employees to burnout from excessive workload and stress. When the job has a fair amount of balance, employees could find sufficient time to engage in their favourite hobbies and leisure. As one participant mentioned:

> "*I think work-life balance is important. People will be more interested to stay in a job that has balance and they can find time to do things that they love like hobbies and leisure.*" *(Treasury Manager, 5 years tenure)*

Apart from work-life balance, a good working environment also consist of frequent social events organised by organisations as a way to get closer to their staffs. Social events could be an excellent platform for everyone to get to know each other from different departments and exchange useful information. The social events are not only limited at the organisation level, but also within the departments whereby the managers initiate monthly departmental gathering with his or her subordinates as an informal occasion to ensure everyone has equal opportunity to raise any issue about their work in a friendly environment.

The Gen Y group is fond of social activities and enjoys meeting with new people to expand their social network (Truegen & Anderson, 2010). Thus, events that stimulate their social interest and interaction skill would allow them to experience positive bonding towards their co-workers and overall circle of working mates. As shared by interviewees about the importance of social events:

> "*I would say organising monthly gathering with the team is a great idea to get everyone close and share their problems. It can be out of office sometimes. Treating them with food during the gathering can be done to show that the leader appreciates them and it will make the team feel valued.*" *(Junior Telemarketer, 1 year tenure)*
>
> "*We have annual dinner and quarterly lunch gathering where we can mingle and get to know other staff from different department. It sort of makes us engage within the company and understand how each and everyone's role in the organisation.*" *(Senior Sales Executive, 5 years tenure)*

From the above quotes, social events were seen as an engagement booster for the Gen Y working at the financial service. Often wise, employees who work in the financial institutions will have less time to socialise among their mates due to the nature of the industry, and social events specially tailored with the right purpose could make a difference in bringing every member of the organisation to stay close and move forward in achieving an engaged workforce. In sum, a good working environment consisting of work-life balance and social events were highlighted as factors that lead to the feeling of engagement among the Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector.

6.5.2 Workplace Communication

Communication in the workplace has emerged as the second most highly discussed theme. The following sub-themes identified under this theme are:

1. Communication with team members
2. Knowledge Sharing

The essence of effective communication relies on the co-operation of every member of the organisation since communication is a two-way process of exchanging ideas and thoughts. Through communication, organisations could bridge the relationship gap between the leader and their subordinates to sustain a positive work ambience. Establishing effective communication through teamwork could help members of the employee to work effectively with greater spirit. The presence of unity, a supportive environment and the ability to express views during the difficult period could lead to engagement. For instance, a Gen Y respondent commented:

> "*Hmmm, I believe you need to keep emphasize on team work by focusing on unity, working together, supporting each other, effective communication and be there for each other when facing difficulties. This are the things that if you put together, it can lead to engagement.*" *(Customer Service Manager, 12 years tenure)*

On the other hand, they emphasize the importance of building mutual understanding through constant communication with fellow members of the organisation An open communication platform for every employee to express about themselves would set a positive work ambience as there will be transparency in the communication flow. Thus, it is crucial to spend quality time with the staff to understand and get to know each of them individually. This is because every individual of the organisation operates differentially with diverse working style. By identifying these differences, conflicts and misunderstanding can be avoided to ensure smooth working

environment. As suggested by Jablin and Krone (1994), interactions in the workplace are mainly influenced by individual differences and it can affect workers' satisfaction and productivity level if a proper channel of communication is not sorted out. Even a little effort showed by the manager to get to know their staff will lead them to feel appreciated and have a sense of belonging, which will make them be engaged. As said by one interviewee:

> "*You need to spend time and communicate with your staffs. You need to get to know them better and understand them individually. Everyone operates differently and have different working style. By getting to know them personally, most problems at work can be solved because the employees' will feel cared and valued. When someone cares about you, the sense of belongings will increased and you will feel engaged. Nothing greater when your leader appreciates you and wants to get to know you as a person to help you fit better at workplace.*" *(Finance Manager, 7 years tenure)*

Furthermore, a personal interaction through one-to-one session is highly regarded by this cohort because it allows them to open up about their concerns and receive feedback from their leader. By communicating with each member of the team separately, communication barriers could be avoided since there is always room for further improvement after every personal sessions. According to Marston (2007), individual communication session can develop a sense of the commitment and job involvement in millennials which will eventually create an engaged workforce (Marston, 2007). Moreover, managers who invest their time to communicate with their subordinates frequently shall look upon by their employees for comfort as it is an act of building trust which creates a comfortable working environment with less intensity. In addition, some employees may be reluctant to open-up and prefer to be aloof during the meeting, and thus initiating personal sessions would be helpful for tackle such a situation.

Specifically, the millennials do expect communications to be more often, personal and more affirming compared to older generations (Hill, 2002; Deloitte, 2017). As commented by one informant:

> "*Well, I think organizing more meetings with the team will make a difference and try to get as much as feedback from your team about anything that is related to the work. Most of the manager will think everything is ok and spend less time to get to know their subordinates and their problems. For me, I would suggest to have more personal session with each member of the team every month to share their opinion on their work, their difficulties and their feedback as well. One to one session can help each member to voice out anything related to the work because sometimes you might have a shy colleague that afraid to speak up during group meeting. So personal session is a great platform to share ideas and exchange feedback.*" *(Senior IT Executive, 2 years tenure)*

Apart from that, another element of communication that could lead to engagement is through the practice of knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is a form of communication whereby knowledge related to work is shared among the team who requires it. A survey identifies that Gen Y do value learning and appreciate any form of new knowledge related to skill enhancement (Schofield & Honore, 2010). Acquiring job-related knowledge through their leaders and co-workers enhances the relationship and brings the team closer in a positive manner. Moreover, it could assist in transferring new skills and improve communication to increase productivity and reduce workload accumulation. One participant strongly encouraged knowledge sharing as a communication way to improve employee engagement by saying:

> "*To me, I would like to have more knowledge based sharing with my team to increase engagement. I will try to engage them as much as possible through knowledge. Transferring knowledge and sharing the knowledge can be a tool to make a person feel treasured and feel taken care of. Not only they can learn new skills or knowledge, it also improve the communication and make the team closer when it comes to share the workload as everyone will speak in one language and know what each other is doing as the knowledge is shared.*" *(Business Analyst Manager, 3 years tenure)*

Significantly, Gen Y prefers open sharing of ideas and information and hence, seek organisations that promote knowledge sharing (Srinivasan, 2012). In order to continuously pursue learning and developmental opportunities, this generation will quickly embrace knowledge sharing to gain business insights and skills for their career progression (Terjesen et al., 2007). Hence, organisations promoting knowledge sharing as a means of learning and development can expect motivated employees and other positive outcomes such as job satisfaction and employee engagement (Schofield & Honore, 2010).

6.5.3 Rewards and Recognition

The next factor that drives feeling of engagement was rewards and recognition. Two sub-themes emerged under this theme:

1. Monetary rewards
2. Non-monetary rewards

The compensation structure in the financial industry is considered competitive in the market due to tough competitions among the institutions to provide the best remuneration scheme for their staff. It is important for organisations to build a good reward system policy to remunerate their employees for their achievement and hard work to encourage them to serve better. In particular, most Gen Ys are reputed for their immense spending habits; whereby the only resource they rely on to support their lavish lifestyle is their monthly income. Therefore, they seek companies that could provide a good salary package and additional monetary benefits to sustain their standard of living. Monetary rewards can exist in the form of financial contributions such as salary increment, pay for performance scheme, profit sharing, or paid vacations for employees on annual basis. These types of rewards are essential to drive employees' further achievement and provide them with the opportunity to live a quality life. Moreover, monetary rewards are said to boost motivation and feeling of appreciation in oneself when rewarded accordingly.

As shared by respondents:

> "*The financial reward that I will be getting at the end of the month is what motivated me to work.*" *(Senior Business Analyst, 3 years tenure)*

> "*Basically, it's because of the structured reward system that is better than any other company. They provide a good commission schemes for sales deal, and other monetary rewards like paid trips, bonuses and award for high*

> *achiever... the reward system is good and I am living a comfortable life with what I learned from this company.*" *(Senior Sales Executive, 5 years tenure)*

Besides monetary rewards, non-monetary rewards are also important to make employees feel appreciated and valued for their work. There are various types of non-monetary rewards, but recognition plays a special role in building engagement among the Gen Y employees in this study. The interview finding of this study showed that Gen Y acknowledges recognition in the form of positive affirmations for their hard work. As supported by Brown et al. (2009), recognition and praises are significant in improving employees' behaviour such as an increase in motivation and dedication level at work. Recognising employee efforts through compliments, praises, and acknowledgement could bring a positive effect on their performance at the workplace.

> "*I think it's because of my boss because he makes me feel valued, appreciated and trusted to handle the job... He values my opinion and constantly motivates me to do good job by complimenting. So yeah, I feel engaged because I am being valued for my work and effort which is something very meaningful.*" *(Senior Business Analyst Executive, 3 years tenure)*

> "*Hmmm, through compliments...They expressed gratitude for your good job and I feel valued although it may just two words of praises like 'thank-you' or 'well-done' but it just makes you feel appreciated and happy to work. That's a good boost-up. I do get bonuses and promotion as well apart from non-monetary like compliments and recognition.*" *(Business Analyst Manager, 3 years tenure)*

However, on the contrary, Queiri, Dwaikatt, and Yusoff (2015) claims that Gen Y employees are not moved by intrinsic rewards, instead, they are motivated by extrinsic rewards due to the increasing cost of living. Regardless, the respondents in this study acknowledged both types of rewards to lead to the feeling of engagement.

6.5.4 Perceived Leadership Support

Perceived Leadership Support (PLS) was regarded as the fourth most important factor to drive employee engagement among Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. This theme generated seven coded references from four respondents. One sub-theme emerged from this theme;

1. Supportive leadership

Based on the responses gathered, Gen Y employees relate employee engagement to leadership style. The management skill of the leader plays a role in setting the overall working ambience for the employee. A leader with great leadership traits and who make a good example for their workers will be able to create a positive working culture. The surroundings of the workplace will be ease which eventually makes the process of building engagement easy to be executed as the leader able to cultivate a positive working surroundings for their subordinates. Besides, a supportive leader is able to provide the necessary support and constructively lead their team by setting their career direction and career goals, which will help to build appreciation and self-value of oneself.

> "*That again goes to leadership style. If your leader has good leadership style, building engagement would be easy tasks. So, I think having a positive leadership attributes can make a lot of difference in working culture which eventually lead to engagement...I am grateful that my leader is quite supportive and helps me to get clearer direction about my career direction and how I can achieve my career goal.*" *(Senior Business Analyst Executive, 3 years tenure)*

Moreover, a supportive leadership also refers to the ability of the leader to understand and manage the expectations of the subordinates to ensure both parties could work together to attain departmental goals. A leader that practices flexibility in managing

the down line and lead the team together in achieving target and objectives can be assured with a balanced and engaged workforce. As said by a commenter:

> "*In that sense, he is quite flexible with the working hours and working style which reflects positive side of him as he understand how current generation works and their expectations. Working under him, I would say I am pretty happy and balanced as he knows to manage us well and I like his approach on flexibility and then he is happy with us as long as we deliver the expected results.*" *(Senior Business Analyst Executive, 3 years tenure)*

Coaching has been renowned by many leaders as a way to promote togetherness and empowering employees to be the best performers by providing them with necessary knowledge and skills to cultivate their willingness to do the job with full support from the manager (Hicks et al., 2013). It is a two-way feedback session between both parties to show support in the areas that need improvement and reinforce strengths to sustain the progress of the employees at work (Hicks, Carter. & Sinclair, 2013). Gen Y employees appreciate coaching as they are known to be dependent towards their leader for ideas, insights and continuous support (Jones, 2018). Thus, the ability of a leader to provide coaching to their subordinates can be regarded as a supportive trait. Coaching can help employees build confidence through guidance and constructive feedback. Managers who regularly check upon their workers to ensure they are performing well and provide mentorship will gain their trust, which in return lead to engagement. As said by a respondent:

> "*He guides a lot through coaching and mentoring and shares his experience freely and very supportive if we needed any help. He also gives us the freedom to do our work in our own phase as long as the job is done, he is fine with it. He is firm and meticulous at times but so far I am good with him.*" *(Manager, 5 years tenure)*

Jones (2018) further suggested that coaching is a game-changer in transforming the relationship between employees and leaders to be more positive and helps the staffs to feel valued and take greater pride in their work, all of which can lead to higher level

of engagement and productivity. In sum, a supportive leadership may be viewed as an essential element in accelerating engagement. With the right support, employees will feel comfortable and confident, and experience less stress at work, which could drive engagement level.

6.5.5 Self-Characteristic

The characteristics of the employees play a part in influencing the feeling of engagement. The interview finding revealed that personality could affect the quality and performance of the employee at the workplace in terms of work delivery, mindset and acceptance of the job. That being said, self-characteristic emerged as a theme to lead feeling of engagement, and one sub-theme emerged from this theme is:

1. Conscientiousness by Nature

Uniquely, some individuals are not intrigued by any form of job resources but choose to be engaged because of their personality. A conscientiousness person is usually engaged by nature as this individual obligated naturally to contribute and perform the best to their organisation without expecting anything in return. They believe in self - responsibility and are always on-the-go to deliver the required tasks because they have high self-accountability. It was mentioned during the interview that:

> "*I am engaged because of my character. Personally, I do not like to disappoint anyone whether it is related to personal matter or work-related issue. I always want to give the best in whatever I am doing and I am a committed person. That's why I am engaged with my work and do the best in any piece of work given to me. It's more of my personality to be engaged rather than other driving factors.*" *(Female, 33, Finance Manager, 7 years tenure in a bank).*

It is generally agreed that employee engagement develops from both personal and environmental sources (Macey & Schneider, 2008). However, most theoretical discussions and empirical findings relate engagement as a response to characteristics

of the job. Engaged and disengaged workers are likely to differ in certain traits based on the nature of their jobs, but few studies on potential personality contributors to engagement have been published (Iike & Warr, 2011). Therefore, there is a need to develop an understanding of engagement from the context of individual characteristics. In sum, it is noted that self-characteristics such as conscientiousness does influence the intention to be engaged regardless of whether or not any job resources are provided to them. These individuals are vigilant and obstinate to face hindrance at the workplace and remain engaged due to their nature and a strong mindset.

6.6 An insight into the Meaning of Employee Engagement

The following discussions traces back to relevant literature to support the themes, sub-themes and the association of both resulted from the findings.

6.6.1 Affective Commitment

The first theme identified in this study is affective commitment. Commitment and connection were perceived as employee engagement, followed by higher sense of security and intention to stay. Foremost, affective commitment is defined as an "emotional attachment to the organisation such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is involved in and enjoys membership in the organisation" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, Pp.2). There are many types of commitment but the closest relationship with engagement is 'affective commitment' as it emphasises on the employees' satisfaction toward their job, organisation and colleague. Academic wise, employee engagement is said to share similarities and constantly overlaps with commitment trait (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004). Thus, it is not surprising that the Gen Y in this study relates commitment to engagement because they understand that employee engagement is closely linked to the employees feeling committed and connected.

Commitment and connection

Based on the interview, nine out of the ten Gen Y participants relate employee engagement with the word commitment and connection when asked to describe the meaning of employee engagement. They mentioned that the sense of commitment and connection is established in various aspects such as the nature of the job, organisational goals and the people. The 'people' mentioned in the interview refers to their colleagues, subordinates and leaders whereby there is a special connection that makes the Gen Y to feel obliged to serve better and sustain a positive relationship with them.

The study also showed that the meaning of engagement is linked to the tendency of employees to commit to the organisation's objectives and goal by going all the way out to achieve it. As agreed by Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), affective commitment recognises how much an employee identifies and associates themselves with the organisational objectives. Buchanan (1974) also stated that employees strive harder to achieve organisational goals and accept the corporate values positively when they are committed and engage. The description truly matches the interviewees' opinion about employee engagement when commitment feeling towards the company's mission and vision was mentioned.

Moreover, the essence behind engagement is the presence of positive connection whereby committed Gen Y employees tend to give the best contribution to support their corporate goal because of their sense of ownership toward the firm. As supported by Mayhew, Ashkanasy, and Gardner (2007), organisational-based psychological ownership is about the employee's feeling of connection toward the firm as a whole, which includes the culture, climate, management style, corporate goals, colleagues, and policies which exhibit an engaged worker.

Additionally, the Gen Y employees generally believed that employee engagement is about being cooperative among the team members to attain organisational goal and objectives. Therefore, it is argued that affectively committed employees possessed strong identification with the company and more willing to help leaders in achieving the organisational goals. This behaviour is expected because of the employee's emotional attachment to the company that makes them perform better in their job and communicate well with everyone (Gelderen & Bik, 2016).

Rhoades et al. (2001) further suggested that committed employees identify themselves with the organisation and enjoy participating in any activities organised by their company without hesitation as they want to be part of the organisation. Similarly, engaged employees constantly occupy themselves with the necessary knowledge about their organisation's business contexts and collaborate effectively with the colleagues to improve their role performance for the benefit of the company (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). That being said, the Gen Y employees in this study probably envisioned themselves to be attached to the organisation's goal, job, and the people when asked about the meaning of employee engagement. Therefore, it is presumed that employee engagement is a blend of affective commitment and employees' connection with their working colleagues to attain the organisational goal (Jena, Bhattacharyya, & Pradhan, 2017).

Also, the information gathered from the interview revealed that Gen Y respondents highly speak about how "feeling committed" has influenced their working culture in a positive way. For example, they feel the need to show their loyalty by showing support to everyone at work and become part of the organisation's short and long term mission and vision. By exhibiting such trait, they believed that engagement can be cultivated. It is merely undeniable that engagement is linked to commitment of oneself to the company and other elements such as mission, people, or job context. According to Smith (2016), affectively committed individuals have high determination and are more likely to be connected with their work, exhibit productivity and are proactive in giving support to their colleagues and supervisors. In sum, the literature highlighted in this section supports that affective commitment associated with the feeling of connection and commitment of oneself toward their job, organisational goals, colleague, and leader.

Higher sense of job security with the intention to stay

Affective commitment also refers to the tendency of the employees to stay with the organisation because of the security they feel toward their job. Employee engagement is described in this interview as an individual that intends to stay with the organisation for a longer duration because the job gives them security. Gen Y who have job security and are stable in their career would stay longer with the company as they appreciate continuity and sustenance in their work profiles. Based on the interview, the context of employee engagement involves the feeling of contentment with the job, which raises security in their income and placement in the organisation for many years to come. As stated by Allen and Mayer (1990), affective commitment relates to the willingness of the employees to remain with their organisation, blends well with the organisational goals and have higher job satisfaction. It is noted that employees with strong identity toward their organisation will have a higher intention to stay as they hold a unique connection with their job and organisation goal (Jena et al., 2017). This definition match to the output shared by the Gen Y interviewee to describe the meaning of employee engagement.

To add further, Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) also commented that affective commitment also means the employee's desire to remain with the company and to work together in achieving organisational and career goal. Similarly, this definition complies with the earlier definition of affective commitment by Porter et al. (1974), who agrees that commitment is a form of effective connection of an individual with the organisation and he or she possess high intention to stay as a result of a great job security. Therefore, affective commitment is pictured as an element that could influence an employee's decision to stay loyal to the company with the condition of being rewarded with good job security.

Albeit the Gen Y are prominently known for switching jobs frequently and unable to sustain longer at one working place due to their constant chase for job satisfaction over job security (Lim, 2014), the interview finding revealed that employee engagement can lead to higher feeling of security which makes the Gen Y to stay longer in the organisation. As agreed by Mohapatra, Saxena, Joshi, and Chaturvedi (2017), Gen Y generally feels that permanent and secured job is unappealing to them because they always strive for a better working environment and benefits. Therefore, it was an interesting fact to know from the perspective of Gen Y employees that job security is related to employee engagement, as this study shows.

However, an overlap of the construct does exist in defining employee engagement in the current existing of knowledge. Presumably, commitment is often looked upon as a necessary trait to accelerate engagement rather than describing it as an engagement definition (Bevan, Barber, & Robinson, 1997). In most cases, commitment is tested as a precursor or mediator (Robinson et al., 2004). Therefore, differentiating the two constructs can contribute to a better understanding of the term employee engagement.

