

THE IMPACT OF TALENT COMPETENCE AND HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE
THROUGH EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the people that I love for giving me continuous support and encouragement. No matter how hard I work, I will not be successful without the help of Allah. All praise be to Allah S.W.T

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In the name of Allah, the Almighty God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, all praise be to Allah and peace upon to Prophet Muhammad as His final messenger. First and foremost, I would like to extend my gratefulness to Allah s.w.t for giving me His blessing, strength, guidance, health, wisdom and enabling me to complete this journey.

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ABSTRACT

The rate of productivity per employee in Malaysia manufacturing sector has declined by 6.9 percent in 2016. If this situation left unchecked, it may impact negatively on the organizational productivity. In view of the national agenda to increase productivity per employee in Malaysia manufacturing industry, organizations should identify significant drivers to boost individual work performance, initiate their plan and continuously play a critical role in preparing the employees for future demand. Thus, this research examined the impact of talent competence and human resource management practices on individual work performance through employee engagement. Based on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Social Exchange Theory (SET) and literature, a total of seventeen hypotheses have been generated to be tested. The questionnaire comprises of four main research variables namely talent competence, and human resource management practices as independent variables, whereas, employee engagement as mediating variable, and individual work performance as dependent variables, which was adapted from seven scholars. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to the employees who were in executive and managerial levels at selected manufacturing organizations in Klang Valley area, and 252 completed questionnaires were used for analysis. Smart Partial Least Square (SmartPLS) version 3.2.7 and IBM SPSS Statistics version 24 statistical software were used in the analysis. The finding revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between talent competence and human resource management practices towards individual work performance. Additionally, employee engagement showed a significant role in mediating the relationship between the talent competence, human resource management practices as independent variables and individual work performance as dependent variables. In brief, this research contributed in adding a new variable which is the talent competence in the model of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), advancing existing knowledge in the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and enhancing the understanding of organization in managing individual work performance more effectively.

ABSTRAK

Kadar produktivi bagi setiap pekerja di sektor pembuatan Malaysia telah menurun sebanyak 6.9 peratus pada tahun 2016. Sekiranya keadaan ini dibiarkan, ia mungkin akan memberi kesan negatif terhadap produktiviti organisasi. Memandangkan agenda negara adalah untuk meningkatkan produktiviti setiap pekerja di industri pembuatan Malaysia, organisasi harus mengenal pasti pemacu yang signifikan untuk meningkatkan prestasi kerja pekerja, memulakan perancangan dengan segera dan terus memainkan peranan yang penting dalam menyediakan pekerja berdaya saing untuk permintaan masa depan. Oleh itu, kajian ini mengkaji kesan kecekapan bakat dan amalan pengurusan sumber manusia terhadap prestasi kerja individu melalui penglibatan pekerja. Berdasarkan Teori Penentuan Diri (SDT), Teori Pertukaran Sosial (SET) dan kajian literatur yang lalu, sebanyak tujuh belas hipotesis telah dihasilkan untuk diuji. Soal selidik untuk kajian ini terdiri daripada empat pemboleh ubah utama iaitu kecekapan bakat dan amalan pengurusan sumber manusia sebagai pemboleh ubah bebas, manakala penglibatan pekerja sebagai pemboleh ubah pengantara dan prestasi kerja individu sebagai pemboleh ubah bersandar yang diadaptasi dari tujuh pakar rujuk. Sebanyak 400 borang soal selidik diedarkan kepada pekerja yang berada di peringkat eksekutif dan pengurusan di organisasi pembuatan yang terpilih di kawasan Lembah Klang, dan 252 borang soal selidik yang lengkap telah digunakan untuk analisis. Perisian *Smart Partial Least Square* (SmartPLS) versi 3.2.7 dan perisian Statistik SPSS IBM versi 24 digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan positif dan signifikan antara kecekapan bakat dan amalan pengurusan sumber manusia terhadap prestasi kerja individu. Di samping itu, penglibatan pekerja menunjukkan peranan yang signifikan sebagai pengantara antara hubungan kecekapan bakat, amalan pengurusan sumber manusia sebagai pemboleh ubah bebas dan prestasi kerja individu sebagai pemboleh ubah bersandar. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini telah menyumbang kepada penambahan pemboleh ubah yang baru iaitu kecekapan bakat dalam model Teori Penentuan Diri (SDT), meningkatkan pengetahuan dalam Teori Pertukaran Sosial (SET) dan meningkatkan pemahaman organisasi dalam mengurus prestasi kerja individu dengan lebih berkesan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TC	-	Talent Competence
HRM	-	Human Resource Management
EE	-	Employee Engagement
IWP	-	Individual Work Performance
PLS	-	Partial Least Square
SEM	-	Structural Equation Model

