

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**MALAYSIAN GENERATION Y
EMPLOYEES' LEADERSHIP
PREFERENCE IN THE PRIVATE
SECTOR: AN EXPLORATORY
QUALITATIVE STUDY**

SHARIZAN BT SHARKAWI

Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Business and Management

November 2018

CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS

I certify that a Panel of Examiners has met on 7th June 2018 to conduct the final examination of Sharizan Bt Sharkawi on her **Doctor of Philosophy** thesis entitled “Malaysian Generation Y Employees’ Leadership Preference in the Private Sector: An Exploratory Qualitative Study” in accordance with Universiti Teknologi MARA Act 1976 (Akta 173). The Panel of Examiner recommends that the student be awarded the relevant degree. The Panel of Examiners was as follows:

Ismail Ahmad, PhD
Professor
Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School
Universiti Teknologi MARA
(Chairman)

Saridan Abu Bakar, PhD
Associate Professor
Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School
Universiti Teknologi MARA
(Internal Examiner)

Haslinda Abdullah @ Betsy Bennet, PhD
Professor
Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia
(External Examiner)


Ioanna Papolomou, PhD
Professor
University of Nicosia, Cyprus
(External Examiner)

**PROF SR TS DR HAJI ABDUL
HADI HAJI NAWAWI**
Dean
Institute of Graduates Studies
Universiti Teknologi MARA
Date: 07 November 2018

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

Name of Student : Sharizan Bt Sharkawi
Student I.D. No. : 2014811888
Programme : Doctor of Philosophy (Human Resource Management)
– BM950
Faculty : Business and Management
Thesis Title : Malaysian Generation Y Employees' Leadership
Preference in the Private Sector: An Exploratory
Qualitative Study
Signature of Student : 

Date : November 2018

ABSTRACT

The current workforce in Malaysia is experiencing changing employee demographics. Generation Y, those age 34 years and below (born in 1980 – 1999), makes up nearly half of the labour force today. They are playing a vital role in the Malaysian labour market by helping to spearhead the country's future economic growth. However, a dilemma confronting leaders today is the limited understanding when leading the Gen Y and ironically the organisation's future vitality is dependent on its ability to work effectively with Gen Ys. There have been numerous feedbacks on Gen Y not staying long in organisations making job retention a challenge. Although the study of leadership has been well established over the centuries, the generational preferences of leadership particularly of the Gen Ys' have been overlooked in the research and literature of leadership studies. Thus, the main aim of this study was to explore the leadership preference of Malaysian Gen Y employees in the private sector. A qualitative approach was employed as an attempt to understand the phenomena from the Malaysian Gen Y employees' perspective. Data were gathered from ten (10) participants who were purposely selected using a criterion-based selection. In-depth semi structured interviews were conducted with the intention to obtain real life experiences of the participants. Data analysis was conducted using the grounded theory analytical procedure in which an inductive analysis strategy was employed to generate the patterns, themes, and categories derived from the data itself. Findings from this research suggest that the Malaysian Gen Y employees interviewed preferred leaders who demonstrate both transformational and servant leadership at the same time – a hybridisation of leadership theory, TransServe Model. They desire leaders with the following qualities: (i) competent and knowledgeable; (ii) give guidance and develop employees; (iii) personable and caring; (iv) trust and respectful of others; (v) provide direction; and (vi) lead by example. Contributions of this study include recommendations for leaders and HR practitioners on guidelines to managing the Gen Y employees more effectively and to the body of leadership knowledge specifically on the Generation Y Malaysian employees in the private sector workplaces.

Keywords: Leadership; Generation Y, Malaysian, Qualitative Research, Transformational Leadership, Servant Leadership,

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS | ii |
| AUTHOR'S DECLARATION | iii |
| ABSTRACT | iv |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | v |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | vi |
| LIST OF TABLES | xii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xiii |
| | |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background of Study | 1 |
| 1.2 Problem Statement | 3 |
| 1.3 Research Questions | 6 |
| 1.4 Research Objectives | 6 |
| 1.5 Significance of Study | 7 |
| 1.6 Nature and Structure of Study | 8 |
| 1.7 Scope of Study | 9 |
| 1.8 Limitations of Study | 10 |
| 1.9 Definition of Terms | 10 |
| 1.10 Organisation of the Thesis | 11 |
| | |
| CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW | 12 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 12 |
| 2.2 Generational Theory | 12 |
| 2.2.1 Baby Boomer | 14 |
| 2.2.2 Generation X | 15 |
| 2.2.3 Generation Y | 16 |
| 2.3 Leadership Paradigms | 18 |