Difference between commitment and employee engagement

The significance of this theme is that employee engagement has been perceived as a feeling of commitment by most of the interviewees. It is evident that there is a divergence between commitment and employee engagement. Employee engagement and organisational commitment are commonly linked to positive work attachment. In spite of its wide use in the academic research, the terminology is often misinterpreted even though engagement and commitment have been studied to be empirically distinct constructs which reflect different elements of work attachment (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). Saks (2006) argued that the definition of employee engagement

tends to overlap with other similar constructs such as job satisfaction or organisational commitment. Research investigations conducted in the Western context revealed that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and affective commitment (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014). The relationship between the two constructs can be explained as a predictor of outcome, whereby higher engagement leads to greater commitment (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007).

CIPD (2014) reported that employee engagement is 'a combination of commitment and organisational citizenship'. Engagement is discussed in multiple definitions, conceptualisations and theories with the existence of confusion in some literature that debated whether the concept is an attitude or outcome (Sutherland, 2018). As said by Jena et al. (2017) and Simpson (2009), the definition of employee engagement circles around certain employee's attitude such as involvement, loyalty and commitment. The confusion about the meaning of employee engagement arises due to many overlapping terms but mainly linked to commitment (Wefald & Downey, 2009). Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) agreed to this by stating that engagement and commitment are connected to one another but both are still independent constructs with a separate identity. According to Gruman and Saks (2001), they mentioned that engagement may overlap with commitment but this does not mean that the two constructs are also distinct. In this case, employee engagement could act as an accelerator to drive commitment and commitment can infuse higher engagement if it is viewed from the opposite perspective. It is vital to distinguish between employee engagement and commitment as the two terms constantly get misinterpreted (Truss et al., 2013).

Although the literature stated that employee engagement is a form of commitment, past research studies have found that engagement is generally picked as a significant predictor of organisational commitment (Saks, 2006). In outline, affective commitment should be regarded as a facet of engagement but not as solely engagement (Macey & Schneider. 2008). This means that engagement is more often studied as a predictor or antecedent of commitment, than a definition of engagement. In overall, it signifies that there is a misconception in defining employee engagement among Gen Y, as they are not aware of the differences between the two constructs. Hence, this small-scale discussion provides an insight about the association and disparities between the two constructs.

6.6.2 Vigour

Schaufeli (2013) described vigour as 'high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties'. Similar keywords from Schaufeli's definition of vigour were identified during the interview session. Based on the keywords, three sub-themes emerged to form vigour as a theme to describe the meaning of employee engagement. Like most other positive domains, vigour induces goal-oriented behaviour which is expected to drive employees to engage with their job and the work surrounding (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Shirom, 2015).

Willing to go the extra mile for the company

Based on the finding, interviewees highly discussed the level of willingness to perform extraordinarily for their organisation when asked to describe employee engagement. In this context, employees are driven to put in more effort than usual to achieve specific tasks or goals that are assigned to them. The positive spirit to perform beyond their comfort zone indicates a high level of engagement. As Robinson (2012) describes, vigour is the veritable definition of employee engagement, whereby a proactive employee willing to go an extra mile and show discretionary effort with added physical energy to perform a task or role. Engaged employees have natural ability to work harder as the work itself keeps them excited and thus, contributing extra effort into the job is seem reasonable. The willingness of the employee to go the extra mile is measured by the way of how the employees take the right initiative to solve problems, learn new skills to improve self-value and help co-workers to attain the organisational goal (CIPD, 2006).

This form of behaviour can be summarised to define employee engagement and as stated by Baumruk (2004), employee engagement means that employees focus on moving forward and beyond by putting extra effort and initiatives to produce magnificent results at the workplace. Gen Y interviewees shared that engaged employees will love their job and demonstrate unconditional interest toward their job by showing discretionary effort. This is agreed by Simmons (2012) which stated that vigour is a practical way to understand about employee engagement by looking at the behaviour of their employees who shows endless high-spirit, energetic and who are wholly immersed in the work they do. Another source from Gebauer and Lowman (2008) also supported that employee engagement is defined as a deep and true connection that employees establish with a company which results in a willingness to go above and beyond to help their company performance.

Feeling motivated at work

The concept of vigour related to energetic component namely to physical, emotional and cognitive energies (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The feeling of motivation is a form of emotional energy that can be categorised as vigour. As Shirom (2015) elaborated, vigour is an affective state that individuals demonstrate to their job and workplace, which comprise of positive traits such as motivation to stay perseverance during difficult times and situations.

The finding from the interviews showed that feeling of motivation is associated with employee engagement. This concept matched with Schaufeli's definition, which explains the psychological state of engagement under the element of vigour. Vigour is one of the components in employee engagement that is characterised as a positive and an affective-motivational state of fulfilment (Schaufeli, 2002).

When interviewees shared about their motivation in relation to employee engagement, they described it as a positive feeling to give out the best and eager to go to work every day even if they need to face tribulations. Supported by Boron (1990), vigour is closely related to human motivation as going beyond to achieve goals even in tough and turbulent conditions. Thus, it is highly possible that positive emotions such as vigour could trigger a continuous improvement in mental well-being, such as motivation for employees to further engage themselves at the workplace.

As vigour is closely associated to energy level, employees that feel motivated at work could experience engagement and intrinsically be motivated as they tend to love what they do by continuously striving to master new skills for better self-development (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). From this point, it is seen that motivation does represent engagement as shared by the Gen Y respondents during the interview. Vance (2006) further supports that employee engagement means employees feel extremely energised, inspired, empowered and highly motivated at work. Employee engagement is explained in the context of motivation when employees are motivated to work harder for their organisation without hesitation and foreseen themselves being part of the company's success (Kimball & Nink, 2006).

Furthermore, Halm (2015) also agrees that engagement is directly related to the level of motivation that an employee shows when completing their tasks, managing important portfolio or working effectively with other colleagues towards achieving desired goals. However, in contrast, engagement is viewed as a multi-dimensional concept with criticism of being incoherent and the term is said to be dependent on other attributes such as motivation, goals and interests (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

For example, Wellins and Concelman (2005) define engagement as "the illusive force that motivates employees to higher (or lower) levels of performance". This means that engagement is not defined as motivation but rather, it is seen as a performance construct that could influence other traits such as involvement, motivation, and satisfaction to produce specific results. In other words, motivation and engagement are two different constructs but it does share association as most literature linked engagement to motivation as part or as the meaning of employee engagement. Therefore, it could be said that the feeling of motivation is related to employee engagement, and Gen Y employees particularly perceived it as an essence of engagement, although some literature looks at it as a separate construct.

Positive energy and mindset at work

Maslach et al. (2001) have suggested that employee engagement can be characterised by energy, high involvement of oneself at work and efficacy. This statement matched with the Gen Y interviewees who revealed that employee engagement is a form of energy that is infused with positivity and great team coordination with the ability to stay perseverance when the situation gets tough. It is also said that engaged employees will be happy and energetic to perform even a task that seems to be simple and uninteresting. This is agreed by Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Lloret (2006) by describing engaged employees as an individual who perceived their job as meaningful and thus more likely to be fully involved and excited about any task that is assigned to them.

Energy and engagement are interrelated to one another as a form of investment of the employees in the job to stay engaged. Wright (2015) justified that energised employees engage themselves completely because of the positive emotional state in them and the energy level would always be consistent as they draw the energy from

the feeling of engagement. MacLeod and Clarke (2009) argues in an article that employee engagement is a combination of how people feel, think and act at work with an optimistic attitude and endless fortitude approach. The happier the employee, higher the level of engagement as vigour represent a psychological state of condition that affects the physical strength, emotional energy and liveliness of oneself at the workplace (Abikoye, Bankole, & Sholarin, 2010).

Based on the interview results, the Gen Y respondents revealed that in the state of engagement, they would constantly feel happy and truly content at their workplace although the tasks can be mundane at times, and that is what engagement means to them. As Staw et al. (1994) statement supports vigour is as an example of positive emotion and vigorous feelings possibly enhance the ability to cope well with work-related demand which will have a positive impact on the employee's well-being. As energy and positive mindset associated to employee engagement, it is rational to conclude that vigour is part of cognitive liveliness and positive emotional energy that exists in a person who is truly engaged (Shirom, 2015).

6.6.3 Dedication

According to Schaufeli (2013), dedication refers to "being strongly involved in one's work, and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge". In another context, dedication merely refers to a devotional feeling and the willingness to invest time and energy into something because it is meaningful (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). Two sub-themes from the interviews have matched the description of dedication by Schaufeli (2010). Although dedication theme was least endorsed in this study, it asserts that Gen Y employees have their own thought when it comes to describing engagement by linking to passion and time/effort contribution at the workplace.

Passionate about the job

Vallerand (2008) defines passion as a strong inclination of an individual toward an activity that they love and is essential to them, and they do not hesitate to spend their time and effort on a consistent basis. From the interview conducted, participants shared their passion and high level of fervour to perform at work as a meaning of employee engagement. Likewise, employee engagement involved with a psychological state such as feeling for importance, enthusiasm and inspiration which is characterised as dedication (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013). Gen Y employees shared their views about being passionate not only toward their job, but in every aspect pertaining to their career in the organisation. This view is similar to Kuntsi (2014) and Albdour and Altarawneh (2014) who argue that passionate employees are known to be focused, committed, and engaged in everything they do and as a result, they are able to deliver exceptional result and add value to the company.

Moreover, based on the interview, it can be pointed out that employee engagement could also be explained as a self-motivated individual who is excited to go to work and will not hesitate to show support to their company daily. As Truss et al. (2013) suggests, dedicated employees are passionate and genuinely devoted to their goals as they are always on-the-go and excited to arrive at their workplace every morning. Similarly, Smith (2016) defines employee engagement as a demonstration of enthusiasm and dedication of an employee in their job. This statement support the testimonies of those shared during the interview when asked to define employee engagement. Interviewees recalled employee engagement as a passionate feeling of the employees toward their job and how they embrace every bit of their work on a daily basis. From the perspective of engaged employees, a pay cheque is not the main priority, but rather, it is the excitement they feel about their job that makes them passionate and is often reflected in individual outcomes such as high job satisfaction and high productivity (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Although the literature has shown that engaged people are passionate in their work, it also indicates why some employees do not have passion at work but seem to show positive traits such as involvement and ownership. In this perspective, the feeling of being passionate could be influenced by the nature of the job. Six out of ten interviewees mentioned that they are happy with their job and feel engaged because their job is interesting and fulfilling. This explains why they felt engaged and connected to their organisation. It is further supported by Macey and Schneider (2008), who state that attributes of tasks are the ultimate issue for promoting engagement and this reference is made to the job characteristics model by Hackman and Oldham (1980).

Based on Hackman and Oldman's (1980) model, certain elements of the job is said to drive passion, commitment, or other positive behavioural traits. Based on the interview, it can be suggested that the Gen Y participants may have experienced some level of job characteristics at their work place that enable them to feel engaged through high level of passion. Ideally, what truly describes employee engagement is the ability of the employees to discover the true sense of their career purpose through the job and continuously show a high level of passion and enthusiasm into the work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2004).

Contribute time and effort to complete tasks

In the interview conducted, the Gen Y participants also relate the meaning of engagement to time and effort contributed by employees to complete the tasks. It is said that employees who are willing to invest themselves unconditionally are described as engaged since they do not mind letting go of their extra time to work for the organisation's sake. Kinnie, Rayton, Walsh, and Deery (2017) agrees that employees will sacrifice their time, and take on additional job responsibilities because they feel engaged with their work while still remaining positive. Whether working after usual office hours or helping out their colleague, engaged employees are delighted to put extra effort to help the organisation to prosper.

Tower Perrin (2003) also similarly defines employee engagement as the extent to which employees will show discretionary effort into their job and invest time and energy to finish a task. In a study conducted in company X, there is a strong correlation between time and effort invested in employee engagement (Fuller & Shikaloff, 2017). It is indicated that employees who work long hours were generally more engaged. Paired with qualitative observation within the same study, it is

observed that highly engaged employees voluntarily choose to spend long hours at their office because they feel involved with the job (Fuller & Shikaloff, 2017). Hence, it is not surprising that Gen Y employees who are known to have high social-life and intolerance attitude when it comes to sacrificing their time, would end up willing to do the opposite when engaged.

Moreover, Macey and Schneider (2008) suggests that engagement is about investing something extra or special, and thus it is very likely to define employee engagement as putting discretionary effort, or as investing extra time and energy. Engaged workers tend to contribute more time and other relevant resources in hope that the investment will be rewarded in a meaningful way (Macey & Schneider, 2008). On the contrary, Macey and Schneider (2008) also mentions that it is not practical to define employee engagement solely based on "extra effort or time" because it simply means that the employee is just doing more than what is usual. Kahn (1990) also states that employees who are psychologically engaged at work tend to give more contributions, but this should not be just limited in doing more, but also doing something different that may beneficial to the organisation.

To conclude, although the meaning of engagement may appear to be holistic, a closer look into the literature has revealed the disparities of the concept (Bakker et al., 2008). Most denotations of employee engagement refer to the psychological state traits such as involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, dedication and energy (Schaufeli, 2013). Kim et al. (2012) mentions that there is no standard for defining engagement as people hold different conceptions of what it means. Hence, the lack of accuracy in defining the concept of engagement does not indicate that the concept is

lack of conceptual or practical background; but it is the matter of attaining clarity to the term.

The outcome of the interview also revealed that most interviewees were unsure of what employee engagement meant. Only a few respondents were able to provide a clear description of employee engagement based on their academic knowledge. Hence, it can be concluded from this study, that the Gen Y perception on the meaning of engagement was solely based on individual experience at work and the positive encounters they had within the surrounding of their workplace.

6.7 An insight into the Engagement Factors of Gen Y Employees

The following discussions about engagement factors traces back to relevant literature to support the themes, sub-themes, and the association of both resulted from the findings.

6.7.1 Good Working Environment

Working environment refers to the surroundings of the employees' workplace. It includes the social, physical and psychological conditions, and other elements that influence the work environment. Examples of a good working environment are hazard-free workplace, efficient health and safety policies, social events and work-life balance (Tyagi, 2016). According to Anita (2014), there is a positive correlation between the work environment and employee engagement. Previous studies have shown that the work environment is a factor that can be tested to understand the level of engagement among employees in an organisation (Richman, 2006: Mohd, Shah, & Zainal, 2016). Empirical studies by Miles et al. (2001) and Harter et.al (2001) indicate that various aspects of work environment can impact the level of employee engagement (May et.al, 2004; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford 2010). The conditions of the workplace play a vital role in determining their stay in the organisation. Based on the interview findings, WLB and social events were categorised as a good form of working environment to boost engagement and keep the Gen Y engaged.

Work-life balance (WLB)

The practice of WLB is fundamental in every organisation to minimise the effect of work-life conflict for employees. To recap, WLB is defined as the ability of the employees to balance between work, personal and family time through effective integration to avoid conflict in life (Ungerson & Yeandle, 2005). Over the years, companies are increasingly aware of the need to implement work-life balance as a way to attract, retain and improve employee engagement (Abercromby, 2007). In this study, six of out ten Gen Y employees interviewed emphasised on the importance of WLB in accelerating the feeling of engagement. Flexible working hours, gym facilities and the flexibility to work from home are some of the work-life balance facilities provided by their organisations. The existence of a WLB program does play a role in making them feel appreciated as well as inducing a positive lifestyle with a proper balance between work and leisure.

Based on statistical evidence, 40% of Malaysians have cited work-life balance as the ultimate reason for staying at their current workplace (News Straits Times, 2017). Specifically, in the financial sector, WLB benefits are offered in most financial institutions such as conventional banks, insurance companies, Takaful operators, capital market players, and Islamic banks (Asian Institute of Finance, 2015). Research on Gen Y also supports that young professionals demand more flexibility than Gen X and Baby Boomers. With the increasing number of Gen Y being hired into, attracting this cohort should be a priority for employees to promote the right work-life balance program as part of the company policy as it is apparent that this generation prefers a workplace environment that has work-life balance (Asian Institute of Finance, 2015).

However, in a contradicting finding by Randstad Employer Brand Research (2016), almost half of the millennials in Malaysia prefer a more traditional workplace with standard working hours. The result showed that millennials are more concerned about securing a job than focusing on work-life privileges such as flexi-hours (Randstad, 2016). The potential reason for the said finding could be influenced by the living lifestyle or the age of the millennials. High cost of living among the Gen Y may lead to the feeling of desperation to land a job without giving much attention to WLB. Younger millennials, on the other hand, tend to secure a job after completing their studies and therefore, WLB incentives may not be their main concern. Looking from another perspective by Sturges and Guest (2004), initially Gen Y will seek for WLB but their urge for career success at a later stage will eventually draw them into working excessively long hours and experiencing an imbalance between their personal and work lives. In general, it could be concluded that the need for WLB for Gen Y can be vary based on the nature of the industry and to some extent, the demographic factor such as age and status of the employee, whether married or single.

Social Events

Few Gen Y employees in the interview shared about how social events make them feel connected and engaged with their company. The primary purpose of organising social events is to create a connection among employees, reduce stress and promote emotional wellness through team bonding sessions (Aon Hewitt, 2014). Social events help to strengthen the relationship with colleagues and other members of the organisation to build a better sense of community and positive acquaintance. Examples of social events are team building activities, CSR programs, town hall sessions, annual dinner, monthly gatherings, and more.

The Gen Y individuals are often intrigued by activities that can enhance their social skills as they love being in the centre of attention. The agenda of the activities play a role in attracting the Gen Y employees to participate and gain useful experiences because this generation value connections to grow their professional network. Moreover, the millennials constantly uses social media to share information about their social activities and day-to-day life. This is one of the way the Gen Y portrait their company's profile to show their excitement and how engaged they are towards the organisation. Therefore, events which most likely to boost their confidence level, increase their knowledge and allows them to contribute to the company's goals would make them to feel more engaged (Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006).

Besides that, social networking events also promote transparency in communication which could provide a platform for acknowledging employees for their excellent performance (Chignell, 2015). Through social events, employees will feel comfortable to share their experiences and exchange meaningful knowledge when the environment is less formal and relaxed. According to Rawat (2014), companies who establish a playful environment will encourage their employees to be more out-going, motivated and engaged in their work and organisations. Although social events may be costly, the results of organising such events will be fruitful for the organisation in terms of retention, engagement and ability to cope with change during the recession. Since job hoping and career switch is a common phenomenon among this generation, companies that organises successful social events are on the track to retain the Gen Y for a longer term. Although social events may not be favourable to every Gen Y because some prefer to be out of the limelight, promoting events that have positive message and purpose could help to stimulate interest and involvement at one point if properly executed.

As claimed by Fenich, Scott-Halsell, and Ogbeide (2012), Gen Y members prefer to benefit personally from meetings and gatherings, and thus they expect engaging events that are worth their time and money. In sum, a good working environment does not only limit to work-life balance and social events. Other underlying factors could contribute to good working environments such as a safe and hazard-free workplace, open-space workstation and many other elements. In this case, the respondents of this study consider both work-life balance and social events to play a role in driving feeling of engagement.

6.7.2 Workplace Communication

The term workplace communication refers to the process of "exchanging information and ideas, both verbal and non-verbal, within an organization" (Baden, 2007). Poor communication at work will result in misunderstandings, lack of productivity and even disengagement (Lam, Cheng, & Kong, 2014). Nowadays, the workplace is all about globalisation and knowledge-based environment, and thus effective workplace communication should not be neglected. Based on the interview findings, Gen Y respondents emphasised the importance of communication in engaging staff through open communication with team members and knowledge sharing.

Communication with team members

Research has recognised internal communication as an underlying influence of employee engagement (Karanges, Johnston, Beatson, & Ling, 2015). Respondents in this study expressed the importance of communicating effectively at the workplace with their colleagues and other members of the organisation. Effective communication is a way for them to get connected with their co-workers which in return, makes them feel acknowledged and engaged (Men & Baesecke, 2015). The connection between engagement and effective organisation communication was already suggested in Welch's (2011) communication-engagement conceptual model. The model proposed that internal corporate communication is positively correlated to the engagement by making employees attached via positive emotion, dedication, absorption, and vigour (Welch, 2011).

The purpose of internal communication is not just about expressing dissatisfaction or complaining, but it is a platform to discuss work-related issues and exchanging ideas to maximise the work performance (Karanges et al., 2015). Organisations that show concern to their employees' needs and feelings by providing positive feedback and

take initiatives to solve work-related problems found to foster a supportive working environment which can potentially drive engagement (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Millennials constantly expect a close relationship and meaningful feedback from their supervisors (SHRM, 2009). Regardless of the discussion outcome, the Gen Y employees appreciate the transparency of the communication as they are able to improve themselves for the better in the future after each discussion session (Mohd et al., 2016). This statement supports the interview findings whereby respondents were looking forward to constructive feedback and advice from their leaders about their work issues and performance.