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In chapter one, an introductory for this research will be presented. Besides that, this chapter also will provide the background of the study and relevant information pertaining to the current issues in this field of study. The following section explains on the problem statement for this study. The problem statement section shall outlined a clear description of issues regarding a statement of the problem that has been identified for this research. After that, this study shall proceed with the statement of research objectives. There are a total of seven research objectives that have been presented and listed in this research. The following section will outline the research questions, which consist of seven research questions for this study. The next section shall be the research hypotheses. Subsequently, the chapter proceeds with the section on significance and scope of this research. The significance of this study emphasized on the contribution towards the body of knowledge and to the practical implication. Whereas, the scope of the study explained by the participation of respondents, the location setting and the industrial setting. This shall be followed by the limitations of the study and definition of terms. Additionally, in this research also there exists four main latent constructs which consist of talent competence, human resource management practices, employee engagement and individual work performance. Therefore, these four latent constructs will be defined in the last section in this introductory section. The following section will describe and explain the details for this research.

1.2 Background of Study

The background of this study exists in two parts: in subsection 1.2.1 as contextual background and in subsection 1.2.2 as a theoretical background.

1.2.1 Contextual Background

In a healthy economy, economic growth always stands as one of the most crucial indicators for a country's success. Over the course of centuries, Malaysia witnessed the tumultuous evolution of manufacturing industries both at home and across the globe. Significantly, these manufacturing industry became one of the main industrial key players to expedite economic growth. Therefore, through most of these years, Malaysia has acknowledged the contribution of manufacturing industries and so this industry have been viewed as the bellwethers of Malaysia's economy. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Tun Dr, Mahathir Bin Mohamad stated that the manufacturing sector has played an important role in turning Malaysia into a trading nation and the sector is constantly infusing dynamic process improvement. However, the Prime Minister has cautioned that without knowledge of application, the improvement is meaningless, (National Policy on Industry 4.0, 2018).

Comparatively to the global position, the Malaysian manufacturing industry's total labour productivity is ranked in 44th position and this rank has remained static since the year 2009 (National Policy on Industry 4.0, 2018). In the same report, the relative share for high skilled labour indicates a declined rate from 19 percent in 2010 to 18 percent in 2017. In short, this situation may lead to declination of overall industry competitiveness. Meanwhile, there is a recent report which could help the industry to project its future readiness. Specifically, the report revealed the readiness for future production among 100 countries, (World Economic Forum, 2018). Malaysia is positioned at the 'leader' quadrant and despite the strong manufacturing position among 100 countries, it is claimed that the economy is at stake if the country does not accelerate its transformation, (World Economic Forum, 2018).

In the same report, it is highlighted that the global leader countries such as China, Switzerland, Germany, Republic of Korea and Japan are moving aggressively and rapidly in their implementation. The fact of the matter is that many organizations are now developing complex structures and processes to continuously spark their performance. The changing of current markets and advancements on new technologies will create a demand for talent which can adapt quickly and repeatedly to new processes and environments.

Talent becomes a potentially powerful source of competitive advantage in today's global business environment. Given the economic constraints faced by organizations, there is a need to efficiently manage potential talent, by "working smarter" to ensure the return on investment is worthwhile. In today's competitive knowledge-based world, managing employees become the fundamental building block to create an organization that is capable of changing, innovating and learning as well as to execute new processes. Most of the organizations are aware that these talented employees are their most critical asset in driving productivity excellence (Skorková, 2016). Primarily, it is highlighted that undoubtedly the performance from individual employee contributes towards the organization's success and growth, which helps the organization to remain competitive in the industry for a long period (Anitha, 2014; Anvari, Soltani, and Rafiee, 2016; Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, and González-Cruz, 2013; Kwame Mensah, 2015; Nangov, Sasmoko, and Indrianti, 2018; Pahos and Galanaki, 2018; Rai, Ghosh, Chauhan, and Singh, 2018; Velciu, 2017; Vosloban, 2013).

Having pool of qualified workforce will not only helps the industry and organizations to survive for the long term, but also maintain the consistency of individual performance for generating high qualities of productivity, (Diamantidis and Chatzoglou, 2019). It is also has been postulated that work performance of an employee will not only contributed to the overall performance, but also will be able to meet the objectives and goals of the organizations, (Sujatha and Krishnaveni, 2018). Likewise, Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) believed that a new linkage towards performance at the individual level is a new dimension worthy of investigation. Generally, there are several aspects which have significant consequences towards

performance at individual levels such as benefits, developmental programs, support provided by organization and others. This will later provide positive improvements in performance and profitability within the organizations (Ahmad, Farrukh, and Nazir, 2015).

