

Malaysian Gen Y's Work Behaviours and Attitudes towards Job Retention and Career Advancement

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Lay-Hwa Yeap¹, Su-Hie Ting^{2,*}, Kien-Bee Ooi³

¹ Politeknik Seberang Perai, Jalan Permatang Pauh, 13500 Permatang Pauh, Penang, Malaysia

² Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 4300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia

³ School of Electrical System Engineering, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Pauh Putra Main Campus, 02600 Arau, Perlis, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Gen Y behaviours in the workplace have been much written about based on observations and studies in Western settings but little is known about Gen Y in Asian work contexts, particularly in the context of employee retention and turnover. This study examined Malaysian polytechnic graduates' work behaviours and attitudes towards job retention and career advancement. Through a questionnaire survey of 195 polytechnic graduates, the study showed that the polytechnic graduates are a homogeneous group. There were no significant differences in the work behaviours and attitudes of female and male polytechnic graduates. No significant differences were found for ethnic groups. They frequently sought guidance and feedback on their work, needed project deadline extensions, worked in groups, and expected positive comments on their work performance. The results showed that monetary incentives is the main motivating factor for them to stay at their current job, work hard and not change jobs. A collegial workplace with a good supervisor and enjoyable work with flexible work hours play some role in employee retention where Gen Y is concerned. However, the prestige and convenient location of a company cannot retain them in their present or future job. A majority of them expected to be promoted within two years of service and every two to three years. The findings suggest that a fast-track promotion and an attractive salary are critical factors in the attempt to understand the connection between Gen Y's work behaviours and career advancement expectations in the context of employee retention and turnover.

Keywords:

Generation Y, work behaviour, attitudes,
job retention, career advancement

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1. Introduction

With the entry of Gen Y into the workplace in the past one and a half decade, there is now a multi-generational workforce with Gen X and Baby Boomers managing or working alongside Gen Y. This paper uses the age categorisation as follows: Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964, aged 54-72), Gen X (born 1965-1979, aged 39-53), and Gen Y (born 1980-2000, aged 18-38) [1-4]. The generational

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: suhieting@gmail.com (Su-Hie Ting)