Furthermore, communication is the keystone of an engaged workforce and it can start with daily communication with the employees. Specifically, interacting with the employees about career development and company's direction will add benefit in retaining quality workforce as they will feel important and appreciated which result in employee engagement (Mohd et al., 2016). Studies have shown that various internal communication such as innovation organisational communication, feedback session, and information sharing are positively associated with work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Durkin, 2007). A study by MacLeod and Clarke (2009) suggests that balancing the quality of internal communication increases engagement in public, private and voluntary sector organisations. From another perspective, poor communication flow reduces engagement and leads to turnover when information is not delivered promptly to employees as they feel left-out and neglected (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Empirically, respondents in this study preferred frequent communication to take place within the department in order to allow every member of the organisation to freely express their needs and improve open-communication culture though feedback session, coaching, and meetings.

Moreover, the concept of open communication is also welcomed by Gen Y, even though certain confidential matters should be reserved for senior employees (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). Disclosure about what is going on within the organisation and the future direction of the company provides feeling of security and employment stability. The management must be unambiguous in stating the objectives of the company at every operation level. The more transparent and open a leadership team is in sharing their corporate goals and vision, the more likely the employees will understand their role and engage themselves to achieve them (Conrad, 2014). The culture of open communication whereby employees are given the equal opportunity to share their opinions, both positive and negative, will give the employees the feeling that they are valued and important (Conrad, 2014).

Also, soliciting feedback from workers improves employee morale and work attitude because employees feel that the management takes their concerns seriously and wants them to feel included. This feeling in return, leads to a greater sense of ownership and responsibility to help toward the company's success via engagement (Conrad, 2014). As concluded by Schumann (2003), co-operation between co-workers and leaders is highly crucial to ensure smooth functioning of a workplace, and it can be only achieved through effective communication.

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is defined as employee participation in the exchange of knowledge, experiences and skills with other members of the company to build competencies (Senge, 1998). The millennials prefer open sharing of new ideas and information across the organisation and thus, they will tend to seek organisations that promote the culture of knowledge sharing (Srinivasan, 2012). According to Naim and Lenka (2017), knowledge sharing will positively contribute to engagement and competency development if adequately implemented. Organisations that practice knowledge sharing would have higher job satisfaction and engagement level as knowledge management is a method to build a supportive working environment for employees through knowledge transfer (Juan, Liu Yao, Muhamad, & Tamyez, 2016).

Employee knowledge has been recognised as paramount resource for organisations to attain a competitive advantage and to build a robust workforce to facilitate engagement through the enforcement of knowledge management (Wellins, Bernthal, & Phelps, 2005). However, the studies on employee engagement from the angle of knowledge management are lacking in Malaysian organisations (Razali, Janice, Zainuddin, & Yunus, 2016). Therefore, the imperative gap in the context of knowledge management is seen as an opportunity for organisations in Malaysia to further investigate the potential of implementing this strategy to determine the level of employee engagement. As the interview finding showed that Gen Y leader started to put emphasis on the practice of knowledge management to stimulate engagement, this highlights the needs for organisations to develop a proper method to promote the effectiveness of knowledge sharing at every departmental level.

Leaders who take responsibility to encourage knowledge sharing to help their employees expand their capabilities and skills can expect a more organized team that work together to achieve departmental goals and target (Conrad, 2014). The prevailing view in the literature suggests that Gen Y employees recognise the need for knowledge for their career advancement and thus, will seek for opportunities to learn from their supervisors and co-workers as much as they can while they are on-board (Sharma, 2012). However, according to Alavi and Leinder (2001), contemporary challenges do exist when it comes to a successful transfer of knowledge among employees of different generational cohorts.

In a team consisting of Gen Y, Gen X or Baby Boomers; knowledge sharing can get slightly tough especially when every member requires a different set of skills or knowledge to attain the departmental goal. Thus, it is essential for the leader to understand the type of knowledge needed to ensure every member could obtain the precise type of knowledge from the right source. In this case, the organisation needs to know who holds the key knowledge and therefore, strive to create a friendly environment that would enable employees to gain knowledge equally and fairly (Kovacic, Bosilj Vuksic, & Loncar, 2006). Thereby, every employee would feel treasured and this indirectly changes the work ambience to be more positive and engaged.

6.7.3 Rewards and Recognition

The reward system and recognition is acknowledged as one of the factors in building engagement among the Gen Y participants in this study. The act of rewarding and recognising the hard work of the employees is the ultimate way to improve engagement and enhance business operations including the processes, output and bottom line management (Lau, 2014a). The Gen Y continuously anticipate some form of return for their hard work and achievement from their organisation in order to stay engaged and motivated. Based on the interview findings, both rewards and recognition play a factor in accelerating engagement among the Gen Y employees in order to stay motivated and sustain in their job.

Monetary and Non-monetary rewards

According to Zani et al. (2011), both monetary and non-monetary rewards are among the top preferences for driving employee engagement. Four Gen Y employees from the interview expressed the attractiveness of rewards and recognition in making them feels excited to work and be engaged. In the financial industry, it is safe to claim that the rewards and recognition program is competitively attractive because the employees play an extremely important role in securing customers and clients for the industry's survival (Mansor & Idris, 2015). Thus, a strategic rewards system is often used by the financial institutions as the main ingredient to boost their employees' motivation and productivity for greater work performance.

Robbins (2001) agrees that the productivity and performance of the employees will increase tremendously when the employees are rewarded and acknowledged accordingly, because it will lead to higher motivation, inspiration and engagement. In an empirical study conducted by World at Work with 736 professionals, 42% of the respondents mentioned that their company's total rewards strategies had a positive

impact on employee engagement, while 24% of them either agreed or strongly agreed that the efforts to engage employees through rewards systems had reduced complaints about pay fairness, absenteeism, turnover rate and increases employees discipline at work (Scott & McMullen, 2010). This study suggests that the rewards programs do influence employee engagement and promote a positive working condition in the office.

As such, it is justifiable that this study corresponds with the finding obtained from the Gen Y employees about how monetary reward helps in increasing employee engagement. Waqas and Saleem (2014) mentioned that monetary rewards could boost motivation while non-monetary rewards are more effective as these incentives have an intrinsic motivational impact on workers to induce engagement in the long run. Thomas (2009) further added that non-monetary rewards tend to create a positive feeling and employees feel more appreciated than when they receive financial rewards as it is highly viewed from the esteem and gratitude on worker's achievement (Aguinis, Joo, & Gottfredson, 2013).

Although non-monetary rewards were not highly discussed in the interview session, it can be suggested that it does lead to engagement to a certain extent, especially for older Gen Y employees that gives less priority to monetary rewards. The possible reason could be the fact that older Gen Y is more stable in their career and prefer appreciation in form of compliments or sponsored trips to spend time with the family. Generally, it was revealed that Gen Y employees prefer extrinsic motivation over intrinsic, while some scholars mentioned that there is an equal preference of both rewards (Chawla et al., 2017). Since the attrition rate among the Gen Y is something to ponder about, it is vital for HR practitioners to take necessary measures to

understand the type of reward mechanism that can help to retain Gen Y employees especially in the fast-moving industry such as financial services.

6.7.4 Perceived Leadership Support

Effective leadership was mentioned as a driver that helps to foster engagement among the Gen Y employees in this study. Interviewees described how supportive leadership plays a crucial part in improving their work performance and increase engagement. This lent support to a study by Sharkawi, Roslin, and Mohamad (2016) among Gen Y employees in Malaysia that many prefer leaders who can demonstrate positive qualities such as leading by example, caring, supportive, and trustworthy. Daily feedback, coaching and other forms of personal communication act as fuel to boost motivation and confidence when dealing with difficulties and conflict at the workplace (Alimo & Bradley, 2008). Furthermore, supportive leadership role has been studied for decades (Fleishman, 1953) and there is a significant body of research to show that supportive leadership help to increase employee's satisfaction and engagement (Cooper, 2012). A leader that demonstrates support to their staff will add improvement to business processes and fosters a strong, productive and engaged team where employees feel supported to contribute to the organisation and grow together into the future (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003).

In the Malaysian financial sector, some departments may have more than one reporting manager to handle multiple teams. For instance, a customer service unit or a hire purchase department might be the busiest and most stressful compared to other units due to the large volume of customer database that needs to be handled. Hence, employees from these units may face high workload and experience burnout if necessary support is not provided to them. This is where the presence of a supportive

leader would improve the meaningfulness of the job by guiding an employee to understand the importance of his or her contribution to organisational effectiveness (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). This empowering action ensures that employees have access to useful information and continuous opportunities to learn and grow in their career with the support of the leader (Abu Bakar, 2013; Tierney, Farmer, & Graen, 1999).

Besides that, supportive leadership also helps to build and maintain an effective interpersonal relationship. For example, coaching drives engagement by focusing on specific areas that need improvement for the individual, team and organisation. This is important, especially when dealing with employees who are attached to a unit that requires constant change in the business operations such as the customer service department, product development unit or telemarketing. New changes in organisations or practices in operations may affect the emotional well being of the employees and action of coaching would help the employees to adapt to the changes positively. Also, workplace coaching has gained importance as a strategy for strengthening manager and employee relationships, which is a crucial step toward improving employee engagement (Hicks et al., 2013). Whether it is a Gen Y leader or employee, supporting each other during a recession can ease the difficulties of coping with stress, reduce turnover rate and improve communication barriers. As supported by Sharkawi et al. (2016), a manager who is approachable, calm and caring ,provides guidance and support will cultivate a happier, healthier and motivated working space for everyone. In conclusion, supportive workplace with the presence of a good leader gives a positive impact in building an engaged workforce, especially among the millennials.

6.7.5 Self-Characteristic

Feeling engaged can be influenced by personal characteristics and inner personality. For some, they are triggered to be engaged due to their nature and not because of what is being offered to them at the workplace. During the interview, two respondents mentioned that the reason they are engaged is because of their character and personal choice. The personality of the employees can be considered as an important variable that affects their engagement levels. For instance, two employees working in the same environment may have different levels of engagement. This difference can exist because of their different personality traits.

The Big-Five module of personality traits is built on a model which describes the nature of individual differences as the human in five directions (McCrae & John, 1992). Those personality traits are collected, summarised and defined as a structure that involves five factors: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to experience (McCrae & John, 1992). The closest trait that matches to the personality described in the interview was conscientiousness. Conscientiousness includes traits such as organization, thoroughness, and reliability. Conscientiousness is the personality trait of being careful, or vigilant, and implies a desire to do a task well, and to take obligations to others seriously. Conscientious people also tend to be efficient and organised. Ongore (2014) also adds that a conscientious employee can be more engaged in their job because they are organised, result-driven, and possess high self-discipline to complete a task given.

This interview supports to the previous study of Shukla, Adhikari, Aggarwal, and Singh (2014) about the relationship between conscientious personality and employee engagement. The result of the study showed that conscientiousness has a significant relationship with employee engagement. A self-administered survey collected from 118 respondents also revealed that engagement was positively correlated with conscientious behaviour (Ongore, 2014). Another study by Ghorbannejad and Esakhani (2016) with 263 employees from the automotive industry similarly reported that employees with conscientiousness tend to produce better work outcomes and naturally engaged. Moreover, an individual with conscientiousness attitude has been known to be reliable, engaged, persistent, and hardworking which are important attributes to accomplish job tasks (Inceoglu & Warr, 2012).

That being said, it is not surprising that individual differences do have a positive effect on employee engagement. Apart from job resources and job characteristics as common predictors of engagement, many researchers believe that individual differences can influence motivational processes and performance (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001). Therefore, organisations should take consideration of employees' characteristics in their recruitment and selection process by conducting a psychometric test as part of the pre-employment criterion to ensure quality and sustainable workers are hired.

6.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides detailed insights into (1) the meaning of employee engagement from the perspectives of Gen Y employees; and (2) factors that could lead to the feeling of engagement. Three themes emerged to form the meaning of employee engagement from the perspective of Gen Y employees. For factors that drive engagement, five themes were endorsed respectively in the present study. The next chapter focuses on the quantitative study (Study 2) to test the hypotheses presented in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER SEVEN
STUDY 2: THE IMPACT OF JOB RESOURCES AND MODERATING EFFECT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

7.1 Chapter Overview

Study 2 aims to answer two research questions as addressed in Chapter Three; (1) the association between the job resources and employee engagement, (2) the role of self-efficacy and high-workload in moderating the relationship between the job resources and engagement level. For this reason, Convergent validity (CFA) and correlation matrix is examined, followed by hierarchical regression analysis and moderation analysis to test the hypotheses presented in Chapter Three. Lastly, discussion section is presented at the end of the chapter.

7.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The convergent validity was demonstrated by performing the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS 25 with Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE). The purpose of conducting the CFA was to ascertain that each construct/dimension had an adequate model fit via measures of fit indices (Byrne, 2010). CFA test ensures that the proposed models suited the context of the study. All the questions were from established scales and adopted from previous studies which had good psychometric properties. Based on the recommended guidelines by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), several measures of fit indices were used to evaluate how well the data fit the model: 1) normed chi-square which is the chi-square value divided by the degrees of freedom (x^2/df), 2) comparative fit index (CFI), 3) root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), 4) Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), 5) Incremental first index (IFI) 6) goodness of-fit index (GFI) and the 7) normed fit index (NFI). Next, scale items with factor

loading below 0.5 were removed from the model to ensure only good items were carried forward to the next stage of analysis (Hair et al, 2010).

Table 7.1 Criteria for a model fit

Measures of fit	Suggested values of a good fit
Normed x^2	Value less than 2 (Very good) Between 3 and 5 (Acceptable)
CFI/GFI	Value from 0 to 1, and 0.90 and above
RMSEA	Value of .05 or less/0.1 or less (Good fit) Between .05 and .08 (Adequate fit)
TLI	0.90 and above
IFI	0.90 and above
NFI	0.95 and above

7.2.1 Work-life Balance (WLB)

The WLB factor model was analysed and the model yielded a good degree of fit (normed $x^2 = 1.50$; CFI = 0.99; GFI = 0.99; RMSEA = 0.04; TLI = 0.98; IFI = 0.99; NFI = 0.98). All the items have factor loadings greater than 0.50 and therefore were retained.

Table 7.2 Work-life Balance Factor Items Loadings

Component Matrix of WLB	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
I am satisfied with my work-life balance, enjoying both work and non-work life roles	0.65
Nowadays, I seem to enjoy every part of my life equally well	0.74
I manage to balance the demands of my work and personal and family life well	0.63

7.2.2 Reward and Recognition

The reward and recognition scale was tested and the results indicated that the model was an acceptable fit for the data (normed $x^2 = 1.73$; CFI = 0.90; GFI = 0.99; RMSEA = 0.05; TLI = 0.98; IFI = 0.90). Factor loadings above 0.5 were attained for all the five items in the model. Therefore, no items were deleted.

Table 7.3 Reward and Recognition Factor Items Loadings

Component Matrix of Reward and Recognition	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
In the organization where I work, I get incentives such as promotions, commissioned functions, awards, bonuses, etc.	0.60
In the organization where I work, my salary is influenced by my results	0.58
The organization I work for offers me a salary that is compatible with my skills, training, and education.	0.60
The organization I work for remunerates me according to the remuneration offered at either the public or private marketplace levels	0.59
The organization I work for considers the expectations and suggestions of its employees when designing a system of employee rewards	0.56

7.2.3 Training

The training factor scale was examined and the results provided a good fit to the data (normed $x^2 = 0.81$; CFI = 1.0; GFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.00; TLI = 1.0; IFI = 0.95; NFI = 0.95). The factor loadings for all the items were loaded greater than the minimum recommended value of 0.50, with the exception of three items. The items; (The organization I work for invests in my development and education promoting my personal and professional growth in a broad manner = 0.32), (In the organization where I work, training is evaluated by participants = 0.46), and (In the organization

where I work, training needs are identified periodically = 0.46). Thus, the three items were dropped from the model while remained as a good fit with a slight change in the overall model fit value (normed x^2 = 1.34; CFI = 0.99; GFI = 0.99; RMSEA = 0.03; TLI = 0.98; IFI = 0.99; NFI = 0.98). The Cronbach Alpha for the final measure was 0.680 with moderate reliability.

Table 7.4 Training Factor Items Loadings

Component Matrix of Training	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
I can use knowledge and behaviours learned in training at work	0.61
The organization I work for helps me develop the skills I need for the successful accomplishment of my duties (e.g., training, conferences, etc.).	0.55
The organization I work for stimulates learning and application of knowledge	0.61

7.2.4 Career Development Program (CDP)

CDP factor scale was tested and the initial results showed a poor model fit (normed x^2 = 8.32; CFI = 0.79; GFI = 0.92; RMSEA = 0.18; TLI = 0.66; IFI = 0.83; NFI = 0.78). Factor loadings for all items were above 0.5 except for one item (Career management programs are essential to support my career development = 0.39). The item was dropped from the model, resulting in an increase of model fit (normed x^2 = 3.7; CFI = 0.95; GFI = 0.97; RMSEA = 0.10; TLI = 0.90; IFI = 0.95; NFI = 0.93). The reliability coefficient for the final measure was 0.706.

Table 7.5 Career Development Program Factor Items Loadings

Component Matrix of Career Development Program	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
A formal process to attain career development is important to me	0.76
Career development is important to me	0.65
I understand the need for continuous career development.	0.53
Career planning tools are essential to support my career development	0.53

7.2.5 Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)

The PSS factor scale was analysed and the results yielded a good fit (normed x^2 = 2.26; CFI = 0.97; GFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.07; TLI = 0.95; IFI = 0.97; NFI = 0.95). Factor loadings for all the items were above 0.5.

Table 7.6 Perceived Supervisor Support Factor Items Loadings

Component Matrix of Perceived Supervisor Support	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
My supervisor cares about my opinions	0.61
My work supervisor really cares about my well being	0.65
My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values	0.61
My supervisor shows very little concern for me	0.51

7.2.6 Job Characteristics: Task Identity and Autonomy

The CFA analyses of task identity and autonomy scale showed an adequate fit. Task identity (normed $x^2 = 0.67$; CFI = 1.0; GFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.00; TLI = 1.0; IFI = 0.99; NFI = 0.97). Autonomy (normed $x^2 = 0.87$; CFI = 1.0; GFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.01; TLI = 1.0; IFI = 1.0; NFI = 0.99). Factor loadings for the all items were also above the acceptable level of 0.5, therefore no items were deleted from the scale.

Table 7.7 Task Identity and Autonomy Factor Items Loadings

Component Matrix of Task Identity	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
I do a complete task from start to finish. The results of my efforts are clearly visible and identifiable	0.58
I make insignificant contributions to the final product or service	0.51
My job is arranged so that I do not have a chance to do an entire piece of work from beginning to end	0.51
My job provides me with the chance to finish completely any work I start	0.61

Component Matrix of Autonomy	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
I have almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the work is to be done	0.51
I have very little freedom in deciding how the work is to be done	0.59
My job does not allow me an opportunity to use discretion or participate in decision making	0.69
My job gives me considerable freedom in doing the work	0.56

7.2.7 Employee Engagement

The employee engagement scale comprised of 17 items which showed an acceptable degree of model fit when analysed using the CFA (normed $x^2 = 0.89$; CFI =0.94; GFI = 1.0; RMSEA = 0.00; TLI = 1.0; IFI = 0.99). The factor loadings for all the 17-items were loaded above 0.5, meeting cut-offs set by Field (2017).

Table 7.8 Employee Engagement Factor Items Loadings

Component Matrix of Employee Engagement	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
At my work, I feel bursting with energy	0.56
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	0.51
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	0.58
I can continue working for very long periods at a time	0.51
At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	0.57
At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well	0.50
I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	0.75
I am enthusiastic about my job	0.73
My job inspires me	0.61
I am proud of the work that I do	0.72
To me, my job is challenging	0.71
Time flies when I am working	0.88
When I am working, I forget everything else around me	0.84
I feel happy when I am working intensely	0.82
I am immersed in my work	0.85
I get carried away when I am working	0.86
It is difficult to detach myself from my job	0.67

7.2.8 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy factor scale was analysed for CFA and the results indicated a good model fit (normed $x^2 = 1.68$; CFI = 0.98; GFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.05; TLI = 0.98; IFI = 0.98; NFI = 0.97). All items were remained as the factor loadings loaded above 0.5.