Essentially, individual work performance evaluation practices are important to help an organization in distinguishing between good performers or underperform employees and achieving standardization of a desirable performance (Diamantidis and Chatzoglou, 2019). Individual work performance refers to an action or behavioural that are relevant to the goals of the organization (Campbell, 1990). The main focus of individual work performance is towards one's behaviour or action of an individual employee (Koopmans et al., 2012). In essence, the performance of each individual employee should be aligned with organizational policies or goal, as to ensure the process more strategically implemented (Jena and Pradhan, 2014; London, 2003; Mone and London; 2009). Therefore, individual work performance in the manufacturing industry should be enhanced to increase the organization's odds of survival through future revolutions, especially in manufacturing industries.

The rationality of the present study has enlightened to acknowledge the contribution of competence at the individual level as one of the drivers to boost performance (Le Deist and Winterton, 2005; Meyer et al., 2015). Therefore, relevant approaches such as aligning the competence of individual talent to increase performance level might be an predictor for individual work performance. Meanwhile, the managing director of Kelly Services, Mrs. Melissa Norman, has said that due to globalization, a majority of business conditions and climates have becomes uncertain, leading to situation which encourages hiring skilled talent (Kelly Services Inc, 2012). The Hays Group further claims that the manufacturing industries in Malaysia have retained their demands to have employees that possess strong leadership and willingness to train others (Hays Asia, 2018).

Meanwhile, the Workmonitor's Q3 Global presented the report of employee perception on skill and competencies among 33 countries from the regions of Europe, the Americas and Asia Pacific including Malaysia. The results revealed that

96 percent of Malaysia employees believed that refreshing their skills and competencies will enhance their employability and globally 90 percent of employee agreed with this statement. Thus, the employees globally have realized that a desirable set of competencies and skill set will attract the attention of employers. This is because a set of desirable competence level not only helps in increasing individual performance but also has an impact on the overall organization’s productivity. Figure 1.1 below illustrated the agreement across countries by (Randstad, 2017).

