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## **Talent management practices impact on Malaysian SMI managers job performance**

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Ravichandran Ceyon Krishnan,  
Al Mansor Abu Said,  
Mohd Rizal Abdul Razak and  
Elsadig Musa Ahmed\*

Faculty of Business,  
Multimedia University,  
75450, Melaka, Malaysia  
Email: raviceyon@gmail.com  
Email: almansor.abu.said@mmu.edu.my  
Email: mrizal@mmu.edu.my  
Email: elsadig1965@gmail.com

\*Corresponding author

**Abstract:** This study illustrates the influence of utilisation of human capital management practices via talent management practices (TMP) that influences managers' job performance in the Malaysia's manufacturing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that is called small and medium industries (SMIs). This study modifies the Mitchel's job performance motivation model by including new variables that had been ignored by previous studies. 300 questionnaires had been collected, and the study employed partial least squares (PLS) for primary data analysis to test the model. The study limits itself in the scope of making out most of the managers' TMP within the perimeter of manufacturing SMEs in Malaysia. This was due to the fact that the specific needs of manufacturing are different than other sectors such as mining, quarrying, construction, services and primary agriculture. This study contributes significantly to the effect of moderating role of TMP that could influence Malaysia's manufacturing SMEs managers' job performance.

**Keywords:** talent management practices impact; job performance; Malaysia's SMEs; manufacturing industries.

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**Biographical notes:** Ravichandran Ceyon Krishnan is a PhD student in the Faculty of Business, Multimedia University, Malaysia. He worked in several companies before he joined his PhD.

Al Mansor Abu Said is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Business, Multimedia University, Malaysia. He worked in some Malaysian universities before joining Multimedia University.

Mohd Rizal Abdul Razak is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Business and Melaka Campus Director of Multimedia University, Malaysia.

Elsadig Musa Ahmed is a Professor of Economics and Technology Management in Multimedia University (MMU) senate member, MMU research and ethics, board of postgraduates, panel of research grants and students' disciplinary committees' member.

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## **1 Introduction**

The people development has experienced several management forms throughout the human history, The body managed the people relationship with their employers was called personal affairs up 1990s, then; the term changed to human resources management (HRM) as this relationship is very important in making the difference in the human skills development. Is the human skills associated with the instinctual capital the term has been changed to human capital management (HCM) due to its significant importance to make the difference in the business growing and development same as the physical capital that is based on technology contribution. Recently, due to significant importance of people management most of the multinational companies (MNCs) changed the term from HCM to talent management (TM). In this respect, employees' development is one of the most important functions of HRM and therefore it means to progress the capabilities of an individual employee and organisation as in general. Therefore, employee development involves individual or employee overall growth of the employees as when employees of the organisation would develop the organisation, the organisation would be more prospered. As a result, the employee performance would increase and their work ability increases intellectual capital (Hameed, 2011; Zhao and Thompson, 2019). Due to vast acknowledgment of positive intellectual capital role in the developed world, a flourishing track of research has started to explore the concept of intellectual capital in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operating in developing and under-developing countries and the proactive management of intellectual capital considered to be a vital element of success for individuals and organisations (Rohana et al., 2017).

This study stresses the influence of TM on managers' job performance in Malaysian small and medium industries (SMIs) as part important part of Malaysia's SMEs, focusing on the manufacturing sector. This due to micro and small-medium enterprises as the main engine of growth, whereby it contributes to job opportunities creation, free market competition and continual innovation (Hari et al., 2012). In this context, Malaysian SMIs play a major role in contributing to overall manufacturing output, complementary to large organisations such as MNCs and consequently along the way help rural industries, and hence reducing the income distribution parity; assuring more equitable national revenue and wealth dissemination (Radam et al., 2008). Besides, Malaysia recognises TM's importance and as one of the most developing countries in Asia, believes a knowledge-based workforce is very critical, particularly in the manufacturing sector (Hari et al., 2012). Despite knowing this, in most business organisations, talented managers are scarce; and as a result, manufacturing sector may have a real problem in competing to move forward, be a global contender and profitable entity (Beechler and Woodward, 2009). SMIs are the utmost dynamic rising power in the entire nations, playing a major part in commercial progress and well-thought-out the strength of manufacturing growth (Moghavvemi et al., 2011). Therefore, competent managers are the

main thrust to develop their subordinates' highest level performance must be readily available to meet a country's economic agenda.