Table 7.9 Self-efficacy Factor Items Loadings

Component Matrix of Self-efficacy	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
I do not anticipate any problem in adjusting to work in this organization	0.78
I feel I am overqualified for the job I will be doing	0.60
I have all the technical knowledge I need to deal with my new job, all I need now is practical experience	0.67
I feel confident that my skill and abilities equal or exceed those of my future colleagues	0.77
My past experiences and accomplishments increase my confidence that I will be able to perform successfully in this organisation	0.81
I could have handled a more challenging job than the one I will be doing	0.71

7.2.9 High Workload

High-workload scale was tested CFA and yielded a good model fit (normed $x^2 = 1.25$; CFI = 0.99; GFI = 0.99; RMSEA = 0.03; TLI = 0.99; IFI = 0.99; NFI = 0.98). All items have factor loadings above 0.5.

Table 7.10 High-workload Factor Items Loadings

Component Matrix of High-workload	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
The job involved a lot of repetitive work	0.73
The job involved an excessive amount of work	0.77
The job required lots of physical/mental effort	0.62
The demands of my job take up many hours of my personal time	0.51

7.2.10 Intention to Quit

Intention to quit scale was tested and the results showed a good model fit (normed $x^2 = 3.24$; CFI = 0.98; GFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.09; TLI = 0.97; IFI = 0.98; NFI = 0.97). All items have factor loadings above 0.5, and no items were deleted.

Table 7.11 Intention to Quit Factor Items Loadings

Component Matrix of Intention to Quit	
Items	**Factor Loadings**
In the last few months, I have seriously thought about looking for a new job	0.82
Presently, I am actively searching for other job	0.80
I intend to leave my organization in the near future	0.75

7.3 Correlation Matrix

Table 7.12 shows the correlation matrix amongst the study variables. Employee engagement was significantly correlated with work-life balance ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$), rewards and recognition ($r = 0.14$, $p < 0.05$), training ($r = 0.14$, $p < 0.05$), perceived supervisor support ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$), task identity ($r = 0.14$, $p < 0.05$), and autonomy ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$). Some of these variables were also significantly correlated with the three dimensions of employee engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption). However, career development program (CDP) only had a significant correlation with vigour ($r = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$) but not with dedication ($r = 0.07$, $p>0.05$), absorption ($r = -0.03$, $p> 0.05$) and total employee engagement (0.04, $p>0.05$). Next, a hierarchical regression test was conducted to determine the strongest predictor of employee engagement.

Table 7.12 Inter-correlation among variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 - Work-life Balance	1										
2 - Reward & Recognition	0.06	1									
3 - Training	0.09	0.03	1								
4 - Career Development	0.08	0.06	0.16*	1							
5 - Perceived Supervisor Support	0.15*	0.09	0.18**	0.08	1						
6 - Task Identity	-0.05	0.19**	0.00	0.08	0.04	1					
7 - Autonomy	-0.03	0.19**	0.03	0.02	0.07	0.13*	1				
8 - Engagement	0.24**	0.14*	0.14*	0.04	0.15*	0.14*	0.35**	1			
9 - Vigour	0.17**	0.10	0.03	0.18**	0.16*	0.07	0.25**	0.43**	1		
10 - Dedication	0.11	0.22**	0.09	0.07	0.07	0.25**	0.27**	0.46**	0.18**	1	
11 - Absorption	0.09	0.13*	0.04	-0.03	0.04	-0.05	0.05	0.36**	0.09	0.10	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

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

7.4 Analysing the Effects of Job Resources on Employee Engagement

Hierarchical regression analysis was performed to test the effects of job resources on employee engagement. The potential effect of gender was controlled for by entering in the first block of the hierarchical multiple regressions. The second block examined the direct effects, comprised of WLB, rewards and recognition, training, PSS, task identity, and autonomy. CDP was omitted from the test as there was no correlation. Table 7.13 - 7.16 shows the details of the results.

Table 7.13 Regression Analysis for Job Resources on Employee Engagement

Variables	*β*	*t*	*F*	R^2	ΔR^2	*sig.*
Step 1:			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.98
Gender	0.00	0.06				
Step 2:			7.89	0.22	0.19	0.00
WLB	0.24	3.94				**0.00**
Rewards & Recognition	0.22	0.59				**0.00**
Training	0.10	1.66				0.09
PSS	0.31	1.09				**0.00**
Task Identity	0.10	1.65				0.09
Autonomy	0.33	5.47				**0.00**

N = 232

The results after controlling the effect of gender showed six job resources accounted for 22% of the variances in the dependent variable (R^2=0.22). Four job resources were found to have significant direct effects in employee engagement. They were autonomy (β=0.33, p<0.05), PSS (β=0.31, p<0.05), WLB (β=0.24, p<0.05), and rewards and recognition (β=0.21, p<0.05). Meanwhile, training (β=0.10, p>0.05), and task identity (β=0.10, p>0.05) had no relationship with employee engagement (See Table 7.13).

Likewise, the effects of job resources on the individual dimension of employee engagement were also examined. As shown in Table 7.14, the results of the regression showed that all seven job resources accounted for 14% (R^2=0.14) of the variances in vigour. Autonomy (β=0.24, p<0.05), WLB (β=0.15, p<0.05) and CDP (β=0.15, p<0.05) had significant direct effects on vigour, after controlling the effect of gender. However, rewards and recognition (β=0.02, p>0.05), training (β=-0.03, p>0.05), PSS (β=0.11, p>0.05), and task identity (β=0.02, p>0.05) had no relationship with vigour.

Table 7.14 Regression Analysis for Job Resources on Vigour

Variables	*β*	*t*	*F*	*R²*	*ΔR²*	*sig.*
Step 1:			0.85	0.00	-0.00	0.45
Gender	0.04	0.75				
Step 2:			4.60	0.14	0.11	0.00
WLB	0.15	2.46				**0.01**
Rewards & Recognition	0.02	0.32				0.74
Training	-0.03	-0.50				0.61
CDP	0.15	2.41				**0.01**
PSS	0.11	1.64				0.10
Task Identity	0.02	0.41				0.67
Autonomy	0.24	3.86				**0.00**

N=232

As for dedication (See Table 7.15), the combined predictors accounted for 16% of the variances in the dependent variable (R^2=0.16). CDP was excluded from the test as there was no correlation with dedication dimension. After controlling for the effect of gender, three job resources were found to have significant direct effects on dedication (See Table 7.15). There were task identity (β=0.20, p<0.05), autonomy (β=0.20, p<0.05), and rewards and recognition (β=0.12, p<0.05). Conversely, WLB (β=0.11, p>0.05), training (β=0.06, p>0.05) and PSS (β=0.00, p>0.05) had no significant relationship with dedication.

Table 7.15 Regression Analysis for Job Resources on Dedication

Variables	*β*	*t*	*F*	R^2	ΔR^2	*sig.*
Step 1:			0.16	0.00	-0.00	0.68
Gender	0.01	0.29				
Step 2:			5.44	0.16	0.13	0.00
WLB	0.11	1.82				0.06
Rewards & Recognition	0.12	1.94				**0.05**
Training	0.06	0.98				0.32
PSS	0.00	0.03				0.97
Task Identity	0.20	3.21				**0.00**
Autonomy	0.23	3.64				**0.00**

N=232

As seen in Table 7.16, the last dimension of employee engagement- absorption were examined and accounted 3% of the variance in dependent variable (R^2=0.03). Similarly, CDP was omitted from the test due to no correlation effect. After controlling the effect of gender, the result revealed that only reward and recognition had significant relationship on absorption (β=0.14, p<0.05). On the other hand, the remaining five job resources were found to have no relationship with absorption (WLB (β=0.07, p>0.05), training (β=0.04, p>0.05), PSS (β=0.01, p>0.05), task identity (β=-0.08, p>0.05), autonomy (β=0.03, p>0.05).

Table 7.16 Regression Analysis for Job Resources on Absorption

Variables	*β*	*t*	*F*	R^2	ΔR^2	*sig.*
Step 1:			0.09	0.00	-0.00	0.84
Gender	0.01	0.29				
Step 2:			1.10	0.03	0.00	0.35
WLB	0.07	1.18				0.23
Rewards & Recognition	0.14	2.06				**0.04**
Training	0.04	0.61				0.54
PSS	0.01	0.25				0.80
Task Identity	-0.08	-1.17				0.24
Autonomy	0.03	0.57				0.56

N=232

7.5 Analysing the Moderating Effect of Self-efficacy and High Workload on Employee Engagement

PROCESS Model 1 by Hayes (2013) was applied to test the interaction effect of self-efficacy and high work-load on the relationship between the independent variables and (WLB, rewards and recognition, training, CDP, PSS, task identity, autonomy) and the dependent variables (employee engagement, vigour, dedication, absorption). Process Model 1 was tested with a bootstrap confidence level set at 95%. The interaction is deemed significant if the ZERO (0) does not lie within the intervals range of the confidence interval (CI) - (LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit). All significant interactions was further subjected to a simple slope analysis (Hayes, 2013) using the pick-a-point method to visualise the moderating effects at various level.

As shown in Table 7.17-7.18, self-efficacy moderates the relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and employee engagement (β = -0.08, 95% CI [-0.157, -0.008], p < 0.01). At low and average level of PSS, self-efficacy enhances employee engagement. However the effect is not found when PSS is high (See Figure 7.1)

Table 7.17 Moderation Analysis for Self-efficacy on Employee Engagement

	β	SE	t	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Control Variables						
Gender	0.00	0.05	0.00	*p>0.05*	-0.087	0.087
Independent Variables						
Work-life Balance (WLB)	0.23	0.04	3.94	*p<0.05*	0.051	0.210
Rewards and Recognition (RR)	0.22	0.05	0.48	*p<0.05*	0.747	0.124
Training	0.10	0.58	1.66	*p>0.05*	-0.051	0.180
CDP	0.00	-0.04	-0.19	*p>0.05*	-0.090	0.088
PSS	0.31	0.04	0.89	*p<0.05*	-0.517	-0.138
Task Identity	0.10	0.03	1.70	*p>0.05*	-0.009	0.143
Autonomy	0.33	0.03	5.47	*p<0.05*	0.100	0.224
Moderator						
Self-efficacy (SE)	0.02	0.02	1.01	*p>0.05*	-0.025	0.080
Interactions						
WLB x SE	0.05	0.05	1.12	*p>0.05*	-0.040	0.155
RR x SE	0.02	0.06	0.31	*p>0.05*	-0.106	0.147
Training x SE	0.01	0.08	0.20	*p>0.05*	-0.144	0.178
CDP x SE	-0.06	0.06	-1.11	*p>0.05*	-0.186	0.517
PSS x SE	**-0.08**	**0.02**	**-2.99**	***p<0.05***	**-0.157**	**-0.008**
Task Identity x SE	0.01	0.05	0.37	*p>0.05*	-0.082	0.126
Autonomy x SE	-0.03	0.03	-0.99	*p>0.05*	-0.106	0.035

Table 7.18 Conditional Effect of PSS on Employee Engagement at Values of Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy		Effect- β	sig.	LLCI	ULCI
Low	-0.8558	**0.1761**	**0.002**	0.0821	0.2665
Average	0.0000	**0.1048**	**0.018**	0.0179	0.1893
High	0.8558	0.0335	0.584	-0.0856	0.1514

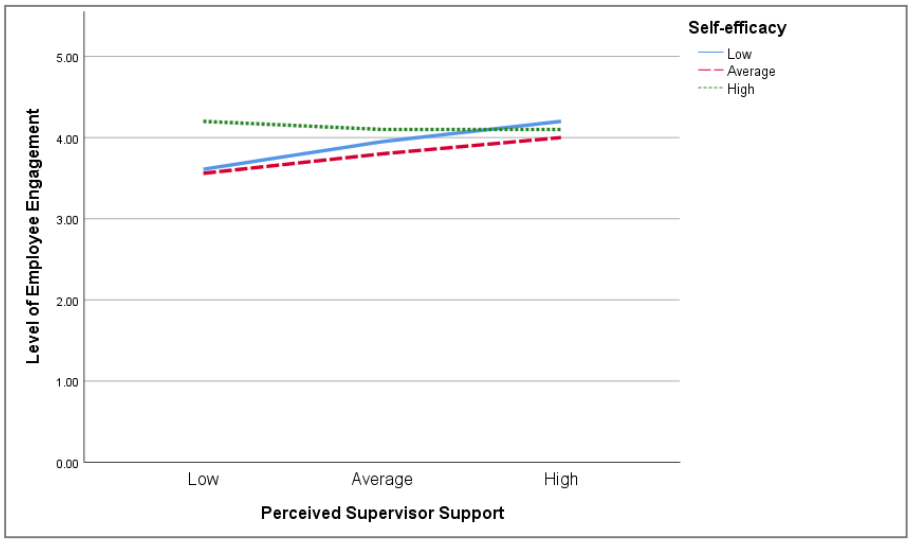


Figure 7.1 Interaction Slope for PSS and Self-efficacy in Predicting Engagement

Similarly, self-efficacy moderates the relationship between PSS and vigour (β = -0.26, 95% CI [-0.377, -0.151], p < 0.01) (See Table 7.19-7.20). As seen in Figure 7.2, self-efficacy increases the effects of PSS on vigour at low and average levels of PSS. However, the effect tapers off at high levels of PSS (See Figure 7.2).

Table 7.19 Moderation Analysis for Self-efficacy on Vigour

	β	SE	t	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Control Variables						
Gender	0.00	0.05	0.69	*p >0.05*	-0.079	0.165
Independent Variables						
WLB	0.12	0.05	2.46	*p<0.05*	0.015	0.222
Rewards and Recognition (RR)	0.01	0.05	0.32	*p>0.05*	-0.817	0.133
Training	-0.02	0.07	-0.50	*p>0.05*	-0.890	0.188
CDP	0.15	0.05	2.41	*p<0.05*	0.211	0.253
PSS	0.09	0.05	0.11	*p>0.05*	0.003	-0.209
Task Identity	0.02	0.04	0.41	*p>0.05*	-0.125	0.061
Autonomy	0.16	0.04	3.86	*p<0.05*	0.074	0.262
Moderator						
Self-efficacy (SE)	0.02	0.02	1.01	*p<0.05*	0.019	0.145
Interactions						
WLB x SE	0.09	0.15	1.12	*p>0.05*	-0.040	0.155
RR x SE	0.02	0.02	0.31	*p>0.05*	-0.106	0.147
Training x SE	0.01	-0.03	0.20	*p>0.05*	-0.144	0.178
CDP x SE	-0.06	0.15	-1.11	*p>0.05*	-0.186	0.517
PSS x SE	**-0.26**	**0.05**	**-4.6**	***p<0.05***	**-0.377**	**-0.151**
Task Identity x SE	0.01	0.02	0.37	*p>0.05*	-0.082	0.126
Autonomy x SE	-0.03	0.24	-0.99	*p>0.05*	-0.106	0.035

Table 7.20 Condition Effect of PSS on Vigour at Values of Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy		Effect- β	p-value	LLCI	ULCI
Low	-0.8558	**0.3839**	**0.000**	0.1971	0.5707
Average	0	**0.1636**	**0.007**	0.0449	0.2823
High	0.8558	-0.0567	0.474	-0.2129	0.0994

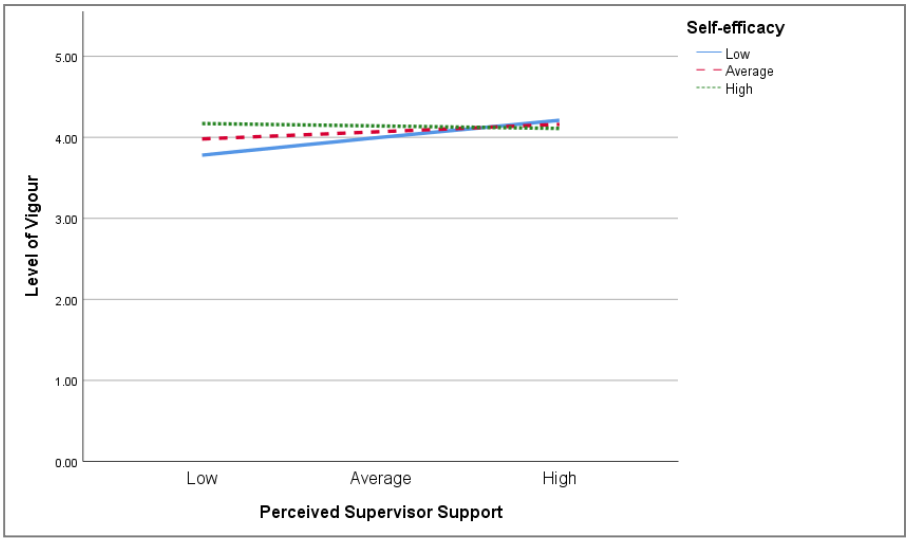


Figure 7.2 Interaction Slope for PSS and Self efficacy in Predicting Vigour

The moderation analysis also showed that self-efficacy moderates the relationship between task identity and dedication (β = 0.23, 95% CI [0.061, 0.378], p < 0.01) (See Table 7.21-7.22). Self-efficacy enhances the effect of task identity on dedication when task identity is average and high. On the contrary, the effect was not significant when task identity is at lower level (See Figure 7.3)

Table 7.21 Moderation Analysis for Self-efficacy on Dedication

	β	SE	t	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Control Variables						
Gender	0.01	0.08	0.21	*p>0.05*	-0.156	0.195
Independent Variables						
WLB	0.13	0.11	1.82	*p>0.05*	-0.044	0.320
Rewards and Recognition (RR)	0.16	0.12	1.59	*p<0.05*	-0.037	-0.360
Training	0.07	0.06	0.98	*p>0.05*	-0.057	0.243
CDP	0.25	0.02	0.28	*p>0.05*	-0.129	0.162
PSS	0.00	0.00	0.03	*p>0.05*	-0.119	0.192
Task Identity	0.26	0.20	3.21	*p<0.05*	0.044	0.560
Autonomy	0.22	0.23	3.64	*p<0.05*	0.085	0.327
Moderator						
Self-efficacy (SE)	0.05	0.06	0.81	*p>0.05*	-0.075	0.181
Interactions						
WLB x SE	0.18	0.10	1.80	*p>0.05*	-0.017	0.358
RR x SE	-0.00	0.18	-0.00	*p>0.05*	-0.061	0.388
Training x SE	0.02	0.19	0.12	*p>0.05*	-0.360	0.410
CDP x SE	-0.00	0.08	-0.04	*p>0.05*	-0.176	0.169
PSS x SE	-0.06	0.09	0.66	*p>0.05*	-0.241	0.120
Task Identity x SE	**0.23**	**0.08**	**2.73**	***p<0.05***	**0.061**	**0.378**
Autonomy x SE	-0.05	0.08	-0.63	*p>0.05*	-0.065	0.586

Table 7.22 Condition Effect of Task Identity on Dedication at Values of Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy		Effect- β	p-value	LLCI	ULCI
Low	-0.8558	0.176	0.105	-0.0372	0.3892
Average	0.0000	**0.3669**	**0.005**	0.1102	0.6236
High	0.8558	**0.5578**	**0.001**	0.2085	0.9072

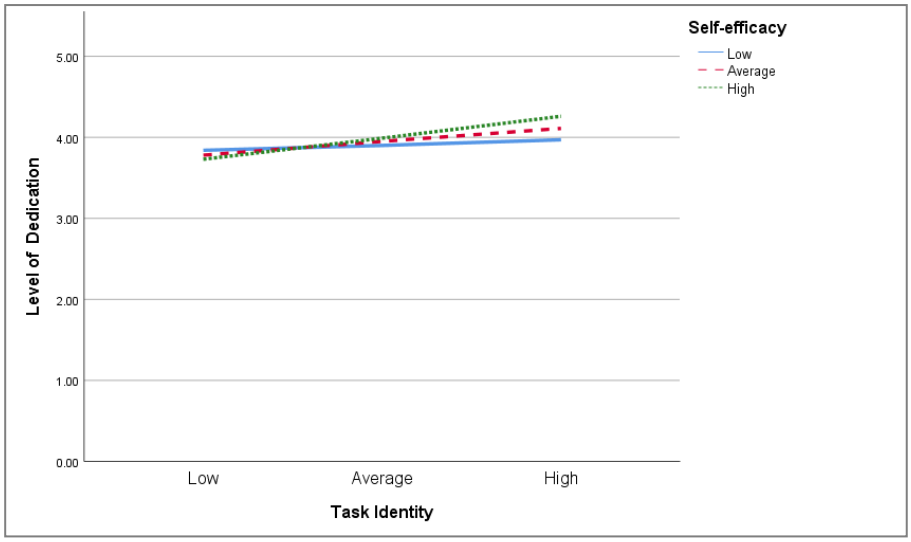


Figure 7.3 Interaction Slope for Task Identity and Self-efficacy in Predicting Dedication

For absorption, there was no moderating effect of self-efficacy on any of the independent variables (See Appendix 7.1 for the moderation output). The next analysis examined the moderating effect of high workload on the relationship between the independent variables (WLB, reward and recognition, training, CDP, PSS, task identity, and autonomy) and the dependent variables (employee engagement, vigour, dedication, and absorption).