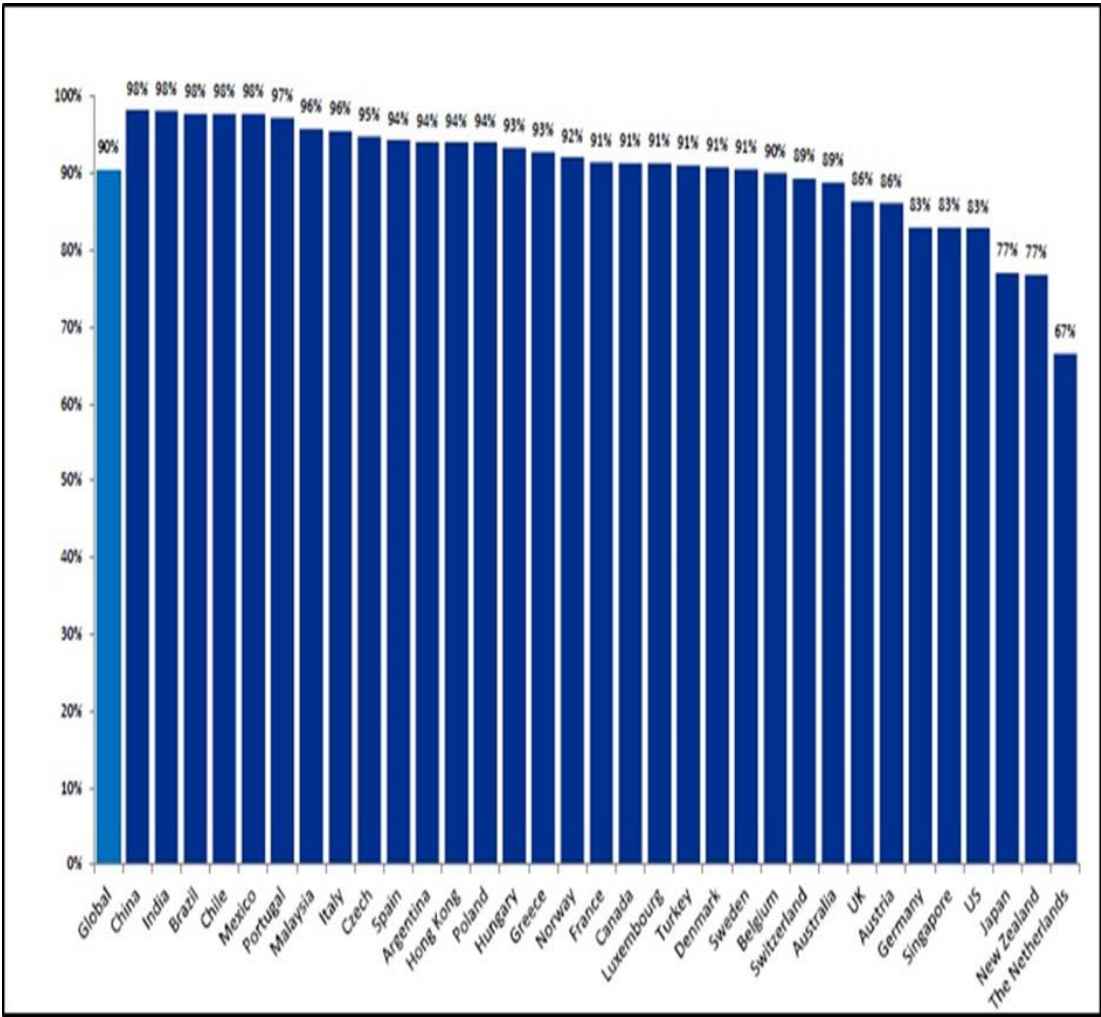


Figure 1.1 Perception of employees on skills and competencies across 33 countries (Randstad, 2017)

1.2.2 Theoretical Background

The conceptualization of competence has been interchangeably used with ‘competency’ (Cheng, Dainty and Moore, 2003). Competence refers to a person and represents a set of attributes which change over a time as the individual employee growth or develop (Lester, 2014). However, it has been noticed that there is a lack of attention on studies related to sustain improvement in areas of competence which lead to outstanding performance, (Richard, 2008).

Apart from talent competence, this research also examines human resource management practices as one of the drivers in achieving an outstanding individual work performance. Regardless of size or industry, highly talented employees are likely to underperform when they feel underdeveloped, underpaid or undervalued. The decline of individual performance could create a reduction in productivity and represent a loss of investment on an organization’s human capital resources.

According to Koh (2003), although most of the research investigates the specific aspect of managing talent, they often neglect to focus on the issues of human resource management. Therefore, organizations worldwide must able to manage their talent effectively in order to win the war of talent. Additionally, due to the high competition among companies to hire the right talent, there is also demand for human resource professionals to focus on an area such as compensation and benefits, learning and development, and recruitment and selection. Hays Group conducted the sequence of navigating Asia’s changing workforce in which five countries participated namely Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore (Hays Asia, 2018). It was revealed that employees in the Malaysian manufacturing industry have been searching for better salary package. Whereas, the same publisher has recently also revealed a report on understanding Asia’s talent and strategizing for the future (Hays Asia, 2019). The respondents in Malaysia manufacturing report a demand for attractive compensation and benefits packages alongside with training and development (Hays Asia, 2019). Although there are numerous studies investigating human resource management practices with performance, there is little

empirical evidence of research targeted towards individual research performance (Jaskiene, 2015).

Human resource management refers to the management function, which involves in recruiting, selecting, training, developing employees and as a process of getting efficiently the use of human resource to achieve the set goals (Ganesan, 2014). There are several practices of human resource management which have been identified by previous scholars these include recruitment, selection, compensation benefits, training and development and career development (Asfaw, Argaw, and Bayissa, 2015; Jouda, Ahmad, and Abed Dahleez, 2016; Long, Perumal, and Ajagbe, 2012). The underlying construct of human resource management practices have been developed in response to the needs of hiring, motivating and developing individual talent to fulfil each organization's need (Boxall, 2014). The linkage of human resource management practices with performance is highly dependable upon the response from employees towards their organization's human resource management practices and the impact direction would be based on the employee perception (Guest 2002). The various configuration of human resource management practices can be seen as the attempts made by an organization to influence performance at the individual level (Runhaar, 2017; Wright *et al.*, 1999; Becker and Huselid, 2006) and it is theorized that the human resource management practices exist as the organizational activities that are mandated for managing the pool of human capital and ensuring this human capital fulfils the organization goals. Next, in this study, the researcher examined the role of employee engagement as a mediator.