It should be recalled that previous research had identified TM as one of the drivers of organisations' success such as Lockwood (2006). Most of the studies acknowledged effective TM practice is crucial towards successful, organised enterprise, profitable, globally competitive and motivated workforce formation (Cappelli, 2008; Hamid et al., 2011); however, the studies did not scrutinise this relationship about why TM is a determining factor of good organisations' performance. In another study, it was mentioned that the ineffectiveness of TM was due to inappropriate talent management practices (TMP) (Kamil et al., 2011).

The purpose of this research is to determine how the use of the HRM strategy via TMP impacts managers' performance in Malaysia's SMIs. Social exchange theory (Cropanzano, 2005), has been applied and examined to measure TM practices influences on managers' job performance in Malaysia's SMIs based on the study under taken by Breznik et al. (2012). In this respect, this study contributes to the body of knowledge through modification of Motivation Theory developed by van der Merwe (2008) as the fundamental framework for employee job performance and, the motivating factors that spurs managers' job performance in the organisations.

Although TM practice is considered as a key element for managers' job performance outcomes, yet the impact of this practice on their job performance that prompts to better individual and organisational achievement was not studied comprehensively. Notwithstanding, the significance of SMIs and its part as a key contributor to Malaysia's economic well-being it should studied. It should be noted that empirical research in Malaysia's SMIs in the area of managers' job performance, TM practices being a moderating role remain lacking as explained by Wasim and Khan (2014). Therefore, this research attempts to fill this gap with support of empirical data in the case of Malaysia's SMIs. Accordingly, the relationship between proper TM practices and these individuals job performance in SMIs brought out to the fore and capitalised on.

Moreover, from the theoretical standpoint, job performance mirrored as an important research agenda for an individual to raise competencies for better performance. There are few studies have investigated the TM practices as moderating factor and independent variable based on motivation theory and social exchange theory. Additionally, job performance support conditions which involved industry professional, such as managerial level employees were urged to be further examined.

Furthermore, Van Rooiji (2012) suggested that several topics stay under-research in the area of TM practices in the individual, organisation and macro-contextual features. It should be noted that Donald (2014) called for strong participatory leadership, organisational full participation, employee engagement to make sure robustness for long-term growth in workforce performance. Besides, job performance model with moderating relationship of TM practices has fewer indicators or characteristics being empirically measured in the earlier research (Al et al., 2014). Henceforward, unpaid attention was given to these research gaps in this study.

Finally, this research endeavours to examine at the contributing elements that influence managers' job performance; the most significant variables that explained greater variance that influence managers' job performance and how TM practices moderate the relationship between the selected independent variables and managers' performance. As such this study tries to answer such research questions, henceforth,

endeavours to plug up the understanding cavity in the specific context of subjective managers' job performance in the Malaysian SMIs. Further, the research objective of this study is to focus on addressing the issues of TM practices, individual characteristic, organisational related characteristics, and macro-related characteristics on managers' performance in SMIs manufacturing companies in Malaysia. In this respect, the general objective is to establish the effect of TM practices on subjective manager's job performance in SMIs manufacturing companies in Malaysia. The specific objectives are:

- 1 To examine the influence of individual related factors (motivation, developing the skill of others, delegating), organisational related factors (organisational culture, organisation interaction) and macro related factors (organisation goal, organisation processes, talent mindset) of Malaysia manufacturing managers' job performance.
- 2 To identify the most significant factor that influence managers' job performance in Malaysian SMIs in the manufacturing sector.
- 3 To investigate the moderating effect of TMP on the relationship between individual related factors, organisational related factors, macro related factors and managers' job performance.

## **2 Literature review**

The main idea of using TMP and selected factors explaining managers' job performance in Malaysia's SMIs to be used as a base for the construction and explanation of this research design and therefore the argument and discussion encompass an area directly related to the variables of interest.