High workload had no interaction with the independent variables on employee engagement, vigour and absorption (See Appendix 7.2-7.4 for the moderation output) However, high workload had a significant moderation relationship between task identity and dedication (β = 0.25, 95% CI [0.292, 2.210], p < 0.01) (See Table 7.23-7.24). High workload enhances dedication at an average level and high level of task identity. The effects however, were not significant when task identity is low (See Figure 7.4).

Table 7.23 Moderation Analysis for High Workload on Dedication

	β	SE	t	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Control Variables						
Gender	0.03	0.09	0.35	p>0.05	-0.149	0.214
Independent Variables						
WLB	0.13	0.11	1.82	*p>0.05*	-0.044	0.320
Rewards and Recognition (RR)	0.16	0.12	1.59	*p<0.05*	-0.037	-0.360
Training	0.07	0.06	0.98	*p>0.05*	-0.057	0.243
CDP	0.25	0.02	0.28	*p>0.05*	-0.129	0.162
PSS	0.00	0.00	0.03	*p>0.05*	-0.119	0.192
Task Identity	0.26	0.20	3.21	*p<0.05*	0.044	0.560
Autonomy	0.22	0.23	3.64	*p<0.05*	0.085	0.327
Moderator						
High Workload (HW)	0.17	0.13	1.25	p>0.05	-0.998	0.446
Interactions						
WLB x HW	0.10	0.37	0.32	p>0.05	-0.612	0.852
RR x HW	-0.11	0.32	-0.41	p>0.05	-0.773	0.505
Training x HW	0.29	0.33	0.06	p>0.05	-0.304	0.927
CDP x HW	0.29	0.28	0.32	p>0.05	-0.292	0.885
PSS x HW	-0.03	0.23	-0.26	p>0.05	-0.425	0.349
Task Identity x HW	**0.25**	**0.53**	**2.20**	**p<0.05**	**0.292**	**2.210**
Autonomy x HW	0.21	0.13	1.47	p>0.05	-0.060	0.496

Table 7.24 Condition Effect of Task Identity on Dedication at Values of High Workload

High-workload		Effect- β	p-value	LLCI	ULCI
Low	-0.2705	-0.0154	0.941	-0.4248	0.3941
Average	0.0000	**0.3243**	**0.028**	0.0341	0.6146
High	0.2705	**0.6639**	**0.001**	0.2941	1.0337

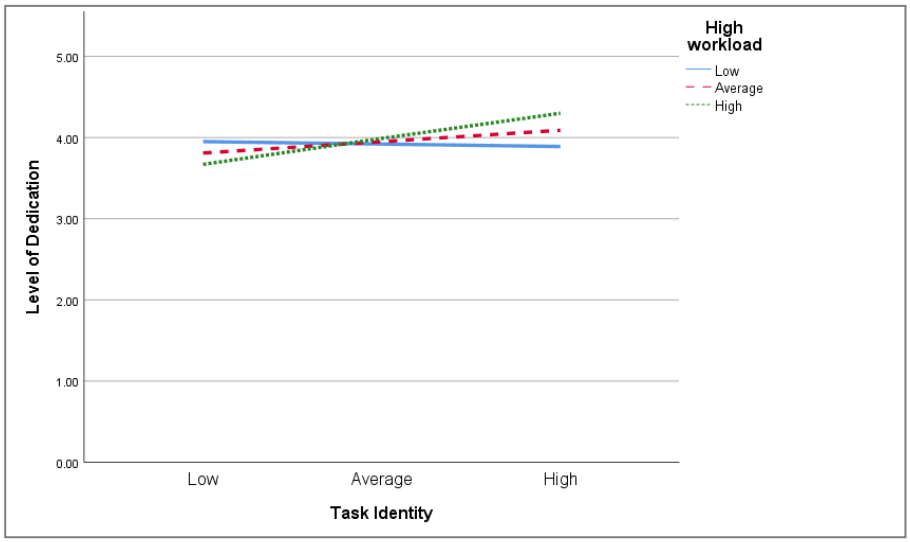


Figure 7.4 Interaction Slope for Task Identity and High Workload in Predicting Dedication

In summary, the following hypotheses were supported/not supported (See Table 7.25)

Table 7.25 Results of Hypotheses for Relationship between Job Resources and Employee Engagement

Hypotheses	Results
H1: Work-life balance is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector	*Supported*
H2: Reward and Recognition is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector	*Supported*
H3: Training is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector	*Not Supported*
H4: Career Development Program (CDP) is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector	*Partially Supported*
H5: Perceived Supervisor Support is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector	*Supported*
H6: Task identity is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector	*Partially Supported*
H7: Autonomy is positively related to employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector	*Supported*
H8: Self-efficacy (SE) and high workload (HW) moderate the relationship between the job resources and employee engagement among Gen Y workers in the Malaysian financial sector	*Partially Supported* • *PSS and SE on (employee engagement, vigour)* • *Task identity and SE on dedication* • *Task identity and HW on dedication*

7.6 Predictors of Employee Engagement

The following discussion aims to discuss the results in detailed with supporting literature to support the research findings. The regression analysis showed that autonomy is the strongest predictor of employee engagement. Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector have perceived the presence of autonomy at the workplace to increase employee engagement. The finding is consistent with the previous study of Yong et al. (2013) in the Malaysian private sector whereby the existence of autonomy at work helps the employees to foster a positive feeling of attachment by exhibiting a higher level of engagement in their jobs. Saks (2006) has emphasised the importance of encouraging certain job characteristics such as autonomy, to avoid disengaged employees and withdrawal of oneself from their job roles.

The presence of autonomy allows the Gen Y employees to gain the freedom to expand their job duties and perform the tasks at their own discretion. Autonomy also provides the freedom for the employees to set their own deadlines and the flexibility to determine which important tasks to accomplish. This form of autonomy is closely associated with the idea of self-managing and being in charge at work (Lin & Ping, 2016). Managers who grant flexibility to their subordinates and encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility in managing tasks will gain the employees' trust and confidence which lead to higher engagement level. A study by Mugo et al. (2014) with 250 employees in state corporations in Kenya shows that autonomy has a significant relationship with employee engagement.

As for the Gen Y, the desire to have power over their career direction and the need for autonomy indicates that this group prefers to work independently and seek for freedom at the workplace (Ologbo & Sufian, 2012). This fact explains why the Gen Y in this study perceived autonomy as a factor to make them feel engaged. The challenging and robust working culture at the financial institution could be the reason for the Gen Y to seek for autonomy. This is because autonomy helps them to stay focus and gain the opportunity to prove themselves to their superiors to carry out tasks with less supervision (Grant & Ashford, 2008).

In addition, previous research by Wheatley (2017) reveals that employees with greater levels of autonomy reported to experience positive effects on their overall well-being and appear to be more happy, energetic and satisfied at work. As autonomy predicts element of vigour in the present study, it is assumed that the presence of autonomy could lead to a healthy work lifestyle among the Gen Y employees. This is agreed by Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2013) whereby employees who are allowed to plan their work tasks and perform without being micromanaged tend to experience higher levels of energy, lower level of stress and improved health condition.

The finding in this study also showed that autonomy leads to a higher level of dedication among the Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. The reason could be the fact that the workload in the financial sector is heavy and the allowance of autonomy at the workplace provides the sense of diligence and enthusiasm to complete the tasks efficiently with minimal supervision. As agreed by Koena, Vianena, Hoofta, and Kleheb (2016), autonomy increases employees' dedication level by contributing to an efficient work environment with pro-active and result-oriented type of employees.

However, on the divergent perspectives, job autonomy should come along with opportunities for employees to receive and provide feedback in order for them to be engaged. According to Deci, Connell, and Ryan (1989), providing both negative and positive feedback in a non-critical manner in the process of providing autonomy would enhance the employees' confidence level and improve employee engagement (McLeod & Clarke, 2009). As the previous literature mentions that Gen Y employees constantly seek for feedback, it is important for managers to provide a discussion platform for them to express their concerns and achieve strategic work autonomy to ensure all tasks are accomplished on time (Bauer & Mulder, 2006). This indicates that managers should consider their subordinates' autonomous needs and therefore, manager should empower them to attain their goals by giving them a certain amount of autonomy.

The finding also corresponded to the second strongest predictor of employee engagement which is perceived supervisor support (PSS). The result indicates that PSS significantly predicts employee engagement among the Gen Y in this study. This implies that Gen Y employees with greater support from their supervisor are more likely to be engaged than others. PSS consists of interactions in a form of exchanging feedbacks, providing guidance and support to his or her employees that are deemed positive (Jawahar & Hemmasi, 2006). Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector generally received support from their leaders for many apparent reasons in order to stay engaged. For instance, a participant from the qualitative interview shared that the leader's encouraging words and guidance are highly sought after by banking employees especially for those who works in the customer service department since the role requires them to deal with complaints and enquiries from the clients.

It is further explained that motivational support and advice from the team leader play a significant role in shaping positive behaviour at the workplace. It also helps the employees to set their performance target for the next day. Thus, the role of the supervisor in the financial sector is crucial to stimulate engagement as the presence of a supportive leader that could give a positive impact on their performance and increase job satisfaction. A research study by Jose and Mampilly (2015) revealed that PSS positively influenced employee engagement among 177 workers from three service sector in India.

In addition, providing support through mentoring seem appealing to Gen Y employees, as they embrace continuous learning, feedback and emotional support from their superior. As the result of pampered upbringing and empowered parenting style at home; leaders who offer emotional support, constant attention, creative freedom and flexibility is highly appreciated by Gen Y (Fishman, 2016; Lowe, Levitt, & Wilson, 2008). Therefore, mentoring is often used as a holistic HR intervention to regulate personal and professional development which is important for Gen Y employees at workplace (Rhodes, 2009). Millennials also strongly value their relationship with the peers and desire a flat hierarchy where they could gain easy access to senior leaders for support and to feel engaged. This is in accordance with the previous study of Jin and McDonald (2017) who note that supervisor support positively affect engagement level among 1251 young employees from state and local government agencies in the United States.

Perceived supervisor support also could be linked to the theory of engagement as described by Kahn (1990), whereby psychological meaningfulness is achieved when employees' contribution is acknowledged, valued and appreciated by the organisation and leader. Leaders who listen to their subordinates' ideas, sharing knowledge and are

genuinely interested in their success are likely to gain greater personal empowerment which increase work engagement and satisfaction (Jose & Mampilly, 2015). In order to sustain engagement level, Gen Y employees continuously need to receive mutual respect, empathy and trust for building a positive interpersonal relationship (Reio & Reio, 2011). As the finding showed perceived supervisor support lead to employee engagement, Gen Y members in the Malaysian financial sector may have encountered many occasion where their supervisor interacted with them to provide work support, which led to the feeling of engagement toward the company. This is in accordance with the previous study by May et.al (2004), who suggested that higher levels of engagement are notable in employees with a supportive and nurturing supervisor.

Furthermore, the social exchange theory (SET) posits that employees that gain supervisor support will naturally be drawn closer with their organisation and feel obligated to return the favour to their supervisor by remaining in the organisation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The feeling of being trusted and supported by the supervisor leads to higher energy investment of oneself into the job, better engagement level and enjoys carrying out the tasks efficiently (Houkes, Janssen, De Jonge, & Bakker, 2013). This explains why the Gen Y in the study recognises supervisor support as a mechanism to accelerate the feeling of engagement. The relationship between PSS and employee engagement could also be explained based on the JD-R model. Based on the rules of the JD-R model, it can be assumed that job resource such as PSS have a motivational effect to lead to engagement. This is congruent with the suggestions of other researchers (Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004; Mohamed & Ali, 2016) that support PSS as an important job resource to predict employee engagement.

The study also identified work-life balance (WLB) as a predictor of engagement among the Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. The presence of the WLB program in the Malaysian financial sector seems to foster employee engagement as the Gen Y values quality time with family and enjoy pursuing their hobbies apart from spending time at work. Examples of the WLB initiative are having flexi-hours, job sharing, work from home and gyms at the office. The working environment of the financial industry is known to be demanding, challenging and often pressurised with high workload due to large clientele. Therefore, organisations that are able to provide WLB for their employees stand at higher chance to have engaged employees.

A research study conducted by Ramos, Philip and Francis (2015), states that among 139 young adults from the banking industry in Malaysia showed that individuals who have good balance of time and involvement, experience better quality of life. Gen Y employees in this study perceived WLB as an engagement accelerator probably because they do not want their work to rule their lives and give priority in making their job more balance between family and career (Campbell, 2000). Similarly, six employees from the qualitative interview too have agreed that work-life is one of the reasons that make them feel engaged at work and continue to stay with the organisation. This finding corresponds to a survey on human resource issues which revealed that 40% of the employees in Malaysia choose to stay in their current job because of work-life balance (Shanmugam, 2017).

The intense pressure and tight deadlines at the workplace have lead individuals seeking for better work atmosphere and improved family and personal life. Particularly in the financial sector, heavy workload and cross-functional practice can be overwhelming to some extent. Hence, Gen Y will look out for organisations that

could offer them a good plan of WLB in order to manage the demands of work and family (Klun, 2008). A good investment of WLB programs could certainly attract and engage the Gen Y in the longer run, since WLB is an important source of well-being at work (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). Weyland (2011) also supports the idea that millennials value a good WLB as it makes them feel appreciated for their contribution and effort at the workplace, which in return, lead to high engagement. This shows that Gen Y in this study may have attained a good WLB and therefore encountered feeling of engagement.

Moreover, the finding of the study also revealed that WLB positively influences vigour among the Gen Y in the Malaysian financial sector. A vigorous employee will be healthy, active, and full of energy with a good state of wellbeing to perform their duties. Previous research have found that WLB predicts employees' emotional and psychical wellbeing in a positive way (Yang et.al, 2018; Gropel & Kuhl, 2009; Noor, 2004) while Greenhaus et al. (2013) suggests that a fair deal of balance between work and life not only will improve job satisfaction but also overall well-being and quality of life. In contrast, competing demands of work and lack of balance in family life will cause conflict and negatively affect the wellbeing of the employees (Clark, 2000). Thus, Gen Y employees who experienced a good balance of work and life tend to be more vigorous at work, as the finding showed.

However, it has been argued that while members of Gen Y continue to seek WLB, their concern for career success will eventually lead them to work extensively and experience an imbalanced work life (Sturges & Guest, 2004). This includes chasing for reward and recognition (R&R) for their hard work, and the next predictor in this study showed the positive relationship between R&R and employee engagement. R&R have emerged as a factor that contributed to engagement among the Gen Y

workers. The Malaysian financial sector is known to offer good remunerations and rewards for their staffs. In particular, their sales professionals tend to be well-paid in comparison to sales people in other industries. The industry is also facing high rivalry and therefore, maintaining a good reward system will help the financial sector to stay competitive and retain their employees from leaving (Asian Financial Institute, 2014). Recognising employees' effort and their achievement especially in a challenging environment like the financial services, will certainly lead to engagement. According to Bartlomiejczuk (2015), companies have been using employee recognition as a staffing strategy to foster engagement. Although recognition and total rewards are not new practices in the industry, it has emerged to become a strategic tool to improve employees' performance and engagement by aligning the recognition program with the organisation's business objectives (Kimutai & Sakataka, 2015). Previous studies have also linked positive effects of R&R on employees' performance, job satisfaction and employee engagement (San, Theen, & Heng, 2012; Armstrong, 2006; Sarin & Majahan, 2001).

An organisations' rewards program is said to lead to high engagement levels and therefore, a better performance is likely to occur. Hence, maximising the use of rewards and recognition can ensure long-term success and employees' retention (Iqbal, Karim, & Haider, 2015). The implementation of effective reward programs does not come easily as organisations need to understand the type of rewards for every employee's needs. According to Mehmood, Ramzan, & Akbar (2013), the Gen Y employees prefer non-monetary rewards than financial incentives, while Gen X favours monetary rewards due to a higher commitment level. This lent support to the qualitative finding of the present study whereby the Gen-Y employees mentioned that non-monetary rewards such as compliments, praises, or new office equipment do

induce feeling of engagement. In this case, the Malaysian financial sector may have provided good non-financial rewards such as promotion, free vacations or awards that induced the feeling of engagement among the Gen Y.

Furthermore, White (2005) suggests that rewards are pivotal to increase engagement and act as a driving force to improve productivity beyond usual. The aim of reward and recognition is to maximize the effects of positive impact on motivation, commitments, job satisfaction and engagement (Manus & Graham, 2003) and it is one of the strategic ways to reward high achievers or either to boost motivation of employees to perform better at work (Armstrong, 2006). In general, employees in the financial services will have high expectations for rewards and usually appreciate most of the rewards (Cherotich, Chepkilot, & Muhanji, 2015). R&R also predicts both dedication and absorption. Schaufeli (2013) refers to dedication as a sense of importance, enthusiasm, motivation and feeling of pride towards the job. When appropriate R&R is provided, employees will be driven to perform more by dedicating themselves into the context of the job through job involvement (Kuntsi, 2014). Meanwhile, employees with high absorption will be fully focused on their work without noticing the time passes quickly and the presence of R&R will accelerate the process of absorption of oneself (Schaufeli, 2013). This is because R&R act as a bait to induce employees to work harder to complete the tasks given and reap the benefits of their hard work later on.

The finding also correlates to qualitative finding whereby rewards (monetary & non-monetary) and recognition incentives were mentioned as one of the factor that contribute to a feeling of engagement among the Gen Y employees interviewed. The possible reason the Gen Y appreciates the rewards and recognition program is because they grew up with positive affirmations in form of compliments or gifts from their

parents for good behaviour and thus responded well to constant rewards and recognition incentives (Sylvester, 2015). However, fostering engagement among the Gen Y employees is not a one-off task as maintaining the consistency in staff recognition and rewards policy is indeed challenging, especially in today's competitive environment. Therefore, organisations that are able to think ahead on how to implement creative R&R packages will be best placed to tap an engaged Gen Y workforce.

At the same time, there were also a number of findings that diverged from the existing literature. Despite previous studies showing positive relationships between CDP, task identity and training on employee engagement, the results in the present study showed mixed results. Although CDP was positively related to vigour, it did not predict the other dimensions of work engagement, such as absorption and dedication. Likewise, task identity predicted dedication but vigour nor absorption. Training on the other hand was found to have no relationship with any of the dimensions of employee engagement.

In the financial services sector, CDP can exist in the form of future managerial training, leadership workshop, sponsorship study program, and many more. The Gen Y in this study generally did not perceive CDP as an engagement factor probably due to extensive compliance training that they obliged to attend, which may affect their interest level on CDP incentives. However, CDP showed a positive relationship on level of vigour among the Gen Y employees. When appropriate CDP program are provided to Gen Y, it may boost up their energy level to perform robustly at work. This is because CDP program act as an accelerator to stay resilience and focus at work in order to achieve their desired career direction (Treuren & Anderson, 2010).

Although task identity did not emerge as the main engagement predictor, it does predict the dedication level among the Gen Y. Employees who are well debriefed about their job scope and the task outcomes are expected to be more dedicated at work. The Gen Y constantly wants to ensure what they are doing is meaningful and important to the organisations and a well-structured job characteristic enhances employees' enthusiasm at performing the best (Westerman, 2007). In contrast, low task identity and vague descriptions of job operations will lead to detachment of oneself from the work and face difficulty to stay engaged, particularly when working on fragmented pieces of a larger task (Sonnentag, 2007).