Apart from the two main predictors, this research has also examined employee engagement as the mediator in achieving outstanding individual work performance. Therefore, organizations should ensure that their employees give a commitment, loyalty and higher focus on maximizing their performance. According to Shuck, Reio Jr, and Rocco (2011), the concept of engagement managed to draw attention because it was reported that high productivity will be achieved once employees are highly engaged. The conceptualization or terminology of employee engagement is well-defined in many forms but primarily focuses on a person's emotional commitment towards the organization, exhibits of discretionary effort in

their job, cognitive ability used to spend time for thinking on a given role and reflection on how individual employ themselves in the performance of their job (Saks, 2006; Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006). Employee engagement refers to the harnessing of organization members selves to their work role in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance, (Kahn, 1990). Additionally, there is a need to further examine employee engagement towards performance at the individual level, (Alagaraja and Shuck, 2015). With all this in view, the construct of employee engagement is claimed to be meaningful and worthy for future research, (Saks, 2006). Recognizing employee engagement as one of the drivers to increase performance at the individual level will help the talent to feel more connected, focus-minded, highly dedicated and motivated to go the extra miles in completing their job, (Menguc, Auh, Fisher, and Haddad, 2013).

This statement is similarly reinstated by Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) on the positivity of employee engagement towards satisfaction, loyalty, profitability and productivity. However, the research linkage still receives minimal attention which requires further examination (Jurgita, Ieva, and Rita, 2018). With all this taken into consideration, it is clear that the individual work performance in manufacturing industries should receive attentiveness to respond with future manufacturing revolution challenges with the adoption of talent competence and human resource management practices. To certify the victorious association of talent competence and human resource management practices towards individual work performance through employee engagement role, the relationship of each construct and the impact on individual work performance needs to be studied. Therefore, the next subsection will explain the problem statement for this research.

1.3 Problem Statement

The present research is conducted based on the contextual, conceptual and theoretical gaps. Firstly, a press statement from the Department of Statistics Malaysia on February 2016 revealed that the productivity per person decreased by 6.9 percent

and the overall performance of manufacturing sector also decreased to 2.4 percent (DOSM, 2016). Over and above that, the Annual Report 2017 from Bank Negara Malaysia has disclosed that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the year of 2016 in the manufacturing industry has declined to 4.4 percent compared to 4.9 percent on the year of 2015 (BNM, 2017). Thirdly, under the national agenda, the baseline target is to increase the productivity per person in the manufacturing industry by 30 percent from RM106, 647 by the year of 2025 (National Policy on Industry 4.0, 2018). Analogically, this reflecting that individual employee work performance does contributed to the overall organization's performance. The importance of individual work performance has drew the attention of previous researchers in their study.

Fourth, several empirical studies have been carried out in different industrial contexts and location settings such as at the public sector in Romania (Ciobanu and Androniceanu, 2015), the public sector in Taiwan (Chen, Bian, and Hou, 2015), the manufacturing sector in Indonesia (Pawirosumarto, Sarjana, and Muchtar, 2017), the financial sector in Netherland (Koopmans et al., 2014), the manufacturing sector in South Korea (Nae, Moon, and Choi, 2015), the education sector in Iran (Dehaghi and Rouhani, 2014), the health sector in Canada (Fleury, Grenier, Bamvita, and Chiocchio, 2017), the manufacturing in India (Pradhan and Jena, 2017) and the education sector in China (Cao, Guo, Vogel, and Zhang, 2016). Whereas in the context of Malaysia, individual work performance related researches have taken place in multiple industrial settings such as the public sector (Fauzilah, Zaharah, Wan Amalina, and Nur Haizal, 2011), the education sector (Sheikh Khairuddin, 2015), the agriculture sector (Hayrol Azril et al., 2010), the hotel sector (Zakariah, Zainal, and Shariff, 2018) and across four sectors which are in the manufacturing, education, hospitality and health sectors (Kamaruddin, Omar, Shaladdin Muda, Saputra, and Ismail, 2017). Scare attention has been received by the manufacturing industry especially pertaining to individual work performance.

Although there are several local scholars whom have conducted study in Malaysia's manufacturing industry but there are differences in terms of individual work performance assessment, location settings and respondent's limitation. For example, research that has been carried out by Md. Amin and Abdul Majid (2017)

only focused in the northern part of Penang and the authors neglected task performance and behavioural constructs when assessing individual work performance among non-executives. Meanwhile, research conducted by Kamaruddin et al., (2017) lacked in the enrichment of data from manufacturing respondents and the respondents are only limited to female. While research conducted by Hee and Jing (2018) only focused on the manufacturing industry in the Southern area of Malaysia and the authors recommended future researcher to conduct research at the Malaysia central region.