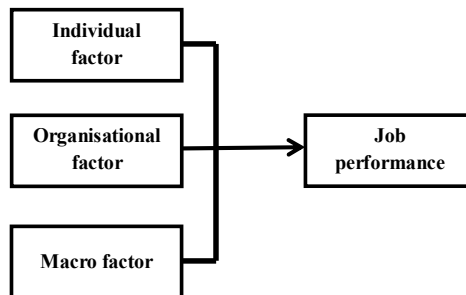
### *2.1 Job performance conceptual framework*

After studying and looking at the various concepts and model of job performance from the past research (Sonnentag and Frese, 2002), the study concluded that the three different perspectives conceptual framework is suitable to investigate the influence of various drivers of job performance. It is conceptualised from the studies done by Yuki and Becker (2006) and Ventresca (2014) from individual perspective which consists of individual abilities (attributes) and traits such motivation (being motivated and motivating others), developing skills of others and delegating that possess leadership tasks and behaviour where amount of guidance and direction provided as part of social support extended to subordinates will eventually lead to better performance or outcome. This is to say that job performance is the way employee performs their work taking into account the above-mentioned factors in the form of leadership skills, individual abilities and organisation skills.

As for the next driver, Alvi et al. (2014), Darijani et al. (2014) and MacIntosh and Doherty (2010) conceptualised organisational related factors or organisational level factors such as culture system and organisational dimensions have impact on employee job performance and level of job satisfaction where refers to behaviour that employees do in their job performance that influences and create a feeling of job done well (Mehdi et al., 2013; Platis et al., 2015). Lastly, the macro related dimensions that feature the

organisation's strategy, structures and contingencies when clearly set and appropriately in-place will direct the employees' efforts and tasks on hand towards producing better work performance (Beeson, 2005; Farndale et al., 2014; Garvin, 1998). The macro process management perspective calls for adequate structures and contingencies for the process-oriented organisation, contribute to individual learning and further development of an organisational culture that leads to individual motivation to perform well in his/her job (Druckman, 2003). The dimensions are organisational processes, organisational goal, and talent mindset. Figure 1 depicts the framework conceptualised for this study, specifically for the managerial jobs.

**Figure 1** A conceptual framework for job performance



It should be recalled that TM concept is nothing new but is an extension of HRM practices (Horner-Smith, 2014). TM is often denoted to as HCM, is the method of hiring, dealing, gauging, evolving and preserving an establishment's utmost essential source – people, therefore it is technically a structure of firmly unified human resource (HR) process that could support in creating learned judgements that backing organisations planned objective to be cost-effective and fruitful (Khatri et al., 2010). Moreover, Schreier and Prügel (2008) elaborated three set of observes that involve utmost TM accomplishments and they were recruiting, enrolment and progression development; training and growth and retaining administration which work well for MNCs, however, this was not studied for SMEs, and specified to the manufacturing sector. Even though this process on a bigger scale are mostly carried out by the HRs functional personnel of late individual management personals too are subjected to at least have some knowledge, understanding, and ability to perform TM practices to certain extend to achieve the best performance results with the guide of HRM, nevertheless. This is because enabling managers to perform TM activities that directly influence employee engagement and productivity requires TM process or practices to be well understood so as to truly able to manage them, i.e., the employees direct under these managers (Stewart et al., 2017). Moreover, by possessing pivotal talent, a person who has niche abilities that others don't have, therefore add value to the organisation or department he/she is serving definitely enhances leaders' perception of job performance to a higher level, which is also revealed by Jooss (2018). Based on PI (2019) three new TM trends to kick off in 2019 that accessed online in 12th April 2019, it has been found that organisations with a clear talent strategy outperform those without one. Through a substantial quantity of information, initiatives, and opportunities for organisations to circumnavigate nowadays, the requirement for a talent strategy appears superior to ever. Hitherto, if our circumstantial

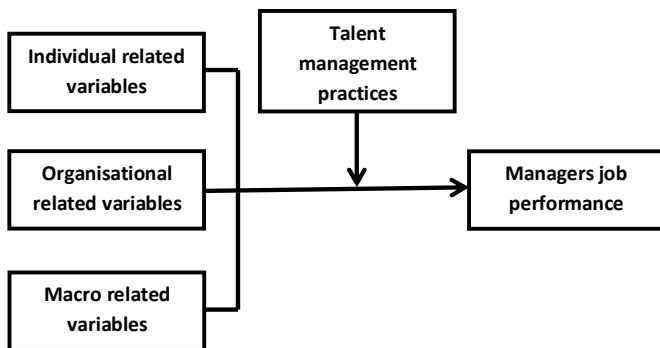
signal is any sign, a minority of companies have capitalised in emerging one. As organisations start to transfer forward in 2019, now could be a great time to consider TM strategy to be main driver of the companies towards better job performance and new innovation that is highly needed for the progress of the companies.