Lastly, the outcome of the research showed that training did not predict employee engagement. The financial industry is subject to tight regulations and the employees are constantly required to undergo extensive training programs to comply with the requirements. According to Schilling, Abdelhafidh, and Neymann (2018), the long-term influence of rigid regulations has lead to onerous training obligations and greater expectations in terms of staff knowledge and competencies. Most of the training are repetitive and were carried out annually or quarterly which may cause boredom to the Gen Y employees as it did not produce any significant value to them since it is part of the regulations and mandatory. This could explain why training did not predict employee engagement in the present study.

7.7 Self-efficacy as a Moderator between PSS and Employee Engagement, Vigour

The result of the study provides support for the positive relationship between PSS, self-efficacy and employee engagement. Self-efficacy moderates the relationship between PSS and level of engagement among the Gen Y workers. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief to accomplish goals and meet the challenges to complete a task (Bandura, 2008). The present study revealed that Gen Y with a low and average level of self-efficacy tend to need PSS the most in order to feel engaged. Managers who provide guidance and support to subordinates that show lack of confidence at work will develop a sense of appreciation which indirectly influences the level of engagement and attachment (Bandura, 1978). A study by Ballantine and Nunns (1998) support that those highly efficacious workers may just need less supervisory support than the individual with low self-efficacy. This is mainly because highly efficacious individuals are independent and are able to cope well with the challenges. Indeed, employees with high self-efficacy may feel irritated by high supervisory support due to their efficacious nature (Ballantine & Nnunns, 1998). This explains why self-efficacy only effects employee engagement when PSS is at a low level.

Similarly, self-efficacy enhances vigour when PSS was limited, which indicates that less efficacious employees tend to need support the most from their supervisor. Energy and enthusiasm level will gradually increase when employees are provided with the right guidance as they feel supported in their career. This hypothesis/statement is further supported by a study by Caesens and Stinglhamber (2014) which suggests that employees who are provided with greater support from their superior will be more vigorous about their work.

7.8 Self-efficacy as a Moderator between Task Identity and Dedication

The result of the study showed that self-efficacy moderates the relationship between task identity and levels of dedication. Self-efficacy improves dedication at an average and high level of task identity. This means that employees who have better confidence to perform the job when they knew the direction of their tasks clearly which, in return lead to dedication to complete the given tasks. However when the task identity is low, self efficacy has no effect on dedication. This is in line with previous studies that highlight how task identity can help clarify tasks effectively amongst employees. Even if an employee is confident about themselves, if the task is unclear, it will be difficult for them to remain dedicated (Saragih, 2011).

It is important for the management to figure out the potential strategy to cultivate a feeling of self-worth in every Gen Y mindset. Herriot, Hirsh, and Reilly (1998) highlighted that when a person's work has an identity, it leads to a feeling of self-worth and confidence which energise them to put more effort in their work. Furthermore, Yakin, and Erdil (2012) mention that individuals with a certain level of self-efficacy are able to handle difficulties more effectively than those who do not have efficacy by being persistence and dedicated. Bakker and Schaufeli (2014) also suggests that task identity plays an extrinsic motivational role in achieving work goals. Therefore, an increase in job resources such as task identity will lead to work engagement and willingness of the employee to dedicate his or her efforts to the work task (Bon & Shire, 2017).

7.9 High Workload as a Moderator between Task Identity and Dedication

High workload moderates the relationship between task identity and dedication. The presence of high workload tends to enhance dedication level when task identity was average or high. Although workload has generally been seen as a job demand or a stressor (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), the findings of the present study highlights how it can serve as resource or a job motivator. When there is sufficient clarity about the task at hand, high workload can actually lead to higher levels of dedication.

This implies that employees will not necessarily deem workload to be a job demand and therefore, something negative, when they have clear guidelines on how the task can be accomplished. According to Renn and Vandenberg (1995), task identity provides a sense of meaningfulness and accomplishment to employees therefore motivating them to keep pursuing the task despite difficulties. Based on the findings at moderate and high levels of task identity, task identity buffers the negative effects of workload on dedication. Hence, it is vital for Gen Y employees to receive clarity about their job role as it helps them to manage their heavy workload efficiently which may positively affect their dedication at work.

7.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter investigated the impact of job resources on employee engagement. The findings revealed that four (Autonomy, PSS, WLB and rewards & recognition) out of seven job resources were significant in predicting employee engagement among the millennials working in the Malaysian financial sector. Some of the job resources had partial relationship with employee engagement (e.g.: CDP and task identity), while training had no relationship with employee engagement or any of the dimensions. As for moderation analysis, the role of high-workload and self-efficacy were found to partially moderate the relationship between the job resources and employee engagement. The next chapter is looking at the impact of employee engagement on intention to quit, which is the last study in the present research.

CHAPTER EIGHT
STUDY 3: IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ON INTENTION TO QUIT

8.1 Chapter Overview

Study 3 aims to investigate the impact of employee engagement on the intention to quit among the Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. Based upon Schaufeli's engagement theory, all of the three elements of engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption) were tested to understand the context of engagement in influencing the intention to quit. Similar to Chapter Seven, the procedure began by running the Convergent Validity (CFA), correlation matrix and followed by hierarchal regression analysis to test the hypothesis of Study 3.

8.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for Intention to Quit

Intention to quit factor (ITQ) scale was analysed and the model yielded a good degree of fit (CFI = 0.98; GFI = 0.98; TLI = 0.97; IFI = 0.98; NFI = 0.97). All the items had factor loadings greater than 0.50 and therefore were retained.

Table 8.1 Intention to quit items loadings

Component Matrix of ITQ	
Items	**Factor loadings**
In the last few months, I have seriously thought about looking for a new job	0.82
Presently, I am actively searching for other job	0.80
I intend to leave my organization in the near future	0.75

8.3 Correlation Matrix

The correlation result showed that intention to quit significantly correlated with engagement (r =-0.29, p < 0.01), vigour (r = -0.16, p < 0.01) and dedication (r = -0.11, p < 0.01). All dimension of engagement were found to be correlated with intention to quit except for absorption (r = 0.00, p >0.01). Therefore, the absorption dimension was omitted from the regression test as there was no relationship detected.

Table 8.2 Inter-correlation between variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Engagement	1				
2. Vigour	0.43**	1			
3. Dedication	0.46**	.187**	1		
4. Absorption	0.36**	0.090	0.102	1	
5. Intention to Quit	-0.29**	-0.16**	-0.11**	0.00	1

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

8.4 Analysing the Effects of Employee Engagement on Intention to Quit

To test the effects of employee engagement on intention to quit, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted (see Table 8.3) After controlling the effects of gender, employee engagement was found to have significant negative effects on intention to quit (β= -0.29, p<0.05). Employee engagement accounted for 9% of the variance in intention to quit. This shows that higher engagement levels lead to lower intention to quit among the Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector.

Table 8.3 Regression Analysis for Employee Engagement on Intention to Quit

Variables	*β*	*t*	*F*	R^2	ΔR^2	*sig.*
Step 1:			1.82	0.00	0.00	0.15
Gender	-0.08	-1.41				
Step 2:			11.57	0.09	0.08	0.00
Employee Engagement	**-0.29**	**-4.60**				**0.00**

In order to examine the deeper the effects of engagement, a second hierarchical regression was conducted this time, separating out the three identified dimensions of employee engagement (see Table 8.4). However, due to the fact that absorption had no significant correlation with the dependent variable, it was excluded from the analysis. Results showed that after controlling for the effects of gender, vigour had significant negative effect on the intention to quit ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, dedication had no relationship with intention to quit ($\beta = -0.08$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, we found partial support for H9.

Table 8.4 Regression Analysis for Vigour and Dedication on Intention to Quit

Variables	*β*	*t*	*F*	R^2	ΔR^2	*sig.*
Step 1:			1.82	0.00	0.00	0.23
Gender	-0.07	-1.19				
Step 2:			3.29	0.04	0.02	0.02
Vigour	**-0.14**	**-2.25**				**0.02**
Dedication	-0.08	-1.26				0.20

8.5 Discussion on the Impact of Employee Engagement on Intention to Quit

Based on the findings of Study 3, employee engagement showed a negative impact on intention to quit among the Gen Y employees in this study. The finding supported the hypothesis that an increase in engagement level resulted in a lower intention to quit. This indicates that the respondents in this study potentially have a higher level of engagement which prevents them quitting from their job. The probable reasons for high engagement might be related to some of the predictors that were discussed in Chapter Seven (For examples: Autonomy, PSS, WLB, and reward & recognition). For instance, autonomy was found to be the strongest predictors of engagement as Gen Y appreciate the flexibility and trust of the leader to complete the job tasks. As suggested by Martin (2008), the majority of Gen Y prefer to work in organisations that grant them the freedom to make decisions with great autonomy at their own pace and time. This flexibility allows them to build their confidence to handle their tasks independently with little interference from the leaders (Islam et al, 2011).

Other factor such as supervisor support had also contributed to employee engagement among the Gen Y employees in this study, which have negatively impacted on intention to quit. According to Naim and Lenka (2017), Gen Y workers strongly value their relationships with the supervisors and desire a flat hierarchy where they have access to senior leadership to feel supported. In addition, the presence of WLB and competitive rewards system in the financial sector attract Gen Y to feel engaged, which also influence their decision to retain in the organisation. This lent support to a previous study by Mendis (2017) that who indicated remuneration, cash incentives, work life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition variables were negatively and significantly correlated with turnover intention.

The significant negative relationship between employee engagement and intention to quit, augment the findings of Gupta and Shaheen (2017), who revealed an improved retention rate among engaged employees across a city in India. Similarly, previous research also supported that employee engagement is mostly associated with positive organisational outcomes such as low turnover intention (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Even in the time of tribulation and challenges, engaged employees are always ready to take initiatives to overcome the problem instead of leaving the organisation (Coetzee, Ingrid, & Ferreira, 2018). As supported by Robyn and Du Preez (2013), highly engaged workers possessed greater attachment to their organisation and are less likely to quit from the company despite facing difficulties.

Based on the literature, it is argued that employees who exhibit certain attributes that signify engagement will have a lower tendency to leave the organisation. Empirically, a number of research studies showed engagement to be positively related with intention to stay (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Harter et al., 2002). According to Saks (2006), engagement can be conceptualized as an antecedent of turnover. Generally, engaged workers are infused with positivity and are truly immerse in their work, which leaves little time or space for negative thoughts such as quitting the job. Usually, employees choose a working environment that is congruent with their dispositions (Luthans, 2002). That means when the organisation does not provide satisfactory employment packages such as proper rewards system or work life privilege, workers will not hesitate to look elsewhere for a better place to work (Rashid et al., 2013). In the context of this study, it is justifiable that Gen Y employees were ideally satisfied with their organisation. This is based on the job resources that showed a significant relationship to engagement as reported in Chapter Seven.

The findings of Study 3 also showed that vigour had a negative impact on intention to quit. The Gen Y participants in this study showed that those who experience vigour in the job are likely to stay in the organisation. Similar to the findings from the qualitative phase of the thesis, Gen Y employee associate vigour with characteristics such as proactive, persistence and happily engrossed in one's work signify. Thus when one is happily engrossed and have energy for their work, they are likely to become more engaged and less likely to search for better employment (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2011). According to a study by Daderman and Bansinka (2016), among 188 nurses in Poland showed that high-workload and low level of vigour significantly associated with turnover intentions. Gen Y employees actively search for excitement in their personal and working lives. Thus, if a job becomes monotonic or boring, they are likely to look elsewhere for better opportunities (Gordon, 2011). Therefore, if an organisation wishes to keep Gen Y employees engaged they need to look for ways to keep them feeling excited, proactive, and energetic about their roles (Yusoff et al., 2013).

From a general perspective, maintaining proper attrition equilibrium is deemed to be a daunting task for most organisations especially when majority of their employees are well known to job hop. Gen Y employees tend to job hop mainly due to unmatched needs at the workplace, change in job preferences, and dissatisfaction with the management or possibly, not pleased with the compensation benefits (Szamosi, 2006). In Malaysia, the turnover rate associated with the Gen Y is known to be unprecedented and has always been a profound concern on the national and organisational level due to high incidences of job switching (Lau, 2014a). Understanding the nuances of why they quit or what factors lead them to job switch is integral in maintaining attrition balances. Therefore, HR personnel and leaders of the

organisations would need to work together to tap the issue of attrition by engaging with employees through strategic approach such as renewing existing HR policy that is favourable in boosting engagement level. As suggested by Robyn and Du Preez (2013), organisations should take time and effort to understand their employees' reason to quit, so that proper retention strategies and plans can be formulated to reduce the turnover rate. These strategies are best to be implemented based on generational differences so that every level of employee will experience the fruition positively. Organisations should start off by evaluating the engagement level of their employees to understand the best mechanisms that could help cultivate employee engagement, and at the same time, reduce their intention to leave.

As stated by Mendis (2017), employee turnover issue is one of the most challenging issue of the current modern organisational environment and most of the time, the movement of the employees from one firm to another may result to the deterioration of quality of the organisation. Mustafa Kamil et al. (2013) further suggests that many organisations are constantly searching for better ways to help their employees to feel connected and happy at their work place, with the aim of keeping high retention rate. Hence, in order to retain their talented employees longer, organisations should design their retention strategy that fit the nature of the business and employees' composition. Designing it means taking into consideration all of the essential changes in generations, roles, organisational structures, and mission.

8.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the impact of employee engagement in effecting intention to quit among the Gen Y cohort in the Malaysian financial sector. The result of the finding showed that engagement and vigour negatively influenced the intention to quit, while dedication and absorption were not significantly related to intention to quit. This finding produced useful implications on the importance of fostering engagement to reduce turnover rate, especially among the millennials. The next and final chapter of the thesis presents the general discussion of the findings, research implications, and the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER NINE
GENERAL DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

9.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter begins by summarising the research findings and contributions for all the three studies based on the research aims and questions, as outlined in Chapter Three. This is followed by theoretical and practical implications. Lastly, the chapter highlights the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research in the context of engagement.

9.2 Study 1 - Summary and Contributions

The complex notion of employee engagement has been defined in many different contexts among academic researchers and practitioners (Sakovska, 2012; Macey & Schneider, 2008). The definition remains ambiguous and many HR consulting firms as well as academics, have been exploring the construct by conducting multi-level empirical studies to reduce the misinterpretations and ambiguity (Macey & Schneider, 2008). The aims of Study 1 are to understand the meaning of engagement and the factors that could lead to the feeling of engagement through the lenses of Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. The purpose of Study 1 is not to demote the existing meaning of engagement, but to gather thoughts about the true meaning of employee engagement based on Gen Y's current work experience. The meaning is further expanded to identify the factors that could exhibit engagement, whether it was influenced by external or internal drivers.

The findings revealed that all ten Gen Y interviewees have heard about the existence of employee engagement at corporate HR events and during their college years, but there was a slight confusion about what it really means. This finding supports the previous studies that highlighted about conceptual confusion with regards to the meaning of employee engagement (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Robinson et al., 2006; Saks, 2006). This is because there are few associated terms such as job involvement, job satisfaction and organisational commitment which have been applied in the engagement literature synonymously. It is apparent that many researchers used these labels interchangeably within the context of employee engagement and gives false interpretation on the actual meaning of engagement (Saks, 2006).

Based on the interview findings, four interviewees were able to provide clear descriptions while the remaining six respondents had to guess when asked to describe the meaning of employee engagement. It was evident that affective commitment has emerged as a highly discussed theme, followed by vigour and dedication. Nine interviewees linked employee engagement to commitment trait as they focused on the word 'engagement' which could also mean as a tie between two parties in a committed relationship. Nevertheless, there were overlaps between the concepts of employee engagement and commitment as engagement is job-oriented while commitment referred as organisation-oriented (Pursell et al., 2003). That being said, engagement and commitment are indeed closely linked although there is a clear distinction between the two concepts. Thus, it is useful to distinguish the terms because companies may require opting different HR strategies to enhance engagement and commitment via a separate mechanism (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Moreover, the interview findings also revealed that having a good working environment through WLB policies and social events were most favoured when it comes to creating an engaged workforce. A study by Meier and Crocker (2010) have found that work atmosphere was among the top motivating factors for Gen Y to retain in their job. This is because employees in the financial sector usually spend between 8-10 hours at their workplace which could influence their cognitive emotional states, behaviours, actions, and abilities to perform (Gladys, Asawo, & Gabriel, 2017). Therefore, they believed that a prosperous and healthy work environment could bring a positive impact on general well-being. A work environment that promises relaxation and opportunities to engage in meaningful activities can ensure greater job satisfaction and involvement (Taiwo, 2010; Chandrasekhar, 2011). It is also noted that a well-structured WLB program and fun work environment can enhance employee engagement and increase motivation (Hammed & Amjad, 2009).

Other engagement factors such as workplace communication, rewards and recognition and supervisor support were also deemed important by the Gen Y in inducing engagement. From the findings, the blend of various job resources such as knowledge sharing, supportive leadership and compliments and recognition are some of the strategic ways that can be integrated as a leadership package to help managers cultivate employee engagement among the millennial workers. For instance, knowledge sharing practice was suggested by one Gen Y manager to encourage decision-making and stimulate innovation via knowledge and skill transfer. Taken together, leaders can approach this practice to create a communicative workspace that simultaneously allows creativity and exchange of skills within the organisation community.

The contributions in Study 1 can be divided into two main points. First, many organisations in Malaysia are not familiar with the concept of employee engagement. However, in recent years, firms have slowly started to propagate the importance of engagement to retain their employees from leaving (Sutherland, 2018). According to a recent report by Aon Hewitt (2018), Malaysia is gradually improving in terms of employee engagement, increasing by 4% to 63% this year, as compared to previous year. Nevertheless, the country still ranks among the lowest in Asia, falling behind Indonesia and the Philippines (Aon Hewitt, 2018). This fact showed that there is still a lack of awareness and recognition for engagement in many organisations. On top of that, there is limited research focusing on Gen Y cohort in the context of engagement (Gan & Yusof, 2015). This calls for more research related to this cohort to understand better about their work behaviour and engagement status. Thus, by understanding the essence of employee engagement through the lenses of Gen Y employees, organisations may potentially stand in the forefront in securing quality Gen Y employees and attain organisational goals via strategic engagement programs.

Secondly, the interview findings also revealed an interesting discovery. For instance, feelings of engagement can be influenced by a person's personality without the presence of any external drivers. One participant shared that her conscientiousness trait drove her to be more engaged and committed. Conscientiousness is related to leader effectiveness (Barrick & Mount, 1991) and conscientious individuals are more driven in achieving their goals which indicate the sign of a quality leader (Goldberg, 1990; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). That being said, organisations should look into identifying such employees through internal engagement assessment test as these individuals may have potential leadership qualities due to their conscientiousness nature. Regardless, engagement factors that were identified in Study 1 have

advantages of its own and management should embed these strategies correctly to match the organisational goals, vision, and culture.

9.3 Study 2 - Summary and Contributions

Study 2 investigated the impact of seven job resources on employee engagement. There were WLB, reward and recognition, PSS, CDP, training, task identity, and autonomy. Four out of the seven job resources were found to have significant positive effects on engagement such as WLB, reward and recognition, PSS, and autonomy. The regression analyses revealed that autonomy was the strongest predictor of employee engagement, followed by PSS, WLB, and lastly reward and recognition. In the financial sector, autonomy can exist in the form of task ownership and task management in which the leaders grant flexibility to their subordinates to manage and handle the task deliverance on own accord. The essence of autonomy is closely linked to the idea of self-managing and independence (Islam et al., 2011) whereby Gen Y enjoy being in charge of their work with less interference from the manager (McOwen, 2009). As much as they appreciate autonomy to stay engaged, they still expect support from their leaders for guidance with the election of PSS as the second highest predictor of engagement. This is because Gen Y wants to be supported and appreciated in return for their contributions and hard work (Gok et al., 2015). It was suggested that supervisor support promotes socio-emotional and cognitive development by providing satisfying two-way relationship and improve self-efficacy of Gen Y employees (Salami, 2010).

Moreover, the financial sector is known for its robust and turbulent environment, hence achieving a good work-life balance can be a challenge. The effects of having an imbalance lifestyle include higher incidences of quitting amongst Gen Y employees.

The Gen Y cohort prefers a work environment that allows them to juggle between their job and personal leisure. A balanced lifestyle leads to a healthy mind and spirit which indirectly affects their performance and engagement at work (Lockwood, 2003). That explains why WLB scored as the third strongest predictor of engagement. The finding also revealed that reward and recognition helps in attaining engagement among the Gen Y employees. Rewards and recognition act as an accelerator for Gen Y to perform extraordinarily and at the same time, maintaining their lavish lifestyle. In earlier studies (Dries, Pepermans, & Kerpel, 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002), it was asserted that salary and intrinsic recognition was important for millennials to stay engaged and happy at the workplace.