Conceptually the assortment and interconnection of employee engagement towards individual work performance have been highlighted by (Anitha, 2014; Buil, Martinez and Matute, 2018; Soane et al., 2012). Besides that, the scholars stated that there are a small number of empirical studies had been done to examine the association of employee engagement and performance of the individual employee (Jurgita et al., 2018). In a study conducted by Kim, Kolb, and Kim (2013), the authors have reviewed 20 empirical studies relevant to the concept of employee engagement and performance of individual employee from out of 134 articles. They found that 11 studies have outlined direct or indirect association between employee engagement and employee performance. Meanwhile, seven studies have found that employee engagement mediates other variables and employee performance. All of the twenty researches were conducted in various location settings. Among them are United States, Netherlands, Italy, Australia, Ireland, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Greece, Portugal, China, Nigeria, Spain and Cameroon. However, most of the research focused on the educational sector, R&D sector, airline sector, fast food franchise, public sector and hotel sector. Due to the importance of employee engagement variable, this construct has gained attention and several past researchers have examined the role of employee engagement as mediator in their work such as (Alfes, Shantz, and Alahakone, 2016; Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014; Buil et al., 2018; Guan and Frenkel, 2018; Jurgita et al., 2018; Karatepe, 2013; Menguc et al., 2013; Nazir and Islam, 2017; Song et al., 2014). The role of employee engagement as a mediator might be appropriate in increasing the level of individual work performance.

In another perspective, the Self Determination Theory (SDT) is concerned with how a person interacts and it is depends on the social environment (Legault, 2019). Despite of this theory's importance which leads to a desirable performance, this theory receives minimal attention especially among local researchers. Others underpinning theories were used by previous researchers to respond to individual work performance such as expectancy theory and organization theory (Fauzilah et al., 2011; Zakariah et al., 2018). Meanwhile the viewpoint of Social Exchange Theory (SET) does not only influence the level of employee engagement but also produces good performance outcome (Yin, 2018). However, some local scholars have lacks explanation on how Social Exchange Theory influences employee engagement for instance the following work by (Nasurdin, Ling, and Khan, 2018; Rasli, Tat, Chin, and Khalaf, 2012). Therefore, the present research has identified the problem pertaining to declination of productivity per person, scarce attention given by researchers in the manufacturing industry in Malaysia, less explanation given from local scholars on Social Exchange Theory (SET), less adoption of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in individual work performance and lastly, some of scholars neglecting the task and behavioural assessment in assessing individual work performance. Based on the contextual, conceptual and theoretical issues, this research attempts to examine whether the predictor of talent competence and human resource management practices impact significantly towards individual work performance mediated with the role of employee engagement.

1.4 Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of talent competence and human resource management practices towards individual work performance mediated by employee engagement among employees in executive and managerial level at Malaysia manufacturing industry.

1.5 Research Objectives

This section explained and presented the details of the seven objectives for this research. There are four main constructs namely talent competence, human resource management practices, employee engagement, and individual work performance. Table 1.1 below shows the statement of objective that has been established in this research.

Table 1.1 List of objectives for this research

No	Research Objectives
O1	To examine the relationship between talent competence and individual work performance
O2	To examine the relationship between human resource management practices and individual work performance
O3	To examine the relationship between talent competence and employee engagement
O4	To examine the relationship between human resource management practices and employee engagement
O5	To examine the relationship between employee engagement and individual work performance
O6	To examine the mediating role of employee engagement between talent competence and individual work performance
O7	To examine the mediating role of employee engagement between human resource management practices and individual work performance

1.6 Research Questions

This section listed and presented the details of the research questions. There are four main constructs namely talent competence, human resource management practices, employee engagement and individual work performance. Table 1.2 below shows the list of research questions statement established in this research.

Table 1.2 List of research questions for this research

No	Research Questions
R1	Is there any relationship between talent competence and individual work performance?
R2	Is there any relationship between human resource management practices and individual work performance?
R3	Is there any relationship between talent competence and employee engagement?
R4	Is there any relationship between human resource management practices and employee engagement?
R5	Is there any relationship between employee engagement and individual work performance?
R6	Does employee engagement able to play mediating role between talent competence and individual work performance?
R7	Does employee engagement able to play mediating role between human resource management practices and individual work performance?

1.7 Research Significance

The main research purpose is to examine the impact of talent competence and human resource management practices on individual work performance. In addition, this research also examines the mediating role of employee engagement in mediating

the relationship between talent competence and human resource management practices on individual work performance. Therefore, the findings for this research are expected to provide relevant research significance to the body of knowledge and practical standpoint.

1.7.1 Body of Knowledge

Firstly, the significance of this research to the body of knowledge will add and expand the cause-effect knowledge on existing human resource management studies. The enhancement of the current knowledge includes the other latent variable such as talent competence, employee engagement and individual work performance. Besides that, a new insight has been added to the existing Self-Determination Theory for the use of future researcher and academicians. The existing self-determination model of flow by Bakker and Van Woerkom (2017) has highlighted three sub domain in personal resources such as self-efficacy, optimism and resilience. Thus, in this research, the latent construct of talent competence add to the existing theoretical perspective as the personal resources domain.