As business organisations attempt to achieve their business goals, they must ensure that they have an unbroken and cohesive method for employing, teaching, handling, assistant, and pay compensation to their employees (Bersin, 2006). TM was seen as process involving workforce planning where it is integrated with business plan, employment strategies, payment resources, and employing goals meant for the year; employing, assess, evaluation and hiring to bring in the people into the organisation. As well as on-boarding selected employees and enable them to be productive and blend into the company as quick as possible; performance monitoring and management where employee performance is measured; provide training and performance support through learning and growth programs; progression development as the association develops and changes; compensation and benefits where organisation ties compensation with their performance level; and critical skill gaps analysis. Hence following Stahl et al. (2012) study, this research conceptualises TM practices into seven strategies. They are attracting, recruiting, engaging employees, retaining employees, evaluating TM programs, rewarding employees, and learning and development. As TM grows as philosophy and practice through nations and developing marketplace (Thunnissen, 2015), there is a need to provide a stable theoretical foundation. Therefore, this research provides a link to conceptualise TM practices element for managers’ job performance confines within the context of Malaysia SMIs.

*2.2 The moderating variable – TMP*

The moderating variable of TM practices explains how and why moderator becomes part of the research. This study is concerned in examining the effects of sets of independent variables. They are the Individual related variables, organisational related variables and macro related variables on managers’ performance. TM practices are hypothesised as the moderators (Figure 2). As an example, the relationship between individual related variables and managers work performance are posited to be stronger when moderated with TMP ability or competency.

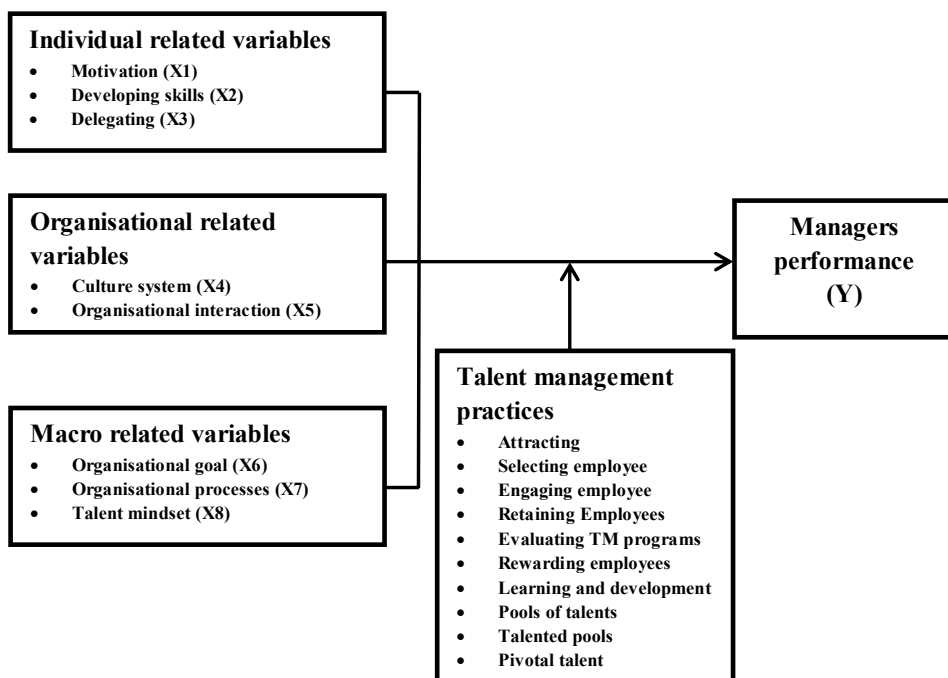
**Figure 2** Moderating effects of TMP



### 3 Research methodology

The framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 3 that shows the point of the moderator variables (TMP), the independent variables and their relationship with manager job performance. The organisations of research variables are within the study goals. This study outline describes the groupings of input variables and output variables that the study applied. Moreover, Imenda (2014) revealed that the study structure as an arrangement that delivers ‘guidance’ for scholar as study enquiries are perfected, procedures for assessing variables are carefully chosen, examined and subsequently after data are solicited and examined, the outline is employed as a reflect to verify whether the outcomes reach agreement with the outline or there are certain inconsistencies.