Study 2 has also considered the moderating effect of self-efficacy and workload demand in influencing engagement level. Based on the results in Chapter Seven, it was found that job resources such as PSS and task identity significantly influence engagement with the presence of the third variable, M. This finding shall provide insight for the organisation to understand the influence of personality (self-efficacy) and high workload in determining the level of engagement. Managers who are well aware of their subordinate's efficacy level and their workload would be able to manage the team effectively because they can imply different strategies to guide them based on the individual differences and needs.

The finding from Study 1 yielded a few similar results to Study 2. Table 9.1 below shows the summary of the finding from both studies. The highlighted boxes indicate the similarity of the factors influences the feeling of engagement among the Gen Y employees. The finding from both qualitative and qualitative methods revealed that WLB, reward and recognition, and PSS were generally acknowledged as engagement boosters for Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. Overall, the data

presented below may assist organisations to present suitable engagement strategies by modifying the current practices to match the need and preference of the Gen Y employees. In sum, Study 2 has contributed to the essence of job resources that is beneficial to foster employee engagement and influencer of engagement. It is hoped that the finding of Study 2 would be useful for the HR team to map out the right engagement resources by considering employees' personality and workload level.

Table 9.1 Similarity of findings from Study 1 and Study 2

Job resources/ by ranking orders	Study 1	Study 2
1	*Work-life balance Social Events	Autonomy
2	Communication with team members Knowledge Sharing	*Perceived Supervisor Support
3	*Monetary and Non-monetary rewards	*Work-life balance
4	*Supportive Leadership	*Reward and Recognition
5	Conscientiousness by nature	-

9.4 Study 3 - Summary and Contributions

The final study of the thesis aimed to investigate the impact of employee engagement on intention to quit among Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. As the thesis has adopted Schaufeli et al. work engagement theory (2002), all three dimension of engagement were tested to gain a clear picture on how engagement could affect the intention to quit among the Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. The findings revealed a negative relationship between employee engagement and the intention to quit. Specifically, vigour showed a significant negative relationship on the intention to quit, while dedication and absorption had no significant effects on the intention to quit.

Empirically, research studies have previously revealed that engagement to be negatively associated with the intention to quit in one's organisation (Harter et al., 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In Malaysia, HR representatives have been pressured by higher management for competent solutions to tap the issue and unfold the reasons behind Gen Y's intentions to quit (Angeline, 2011). The perpetual issue of the high attrition rate among Malaysian Gen Y employees has raised a concern amongst HR managers in many organisations (Islam et al., 2011; Koh, 2015; Ang, 2016). For instance, job mobility is one of the common problems of Gen Y as it gravely affects the organisational effectiveness, in terms of the costs associated with the high turnover rate such as new staff replacement and training for the newbie.

The findings of Study 3 draw attention to the significance of employee engagement as a mechanism to reduce the intention to quit, especially among the millennials. As the result provides supporting evidence to previous studies of intention to quit, this study makes a stronger point to justify that employee engagement plays an essential role

when it comes to sustaining employees in an organisation. For example, in order to reduce the cost of hiring a new candidate, company leaders should take initiatives to develop mechanisms for measuring the engagement level of their key employees on a regular basis (Daderman & Bansika, 2016). This action may help organisations identify the current degree of their staffs' engagement rate, followed by corrective actions accordingly.

By exploring the core essence of employee engagement, the management can layout the right engagement strategies to retain quality employees and sustain a reasonable attrition parameter. As Study 3 gives importance to the impact of engagement on the intention to quit, the result finding shall enlighten organisations to ensure their workforce are engaged at a certain acceptable level for a successful long-term labour plan, regardless of the generational differences. Recognizing that there may be generational differences in engagement, it will allow businesses to create a competitive advantage over others, potentially leading to a more efficiently and effectively operated business (Lapoint & Spence, 2017).

9.5 Theoretical Contributions

This study has made several significant contributions to the field of organisational and employee engagement. First of all, it is important to understand that any practice do not operate in isolation. Integration between organisational structure, culture and nature of the business plays a role in leveraging strategic organisational and HR practices across every division of an organisation. To ensure a smooth implementation of these practices, organisations should access the needs of their employees at every level, including generational differences (Snelgar, Renard, & Venter, 2013). It is estimated that Gen Y will make up 75% of the global workforce by 2025 (Chawla et al., 2017). Therefore, it is worthwhile to invest time and resources to develop good organisational and HR practices that will promote satisfaction and the intention to stay amongst this very important work sector (Gan & Yusof, 2018). As such, this study has taken the initiative to contribute to the area of employee engagement by studying thoroughly from the context of Gen Y employees in the Malaysian financial sector. There are several theoretical contributions identified in the study which will be discussed in the following sections.

Understanding the literature of employee engagement from the context of Gen Y employees in Malaysia

There is a paucity of research published about Gen Y behaviours at work, specifically in the context of employee engagement (Islam, 2011; Queiri et al., 2015). In Malaysia, there is a need for empirical justification to refute the reasons behind Gen Y's engagement and the intention to quit as the issue has been a major concern for organisations in the past few years (James, Bibb, & Walker, 2008; Islam, 2011). The extant literature in this study gives an indication of scarcity of research on the driving factors of engagement among the Gen Y employees. Moreover, the comprehensive

literature provides a clearer research paradigm for readers to relate employee engagement and its importance to Gen Y employees in Malaysia. Precisely, the findings of this thesis help build a better understanding of employee engagement. Majority of existing media information on the Gen Ys consists of general observations, and not based on reliable research (Mendryk, 2018). As a consequence, it is troublesome for HR managers to implement the right engagement strategies for Gen Y employees without understanding the basic essence of Gen Y characteristics and the notion of employee engagement (Ozcelik, 2015a).

Integrating multilevel constructs in the JD-R model

The mainstream literature on engagement has focused mainly on single-level conceptualisations (Abu Bakar, 2013). The advantages of integrating multilevel constructs in a research can help to capture the complexity of organisational phenomenon and develop more sophisticated theoretical models (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Therefore, this study has taken the approach to use multi-level analysis to investigate the concept of employee engagement. The study has also adapted the JD-R model as the main core to present the scrutiny of employee engagement. The reason for choosing the JD-R model in this thesis as a guiding framework is because the model specifies how demands and resources interact, and predict important organisational outcomes (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). In essence, the JD-R model can be applied in different organisation background and a wide range of jobs and personal characteristics, as well as desired outcomes can be included (Schaufeli, 2017). This flexibility has allowed the researcher to integrate few organisational practices such as job resources; and stressors such as moderators, to examine its effect on engagement, as well as investigating intention to quit as a consequence of employee engagement. The application of JD-R model in this study

may provide an insight for the organisation to unleash different dimensions of engagement. Additionally, multilevel constructs result in a better phenomena of understanding unfolding within organisations (Bakker et al., 2014). For instance, detecting the causes and consequence of engagement can allow organisations to employ suitable strategies for managing engagement at the individual, group or organisational level. Hence, the illustration of the JD-R model in this thesis will guide the organisation to build their own JD-R model that suits them best ,according to their organisation's culture, people, and current practices.

9.6 Practical Contributions

The study has produced several important implications for practitioners at every level.

For HR practitioners in the Financial Sector

To provide the best engagement mechanisms for the millennials, it is wise for the management to be aware of recent research that highlights the differences in generational values and their expectations (Schullery, 2013). This can help organisations to identify the right type of strategies to implement based on generational and sector differences. As the present study focuses on the financial sector, the significant job resources and organisational practices identified in this study can assist HR practitioners to further explore the conditions required to build an engaged workforce for Gen Y employees. This can be done by segregating the existing practices based on generational needs and reassess the effectiveness of their current policies. For example, reward and recognition programs can be altered based on the employees' expectation and needs. For certain employees, rewards may not be the ultimate motivator to stay engaged. Therefore, a departmental engagement test can be conducted to assess the employees' engagement level and identify their core needs before the modification of practices and policies takes place.

As suggested by Jenuja (2018), the main aim of conducting an engagement survey is to design or redesign the existing policies and implement new key changes in order to increase the efficiency, output, involvement and productivity of employees. An internal engagement test will help to sync the management’s offering and the employees’ expectations (Gallup Inc, 2009). With that information, organisations can review if the current practice has an impact on the employees' engagement level or otherwise. However, a process of trial and error may occur during the development

and testing of new and updated HR strategies because every organisation is unique by culture and structure. In addition, some of the job resources and practices mentioned in this study may already be established in the organisation. Thus, it is important to run an annual engagement survey to maintain a healthy engagement ratio and get employees' feedback further improvement.

To add on, Study 3 highlights the impact of engagement on intention to quit. The findings revealed that greater engagement level can lead to lower intention to quit amongst these groups of employees. This is critical as HR teams in the financial sector continue to examine how organisations can use engagement to manage job mobility and minimise employee attrition. Previous literature highlighted that the financial sector is facing high turnover rate among the Gen Y employees due to job hopping and unmatched needs (Asian Institute of Finance, 2015). By promoting employee engagement and pushing for policies that would lead to greater engagement, HR teams may help the organisation to better manage employees and help to sustain not only the organisation's competitiveness, but also to retain quality pool of talents (Kyndt, Dochy, & Michielsen, 2009).

For Managers /Leaders

To build and sustain a healthy and engaged work environment, unbiased cooperation and support from the managers are fundamental as they are the key person to lead the division unit towards achieving departmental goal and target (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). The findings from Study 1 and Study 2 both revealed that support from the supervisor was essential to keeping Gen Y employees engaged with their workplace. Gen Y appreciates constant feedback, guidance and wants to be treated equally as a member of the organisation (Brown, 2014).

Thus, managers play a pivotal role in keeping this group engaged and productive. Leaders should understand that Gen Y want their voices to be heard and addressed. By showing more concern and practice transparency in exchanging feedbacks, communication barriers can be reduced. A work environment that emphasises communication, respect and effective teamwork can certainly expect greater levels of engagement from their employees (Lee, 2018).

Additionally, Gen Y employees are typically known to be impatient with mundane tasks and easily get bored with routine jobs (Lee, 2018; Eisner, 2005). They constantly seek for a job that has an element of fun and at the same time, has a meaning and challenge to it (Kelan & Lehnert, 2009). The findings revealed that autonomy, WLB and task identity were associated with employee engagement. Hence, managers can integrate these elements into the job characteristic model to help craft meaningful jobs that could bring out the potential amongst the Gen Y, while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

For Gen Y employees

As the research is focused on Gen Y cohort, this study may help the Gen Y employees to self-manage to be a good leader for the future generation that will embark the working life soon. It is vital for Gen Y employees to know the essence of employee engagement from every aspect as it will be handy when it comes to their turn to run the show in the organisation. They shall be able to do it effortlessly because they understand that the success of a company depends on an engaged workforce. For instance, the findings extracted from Study 1 and Study 2 may help Gen Y employees to understand better how their counterparts perceive employee engagement and how they can use job resources and even job demands to promote engagement in their respective jobs.

Moreover, this research can also serve as a self-reflection tool for Gen Y employees to assess their strength and weakness in order to gain clarity about how individual personalities interact and may affect their work. For example, while Gen Y employees do expect constant support and guidance from their managers, they should reflect the same behaviour as well by practising to be more calm, understanding and concerned. Therefore, they can gradually nurture themselves to be a proactive leader in the future by focusing on self-improvement and development. Understanding the context of one's own generation will help Gen Y to be more aware of their behaviour and represent themselves in an improved way to the society. This will not only increase the chance of hiring, but it would also set a good example for the next generation cohort entering the workforce.

9.7 Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

Although this study has produced a number of significant contributions, there are some caveats that should be noted. First, the study was cross-sectional in nature which may lack evidences for a true cause and effect relationships. However, the nature of the study entails a focus on a particular context, specifically Gen Y employees, in a specific workplace such as the financial sector. Gathering longitudinal data from such group was not the most feasible task given their job hopping nature. In the present study, different set of variables were used to test the hypothesis and all the scales were tested with high and satisfactory reliability score, which eliminate the issue of non-viability in the data. While cross-sectional studies cannot be used to determine causal relationships, they can pave the way for further research within the same phenomenon which may be beneficial for researchers to consider a longitudinal study. Future researchers may also consider using longitudinal and or, experimental approaches to improve generalisability of the findings and provide in-depth analysis in explaining the relationships between the variables. This may help to find patterns and track changes so that cause and effect relationship can be discovered.

Second, due to the self-report nature of the data, the issue of common method bias is likely to arise. This is because the study uses a single-source respondent whereby responses were recorded without the interference of the researcher. Nevertheless, necessary measures have been taken to overcome possible issues of common method bias. The findings detailed in chapter 5 showed that there were no issues based on checks performed on the data. Future studies may strengthen the results findings by collecting data from multiple samples and comparing their means to reduce the effect of common method bias.

Third, the researcher faced difficulties in obtaining approval for data collection from many financial institutions due to tight privacy and confidential act practised in the industry. Only a limited number of institutions considered paying attention to the researcher's request to conduct the study. This affected the researcher's initial target to include at least 10 institutions to participate in the study. However, despite limited institutional participations, the study was still able to generate an adequate sample (n= 232) which met all the initial criteria for data analysis.

Lastly, the present study only aimed at Gen Y employees working in the Malaysian financial sector. Future research should consider exploring other generation such as Generation Z since partial of them has already made an entrance into the workforce. It is rumoured that this Generation is more complex than Gen Y and therefore, exploring this cohort would be an interesting research area to focus on. For future research consideration, a different industry can be explored like technology, start-up business or e-commerce based sector as these are the industries that are currently growing vastly in today's business environment.

9.8 Conclusion

The study demonstrated a clearer picture on several aspects of employee engagement amongst Gen Y employees. Managing this cohort seems to be a challenge as they tend to quit from the company in a short period of time. Based on the research findings, organisations would gain a basic understanding of employee engagement and the factors that drive engagement among the Gen Y employees.

Organisational practices (job resources) and the role of the stressors (self-efficacy and high workload) highlighted in this study would provide a true insight for organisations to constantly monitor their employees' engagement level and adjust the existing practices to suit the need of their employees. Although the promotion of employee engagement is not a quick fix for all organisational problems, it may help employers find ways to ease the increasing challenge of job hopping and high turnover ratios amongst this sector.

Building employee engagement begins with implementing psychological and emotional changes such as introducing new ways of working and other job resources that may promote employee engagement. Fostering engagement should be part of an organisation's philosophy and vision statement, together with succession action plans. That being said, employee engagement requires a shift in the cultural mindset and leadership approach in order to maximise the potential of employees, particularly those from the Gen Y who are poised to become the world’s biggest employee cohort in the next 5 years.

In conclusion, it is believed that this study has met the research objectives and presents valuable research contributions at the end. It is hoped that this thesis will provide useful insights to researchers, practitioners and general readers on the topic of employee engagement from the context of Gen Y cohort in Malaysia.

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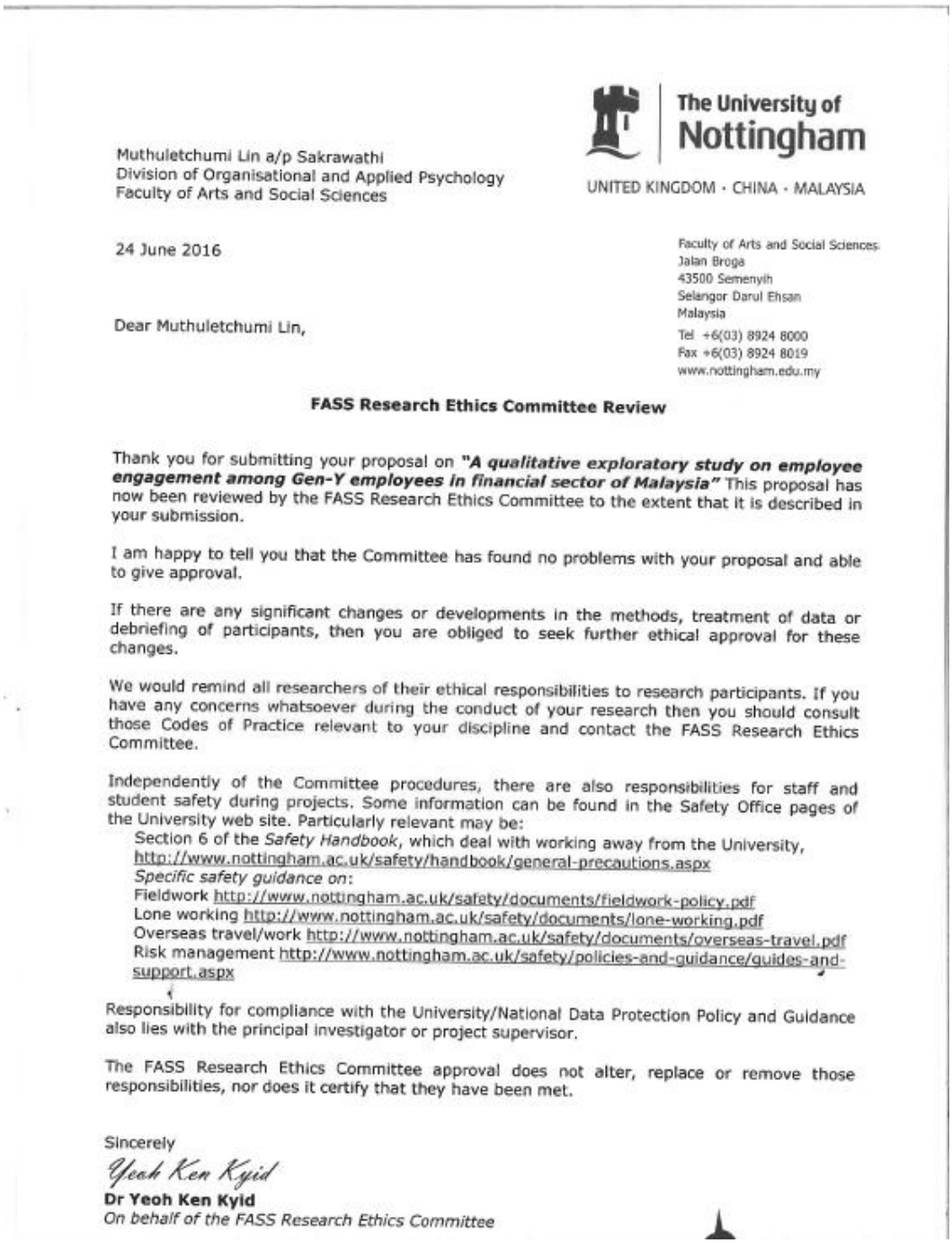
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APPENDIXS

Appendix 1 - Ethics Approval for Qualitative Study



The University of Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Muthuletchumi Lin a/p Sakrawathi
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Dear Muthuletchumi Lin,

FASS Research Ethics Committee Review

Thank you for submitting your proposal on ***"A qualitative exploratory study on employee engagement among Gen-Y employees in financial sector of Malaysia"*** This proposal has now been reviewed by the FASS Research Ethics Committee to the extent that it is described in your submission.

I am happy to tell you that the Committee has found no problems with your proposal and able to give approval.

If there are any significant changes or developments in the methods, treatment of data or debriefing of participants, then you are obliged to seek further ethical approval for these changes.

We would remind all researchers of their ethical responsibilities to research participants. If you have any concerns whatsoever during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice relevant to your discipline and contact the FASS Research Ethics Committee.

Independently of the Committee procedures, there are also responsibilities for staff and student safety during projects. Some information can be found in the Safety Office pages of the University web site. Particularly relevant may be:

Section 6 of the *Safety Handbook*, which deal with working away from the University,
http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/handbook/general-precautions.aspx
Specific safety guidance on:
Fieldwork http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/documents/fieldwork-policy.pdf
Lone working http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/documents/lone-working.pdf
Overseas travel/work http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/documents/overseas-travel.pdf
Risk management http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/policies-and-guidance/guides-and-support.aspx

Responsibility for compliance with the University/National Data Protection Policy and Guidance also lies with the principal investigator or project supervisor.