1.7.2 Practical Significance

In the first place from the practical standpoint, this study will benefit to the manufacturing industry especially in Malaysia by strategizing to increase the performance at the individual level. Current and future issues specifically in individual work performance should receive great attention from the human resource practitioners, employers and organizations. The behavioural and task performance should not be neglected by organization when assessing individual work performance, as it may provide positive impact for overall productivity capacity. Secondly, the talent competence, human resource management practices and employee engagement might become a potential source for organizations in responding towards the work performance at the individual level.

Thirdly, this study also enables the policymakers to revise their existing policy. Therefore, the current key performance indicator at the individual level can be revised and the assessment of individual employee should include the competence level, effectiveness of human resource management practices and assessment of employee engagement level. Lastly, this study significantly acknowledges the contribution of talent competence and human resource management practices to increase the individual work performance in realizing the industrial goal to increase the performance per person by 30 percent in 2025 as highlighted by the National Policy on Industry 4.0, (2018). Additionally, the construct of employee engagement as a mediator is tested to see the significance in the relationship. Thus, assessing individual work performance regularly would help manufacturing industry in transforming successfully by 2025 according to the targeted goals.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This research examines the relationship of talent competence and human resource management practices on individual work performance mediated by employee engagement in the Malaysia's manufacturing industry. In addition, the first scope of the research attempts to collect the perception of employees in the executive and managerial level only. Therefore, only employees in the executive and managerial level are chosen to participate in this research. The second scope of this research only focuses on the manufacturing industry. There are four manufacturing organizations across four subsectors which are chemical-based manufacturer, leather goods and footwear manufacturer, reproduction of recorded media and goods manufacturer and pharmaceutical-based manufactures. They have given their consent to participate in this research. The third scope of this research is the location settings. These organizations are mainly located only at the Klang Valley area (Kuala Lumpur and Selangor). Next scope is unit of analysis. This research focuses on the unit of analysis at an individual level among executive and managerial. Meanwhile, quantitative research approach is the fifth scope in this study. Last but not least, there are only four main variables used in this study namely talent competence, human

resource management practices, employee engagement and individual work performance.

1.9 Limitation of Study

All studies have limitations and there are three limitations have been found in this research. Firstly, the sample selected for this study was specifically for employees in the executive and managerial level at manufacturing who has been identified by their human resource department within the organization. Therefore, the result obtained in this research may have a limitation in the generalization of perception to other levels of employees and other industries. The second limitation is accessibility. During the data collection, the distribution of questionnaires are handed over to the human resource department. This is because only the human resource department has the authority and able to distribute to the targeted respondents. The third limitation, is the researcher facing difficulty in getting permission from some of the manufacturing organizations due to the confidentiality to disclose information related to individual work performance. Therefore, there are only four manufacturing organizations have given their consent to participate in this research. Thus, the details of the limitation for this study will be explained thoroughly in the Chapter 5.

1.10 Definition of Terms

Talent Competence

Gallardo-Gallardo et al., (2013) viewed talent as a select group of employees who demonstrate high levels of potential. The conceptualization of competence is believed belongs to a person and represent as their set of attributes that changing over a time as the individual employees growth or develop (Lester, 2014). The operational definition for talent competence is refers to employees who possess potential to occupy higher position in organization with strong leadership spirit and learning agility (Juhdi, Pa'wan, and Milah, 2012).

Learning Agility

For conceptual and operational definition, learning agility has been defined as the willingness and ability to learn new competencies from the past experience and consequently applying that learning to perform under first-time, tough or different conditions successfully (Lombardo, and Eichinger, 2000).

Leadership Spirit

For conceptual and operational definition, leadership spirit is defined as a leader that is motivating and inspiring employees through his or her strong vision (Smith, Minor, and Brashen, 2018).

Human Resource Management (HRM) Practices

Ganesan (2014) define human resource management as management function which involve in recruit, select, train, develop employees and as a process of getting efficiently the use of human resource to achieve the set goals. The operational definition for human resource management is refers to organizational activities which involves recruitment, selection, training, development, compensation and benefits (Fayez Hamed, Ramalu and Subramaniam, 2013).

Recruitment and Selection

For conceptual and operational definition, recruitment can be defined as the activities and practices that carried out by the organization as the fundamental step in attracting and identification of potential employees (Kianto, Sáenz, and Aramburu, 2017). Meanwhile, the selection is the step of prediction on selecting applicant that have the most possibility to succeed in that job position and best fit with the culture of the workplace (Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson, 2014).

Training and Development

For conceptual and operational definition, training and development can be defined as an attempt in filling the gaps needs of the individual to meet the knowledge and skills needed in performing their current job as well as for future needs (Ganesan, 2014).

Compensation and Benefits

For conceptual and operational definition, compensation and benefits is defined as the form of pay, incentives and benefits given to employees for performing the assigned job (Ganesan, 2014).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has been defined as the harnessing of organization members selves to their work role; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance (Kahn, 1990). The operational definition for employee engagement is refer as the role specific with respect to one's job and organization (Saks, 2006).

Job Engagement

For conceptual and operational definition, job engagement is associated with the work-related task that has been defined as the existing of energetic connection between employees and their job (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003).

Organization Engagement

For conceptual and operational definition, organization engagement can be define as the willingness to dedicate physical, cognitive and emotional resources to the organization and to one's work group or team (Saks and Gruman, 2014).

Individual Work Performance

Individual work performance was defined as the actions or behavioural that are relevant to the goals of the organization (Campbell, 1990). The operational definition for individual work performance is refer to the proficiency to which individual perform the tasks of his or her job and exhibit good behaviour that support the organization, social and psychological environment (Koopmans et al., 2014).

Task Performance

For conceptual and operational definition, Borman and Motowidlo (1993) defined the task performance construct as the proficiency with which the job incumbents perform activities, which are formally recognized as part of their jobs.

Contextual Performance

For conceptual and operational definition, contextual performance is defined as the behaviour that affecting the organizational, social and psychological context, where the work is performed (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993).

1.11 Thesis Organization

This section elaborates briefly the organization of thesis according to the five chapters. There are a total of five chapters:

- (a) Chapter 1 : Introduction
- (b) Chapter 2 : Literature Review
- (c) Chapter 3 : Research Methodology
- (d) Chapter 4 : Data Analysis and Results

(e) Chapter 5 : Discussion and Conclusion

Chapter 1 presented the introductory and foundation of the research. In this chapter, several subsections have been highlighted to provide detail of clarification. For example, the subsection includes the background of study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, research hypotheses, the significance of study, scope of study, limitation of the study, definition of constructs terminology, organization of thesis and lastly the summary of chapter one.

Chapter 2 presented the literature review as the work from the past scholars in the similar field of area. In this chapter, several subsections have been established to give a clear understanding of the previous work that has been done and clarifies on the basic foundation for this research. There four main constructs studied in this research namely talent competence, human resource management practices, employee engagement and individual work performance. This chapter also has continuously explained on each generation of hypothesis, underpinning theories, research gap, integrative framework of research and finally, the summary of the chapter.

Chapter 3 presented the research methodological stance of this study. In this chapter, several subsections have detailed explained on the process and systematic plan to conduct the study. The subsection includes research philosophy, approach of quantitative, research design, research population, sampling method, sample size, unit analysis, type of data, research methodology stages and finally, summary of the chapter.

Chapter 4 presented the data analysis and result attained from this research. In this chapter, several subsections have been established to give a clear understanding on each assessment taken during the data analysis step. There are two main statistical softwares employed in this study which are IBM SPSS software and SmartPLS version 3.2.7 software. This chapter also has continuously explained on

each assessment, indication of acceptance or rejection of hypothesis and finally, the summary of chapter.

Chapter 5 presented the discussion and conclusion. This chapter also discussed the attained results obtained and provided further justification which has been highlighted from the previous work of literature. In this chapter, several subsections have been established such as discussion on the results, implication of theoretical and practical of the research, limitation of the research, recommendation for future research and finally, the summary of chapter.

1.12 Summary of Chapter

This chapter outlines the introduction of this research by presenting the research background and rationale of the present study. Apart from that, this chapter also helps to set up the fundamental steps for this research based on the relevant information presented in the subsection of problem statement and background of the study. This chapter also consequently describing the research objectives of the study. Besides that, the researcher also has presented the research questions and research hypotheses. The hypotheses are generated based on the previous work of literature and the details are explained in Chapter 2. There are several following subsections have been established to explain the foundation of this research such as significance of study, scope of study, limitation of study and definition of terms. Next chapter two, researcher will outline and present the review of literature from past work. Chapter 2 will presents a critical review related to each construct, explain underpinning theories in details, and illustrate conceptual framework.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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2. Harun, N. H., Mahmood, N. H. N., & **Othman, S. A.** (2019). The Effectiveness of Talent Management Practice among Teachers in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(6), 1104–1120.
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