The FASS Research Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Sincerely

Yeoh Ken Kyid

Dr Yeoh Ken Kyid
On behalf of the FASS Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 2 - Ethics Approval for Quantitative Study

FASSREC00232016/DOAP/MLS016511

The University of Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Muthuletchumi Lin a/p Sakrawathi
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05 August 2016

Dear Muthuletchumi Lin,

FASS Research Ethics Committee Review

Thank you for submitting your proposal on ***"A quantitative exploratory study on employee engagement among Gen-Y employees in financial sector of Malaysia"*** This proposal has now been reviewed by the FASS Research Ethics Committee to the extent that it is described in your submission.

I am happy to tell you that the Committee has found no problems with your proposal and able to give approval.

If there are any significant changes or developments in the methods, treatment of data or debriefing of participants, then you are obliged to seek further ethical approval for these changes.

We would remind all researchers of their ethical responsibilities to research participants. If you have any concerns whatsoever during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice relevant to your discipline and contact the FASS Research Ethics Committee.

Independently of the Committee procedures, there are also responsibilities for staff and student safety during projects. Some information can be found in the Safety Office pages of the University web site. Particularly relevant may be:

Section 6 of the *Safety Handbook*, which deal with working away from the University,
http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/handbook/general-precautions.aspx
Specific safety guidance on:
Fieldwork http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/documents/fieldwork-policy.pdf
Lone working http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/documents/lone-working.pdf
Overseas travel/work http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/documents/overseas-travel.pdf
Risk management http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/policies-and-guidance/guides-and-support.aspx

Responsibility for compliance with the University/National Data Protection Policy and Guidance also lies with the principal investigator or project supervisor.

The FASS Research Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Sincerely

Yeoh Ken Kyid

Dr Yeoh Ken Kyid
On behalf of the FASS Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 3 - Sample of Participant Information Sheet



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Division of Psychiatry & Applied Psychology

School of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences

Project Title:

Researcher: Muthuletchumi Lin Email: *kspx4mlh@nottingham.edu.my*

Supervisor: Dr.Hazel Melanie Ramos

Email : *HazelMelanie.Ramos@nottingham.edu.my*

Ethics Approval Reference Number: -

This is an invitation to take part in a research study (Fill in appropriately.....). The research seeks to (Fill in appropriately.....).

Your participation is voluntary, and you may change your mind about being involved, or decline to answer a particular question or (for interview studies) stop the recording at any time, and without giving a reason. You are free to withdraw at any point before or during the study. For anonymous questionnaires, once you have finished the questionnaire and submitted your answers it is not possible to withdraw the data.

What is the project about?

This project aimed to explore the meaning of engagement from the point view of Gen Y employees that works at financial sector. Next, several questions related to engagement at workforce to be explored to understand the overall concept of employee engagement.

Who is being asked to take part, and why?

Expected participants are required to be Gen Y employees who born from 1980 to 1995 and currently employed at financial sectors in Malaysia. There is no specific job position required in order to participate in this project as general population sample would be used to gain information.

What will I be asked to do?

Those who give their consent will be required to participate in a one-on-one semi-structured interview which may take approximately 40 minutes to one hour. The interview timing varies according to the length of answer provided by participants and the duration may be shorten or prolong. You will be asked a series of questions which includes your background, personal information, work environment, challenges and other relevant questions pertaining to the topic. You are under no obligation whatsoever to reveal information that you may deem sensitive, nor will your non-participation in this research have any official ramifications pertaining to you in your workplace.

Will the research be of any personal benefit to me?

Whilst there are no direct benefits for participating in this study, your input will provide vital information regarding the factors that may or may not have an effect on employee's level of engagement at work. It is hoped that the results obtained from this research will contribute to better understanding of engagement in which the resulting data can be applied to theoretical and practical aspects of this study.

What will happen to the information I provide?

The confidentiality of information provided by participants is highly prioritized and we will ensure that your anonymity is protected at utmost importance. Therefore, any information that may personally identify you as an individual, should it be whether by name and/or demographic will be removed from the final report and written transcripts of the audio recordings to ensure anonymity. As previously mentioned, pseudonyms and/or name initials will be used in place of your names and demographic data provided where necessary during the transcription process. The researcher will be the only authorized person to retrieve the audio recordings for transcribing purpose and all the audio recordings will be uploaded to Dropbox account with secured password to ensure the safety of the data. The access for the audio recordings and interview transcripts is only accessible by the researcher and will be archived in a secured storage for a duration period of 7 years after the final completion of the project in accordance with the University's policies and Data Protection Act (2010).

What will you do with the data?

The data obtained from this research will be used by the researcher to investigate the essence of engagement from various aspects from the sample size of Gen Y employees. Important themes would be retrieved by transcribing the audio recordings. The themes will then be used as the outcome of theoretical approach and other relevant information gathered from the interview shall be applied in different context of study within the topic area.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask. We can be contacted before and after your participation at the above email address provided.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

If you have any queries or complaints about this study, please contact the student's supervisor in the first instance. If this does not resolve the query to your satisfaction, please write to the Administrator to the Division of Psychiatry & Applied Psychology's Research Ethics Committee who will pass your query to the Chair of the Committee

Appendix 4 - Sample of Participant Consent Form



PARTICIPANT CONSENT

Division of Psychiatry & Applied Psychology

School of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences

Project Title:

Researcher: Muthuletchumi Lin Email :*kspx4mlh@nottingham.edu.my*

Supervisor: Dr. Hazel Melanie Ramos Email: *Hazel-Melanie.Ramos@nottingham.edu.my*

Ethics Approval Reference Number: -

- I have read and understood the Participant Information
- I agree to take part in an interview that will be recorded
- I know how to contact the researcher if I have questions about this study
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study without giving a reason?
- I understand that once I have been interviewed it may not be technically possible to withdraw my data unless requested within **THREE** days after the day of interview
- I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers in the future provided that my anonymity is protected
- I understand that non-identifiable data from this study might be used in academic research reports or publications

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Signature of the Participant ……. Date: …….

Name (in block capitals) ……..

Appendix 5 - Interview Questions for Qualitative Study

Demographic Information

1) Age

2) Gender

3) Marital Status

Work Information

1) Your tenure with the organisation (Number of years working with the organisation)

2) Position level (Entry level, Junior Executive, Senior Executive or First Line Manager)

Employee Engagement Questions

1) **In your opinion, what is your understanding of employee engagement in general?**
    - Have you heard about the term 'employee engagement' before? If yes, where have you heard about it?
    - How would you describe the characteristics of an engaged employee?
    - What does an engaged worker demonstrate at workplace?
2) **What motivates you to work in daily basis?**
    - How do you feel when you wake up every day to work?
    - What do you do the first thing when you arrived at work?
    - What is your opinion on working extra hours? Do you work extra hours willingly or due to other reasons such as requirement of the job or overtime privilege?
    - How does other colleagues of yours describe about their working life?
3) **What do you like the most about your job?**
    - What makes you to stay in your current job?
    - How would you describe the nature of your job?
    - What is your greatest achievement at work?
    - How do you get rewarded for good job?
    - How would you describe your leader and his/her leadership style?
    - How does the leadership style affect your job performance
    - Any suggestions to improve the current leadership style and what are your expectations from your leader?

4) **What do you dislikes about your job?**
   - How would you change the dislikes of your job for better?
   - How do you handle any difficulties at work?
   - What kind of problems you normally faced at work? How do you overcome such problems?
   - How difficulties at work do affect you? (Psychically, emotionally, well-being?)

5) **Where do you see yourself in next 5 years from now?**
   - What are the steps taken by your organisation in planning your career for long-term?
   - What are your career goals? Do you discuss about your career goal to your leader during appraisal? Does your leader support your career goals? If yes, what he/she does? If no, why do you think the reason could be?
   - Would you recommend your current organisation to your family and friends? (If yes, why and if no, why)

6) Are you familiar with the HR roles in your company?

- How often do you visit the HR department in your company?
- What are the reasons you normally liaise with the HR department?
- How effective does the employees at the HR department in providing assistance to you?
- What kind of activities organise by the HR department for the employees?
- How often training and development initiatives are provided?
- What are the steps taken by the HR team to promote engagement in your company?

7) a) How important is engagement for workers like you?

(Applicable for Entry level and Executives)

- Explain why engagement is important to you when it comes to work?
- What do you think a disengaged employee behaves at work?

b) As a manager, how crucial is to have an engaged workforce in the organisation?

(Applicable for manager level)

- Rate from 1-10
- How many subordinates are reporting directly to you?
- What is your leadership style?
- How do you manage your team?
- What are the common problems that you face within your

team?
- How do you solve the problems?
- Do you think you have disengaged workers within your team?

8) In your own opinion, how do you think engagement at workforce can be achieved furthermore?

- What do you think about work-life balance? What kind of work-life balance activities are promoted by your company?
- What are your perspectives of a healthy working environment?
- Based on your observation, what are the challenges that your organisation facing in managing employees? And how it can be solved based on your opinion?
- Which generation do you think are facing more challenges at work and what are the common challenges that you think are faced by them?
- Does engagement activities important to be implemented to solve employees' problem?

9) Why is it important to you based on the answer provided at No.8?

10) Overall, do you feel engaged at work?

- Rate 1-10
- If yes, what are the factors that drive engagement in your organisation?
- If no, why do you feel so? How it can be improved in future to make you feel more engaged?

Appendix 6 - Survey Questionnaire for Quantitative Study

Dear respondents,

You are invited to participate in a simple survey on employee engagement in Malaysia. There are total of 74 questions and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey will helps to understand about employee engagement in the context of Malaysia perspectives. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and anonymous. Your survey responses are strictly confidential and all data from this survey will be kept secured. If you have any questions pertaining to the survey, kindly contact the researcher at kspx4mlh@nottingham.edu.my. Thank you very much for your time and support.

Section A: Please tick (/) in the appropriate box provided for each question.

1. Gender:

Male ◯ Female ◯

2. Marital Status:

Single ◯

Married ◯

Divorced ◯

3. Education Background:

Secondary School and Below ◯

Diploma/Professional Cert ◯

Bachelor Degree ◯

Post Graduate Degree (Masters ande etc) ◯

4. Current Position

Entry level ◯

Non-executive ◯

Junior Executive ◯

Senior Executive ◯

Assistant Manager and Above ◯

Top Management (Director and above) ◯

5. Ethnicity (Optional)

Malay ◯

Chinese ◯

Indian ◯

Others (Please Specify) _____

6. Income (Optional)

Below RM 1500 ◯

Between RM 1501 - RM 2500 ◯

Between RM 2501 - RM 3500 ◯

Between RM 3501 - RM 4500 ◯

Above RM 4501 ◯

7. My organisation belongs to:

Private Sector ◯

Public Sector ◯

Government linked financial institution/organisation ◯

8. Nationality

Malaysian ◯ Non-Malaysian ◯

9. Which city are you from: _____ (Please Specify)

10. Age (Please Specify) _____

11. Number of years working in total _____ (Please Specify)

12. Number of years working in current organisation _____ (Please specify)

13. How many times you have changed your job _____ (Please Specify)

Section B: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree in regards to the following statements.

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. I am satisfied with my work-life balance, enjoying both work and non-work life roles					
15. Nowadays, I seem to enjoy every part of my life equally well					
16. I manage to balance the demands of my work and personal and family life well					
17. In the organization where I work, I get incentives such as promotions, commissioned functions, awards, bonuses, etc.					
18. In the organization where I work, my salary is influenced by my results					
19. The organization I work for offers me a salary that is compatible with my skills, training, and education.					
20. The organization I work for remunerates me according to the remuneration offered at either the public or private marketplace levels					
21. The organization I work for considers the expectations and suggestions of its employees when designing a system of employee rewards					
22. I can use knowledge and behaviours learned in training at work.					
23. The organization I work for helps me develop the skills I need for the successful accomplishment of my duties (e.g., training, conferences, etc.).					
24. The organization I work for invests in my development and education promoting my personal and professional growth in a broad manner (e.g., full or partial sponsorship of undergraduate degrees, postgraduate programs, language courses, etc.).					
25. In the organization where I work, training is evaluated by participants.					
26. The organization I work for stimulates learning and application of knowledge					
27. In the organization where I work, training needs are identified periodically (regularly)					

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
28. A formal process to attain career development is important to me					
29. Career development is important to me					
30. I understand the need for continuous career development.					
31. Career planning tools are essential to support my career development.					
32. Career management programs are essential to support my career development.					
33. My supervisor cares about my opinions					
34. My work supervisor really cares about my well being					
35. My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values					
36. My supervisor shows very little concern for me					
37. I do a complete task from start to finish. The results of my efforts are clearly visible and identifiable.					
38. I make insignificant (unimportant) contributions to the final product or service.					
39. My job is arranged so that I do not have a chance to do an entire piece of work from beginning to end.					
40. My job provides me with the chance to finish completely any work I start					
41. I have almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the work is to be done					
42. I have very little freedom in deciding how the work is to be done					
43. My job does not allow me an opportunity to use discretion or participate in decision making					
44. My job gives me considerable freedom in doing the work.					

Section C: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree in regards to the following statements.

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
45. At my work, I feel bursting with energy					
46. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.					
47. Time flies when I am working.					
48. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous					
49. I am enthusiastic about my job					
50. When I am working, I forget everything else around me					
51. My job inspires me					
52. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work					
53. I feel happy when I am working intensely					
54. I am proud of the work that I do					
55. I am immersed (engage) in my work					
56. I can continue working for very long periods at a time.					
57. To me, my job is challenging					
58. I get carried away when I am working.					
59. At my job, I am very resilient (strong), mentally					
60. It is difficult to detach myself from my job					
61. At my work, I always persevere (keep-going), even when things do not go well.					

Section D: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree in regards to the following statements.

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
62. In the last few months, I have seriously thought about looking for a new job					
63. Presently, I am actively searching for other job					
64. I intend to leave my organization in the near future					

Section E: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree in regards to the following statements.

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
65. I do not anticipate any problem in adjusting to work in this organization					
66. I feel I am overqualified for the job I will be doing					
67. I have all the technical knowledge I need to deal with my new job, all I need now is practical experience.					
68. I feel confident that my skill and abilities equal or exceed those of my future colleagues					
69. My past experiences and accomplishments increase my confidence that I will be able to perform successfully in this organisation.					
70. I could have handled a more challenging job than the one I will be doing					
71. The job involved a lot of repetitive work					
72. The job involved an excessive amount of work					
73. The job required lots of physical/mental effort.					
74. The demands of my job take up many hours of my personal time.					

~Thank you for your PARTICIPATION and precious time ~

Appendix 7.1 - Moderation Analysis for Self-efficacy on Absorption

	β	SE	t	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Control Variables						
Gender	-0.01	0.14	-0.37	*p>0.05*	-0.295	0.273
Independent Variables						
WLB	0.13	0.13	0.98	*p>0.05*	-0.131	0.391
Rewards and Recognition (RR)	0.27	0.14	2.06	*p<0.05*	-0.027	-0.593
Training	0.07	0.04	0.61	*p>0.05*	-0.252	0.539
CDP	-0.10	-0.05	-0.74	*p>0.05*	-0.407	0.173
PSS	0.03	0.01	0.25	*p>0.05*	-0.251	0.311
Task Identity	-0.15	-0.08	-1.17	*p>0.05*	-0.365	0.029
Autonomy	0.05	0.03	0.57	*p>0.05*	-0.125	0.246
Moderator						
Self-efficacy (SE)	0.05	0.09	0.56	*p>0.05*	-0.132	0.238
Interactions						
WLB x SE	-0.06	0.17	-0.37	*p>0.05*	-0.343	0.281
RR x SE	0.12	0.21	0.61	*p>0.05*	-0.277	0.535
Training x SE	0.18	0.24	0.72	*p>0.05*	-0.256	0.617
CDP x SE	-0.21	0.14	-0.81	*p>0.05*	-0.600	0.180
PSS x SE	-0.15	0.21	0.74	*p>0.05*	-0.531	0.305
Task Identity x SE	0.05	0.10	0.56	p>0.05	-0.137	0.222
Autonomy x SE	0.00	0.10	0.03	*p>0.05*	-0.202	0.171

Appendix 7.2 - Moderation Analysis for High Workload on Employee Engagement

	β	SE	t	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Control Variables						
Gender	0.00	0.04	0.16	*p>0.05*	-0.079	0.093
Independent Variables						
WLB	0.23	0.04	3.94	*p<0.05*	0.051	0.210
Rewards and Recognition (RR)	0.22	0.05	0.48	*p<0.05*	0.747	0.124
Training	0.10	0.58	1.66	*p>0.05*	-0.051	0.180
CDP	0.00	-0.04	-0.19	*p>0.05*	-0.090	0.088
PSS	0.31	0.04	0.89	*p<0.05*	-0.517	-0.138
Task Identity	0.10	0.03	1.70	*p>0.05*	-0.009	0.143
Autonomy	0.33	0.03	5.47	*p<0.05*	0.100	0.224
Moderator						
High workload (HW)	0.10	0.07	1.43	*p>0.05*	-0.039	0.251
Interactions						
WLB x HW	0.14	0.20	0.87	p>0.05	-0.291	0.576
RR x HW	0.10	0.21	0.51	p>0.05	-0.397	0.602
Training x HW	0.18	0.19	0.90	p>0.05	-0.211	0.573
CDP x HW	0.09	0.20	-0.23	p>0.05	-0.362	0.554
PSS x HW	-0.02	0.08	-0.38	p>0.05	-0.236	0.184
Task Identity x HW	0.06	0.19	0.02	p>0.05	-0.379	0.509
Autonomy x HW	0.03	0.09	0.20	p>0.05	-0.145	0.213

Appendix 7.3 - Moderation Analysis for High Workload on Vigour

	β	SE	t	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Control Variables						
Gender	0.55	0.06	0.85	p>0.05	-0.072	0.184
Independent Variables						
WLB	0.12	0.05	2.46	p<0.05	0.015	0.222
Rewards and Recognition (RR)	0.01	0.05	0.32	p>0.05	-0.817	0.133
Training	-0.02	0.07	-0.50	p>0.05	-0.890	0.188
CDP	0.15	0.05	2.41	p<0.05	0.211	0.253
PSS	0.09	0.05	0.11	p>0.05	0.003	-0.209
Task Identity	0.02	0.04	0.41	p>0.05	-0.125	0.061
Autonomy	0.16	0.04	3.86	p<0.05	0.074	0.262
Moderator						
High workload (HW)	0.25	0.10	2.41	p<0.05	0.046	0.456
Interactions						
WLB x HW	-0.07	0.29	-0.55	p>0.05	-0.690	0.534
RR x HW	0.17	0.06	0.21	p>0.05	-0.315	0.671
Training x HW	0.44	0.06	-0.34	p>0.05	-0.034	0.922
CDP x HW	-0.30	0.26	-1.62	p>0.05	-0.900	0.296
PSS x HW	0.01	0.35	0.06	p>0.05	-0.806	0.828
Task Identity x HW	-0.15	0.20	-1.09	p>0.05	-0.596	0.281
Autonomy x HW	-0.15	0.10	-1.39	p>0.05	-0.373	0.057

Appendix 7.4 - Moderation Analysis for High Workload on Absorption

	β	SE	t	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Control Variables						
Gender	-0.00	0.14	-0.03	p>0.05	-0.283	0.272
Independent Variables						
WLB	0.13	0.13	0.98	*p>0.05*	-0.131	0.391
Rewards and Recognition (RR)	0.27	0.14	2.06	*p<0.05*	-0.027	-0.593
Training	0.07	0.04	0.61	*p>0.05*	-0.252	0.539
CDP	-0.10	-0.05	-0.74	*p>0.05*	-0.407	0.173
PSS	0.03	0.01	0.25	*p>0.05*	-0.251	0.311
Task Identity	-0.15	-0.08	-1.17	*p>0.05*	-0.365	0.029
Autonomy	0.05	0.03	0.57	*p>0.05*	-0.125	0.246
Moderator						
High workload (HW)	0.64	0.23	2.73	p<0.05	0.179	1.106
Interactions						
WLB x HW	-0.35	0.49	-0.71	p>0.05	-1.134	0.626
RR x HW	0.37	0.71	0.52	p>0.05	-1.03	1.787
Training x HW	0.52	0.3	0.78	p>0.05	-0.795	1.838
CDP x HW	0.56	0.61	0.91	p>0.05	-0.382	2.009
PSS x HW	-0.23	0.56	-0.48	p>0.05	-1.232	0.756
Task Identity x HW	0.10	0.53	0.10	p>0.05	-0.869	1.072
Autonomy x HW	0.02	0.26	0.19	p>0.05	-0.489	0.538