**Figure 3** The study framework



#### 3.1 Research design and procedures

There are two approaches to data analysis. They are quantitative and qualitative analysis (Khalid et al., 2012). These researchers demonstrated that quantitative research relies on deduction reasoning. It make uses of diverse of measureable examination procedures that range from offering modest expressive of the variables having part in and hence forming numerical connections amongst variables through intricate statistical modelling. Therefore, numerical investigation demands for archetypal study strategies where the emphasis of the research is to define, clarify and envisage occurrences, employing probability sampling and depend on superior sample sizes as likened to qualitative study strategies, hence by means of specific approaches and methods, quantitative research

quantifies relationship amongst different variables (Khalid et al., 2012). Meanwhile, qualitative research uses inductive perceptive and its objective is to obtain and deep knowledge of human conduct and the reasoning of that conduct (Khalid et al., 2012) and as such it can be termed as interpretative study as its main aim is not oversimplification but to offer profound clarification of the occurrences and as such this research method is used in social science and field investigation where the goal is to inquiry human conducts and traits.

In this respect, the quantitative analysis has been found the most appropriate method for followings:

- 1 It permits the analysis of the variables by means of the statistical instrument, whereby this agrees with the main aim of this study, which is to inspect the association amongst individual related variables, organisation related variables, and macro related variables, TM competencies, and managers' job performance satisfaction.
- 2 It allows the usage of regular and prescribed collections of a survey to be disseminated to the entire target population.
- 3 It lets the study to be conducted on a big sample which can be general to the entire populace; further, quantitative is also neutral in nature.

Therefore, this research is correlational in nature because the main goal was to recognise the variables that could inspire manager performance. Hence, correlational studies are typically done for two reasons (Khalid et al., 2012):

- 1 to describe the variance in the dependent variable
- 2 to provide the understanding of the nature of the certain association between two or more variables.

### *3.2 Research questions*

The study was mainly constructed to unearth answers from the following questions:

- 1 How individual variables, organisational variables, and macro do have affected managers' job performance?
- 2 What are the variables that explained greater variance in factors that influence managers' job performance?
- 3 How TM practices moderate the relationship between selected independent variables (individual variables, organisational variables and macro) and the dependent variable (managers' job performance)?

### *3.3 The population of study*

The population in this research included of managers of SMISs of the manufacturing sector in Malaysia. However, the samples are drawn from SMIS managers from selected industrial location in Selangor, Johor, Penang, and Perak as these states are the main locations of SME organisation in Malaysia and more or fewer managers from these



SMEs reflect almost identical task, job structure and manufacturing environment setup, as well similar mindset conditioning.

### *3.4 Sample size determination*

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), sample sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 appropriate for most research. Sampling is important process to support survey success. Thus, much of the literature involves higher sampling numbers to help get more feedback. Therefore, the current study distributed enough questionnaires to help to get more feedback, and the type of sampling is simple random sampling. This research employs G \* Power analysis tool with the following options for fixing the total number of respondent requirement. The minimum is 160 respondents and the maximum is 256.

Looking at the vast physical location of SMIs throughout Malaysia, it warrants for stratified sampling technique. As the SMIs are distributed all over Malaysia, sample selection is done based on the geographical location where higher concentrations of manufacturing sector SMIs are situated. East Malaysian SMIs are excluded in this study due to physical constraint and economic reasons. This covers manufacturing hotspot area in Malaysia where many SMIs are located. In West Malaysian (Peninsular Malaysia) states such as Johor, Selangor, Kedah, Perak, Federal Territory (Kuala Lumpur) and Penang were selected for this study. This selection was done due to free trade zone (FTZ) economic area where many manufacturing companies are operating in these zones.

### *3.5 Data collection method*

As decided for this study, the sample is a target for middle managers of manufacturing sector SMIs which were identified from a number of locations within Peninsular Malaysia. These managers are outreached through the following ways:

- 1 E-mail survey form deliverance from contacts obtained from several professional consultants such as trainers, quality and management consultants who used to service these SMIs as their customers.
- 2 A direct approach to manufacturing SMIs at the identified industrial area. Survey forms were handed to HR department whom then distribute to sectional/organisational departments managers to be filled up accordingly.
- 3 Existing contacts of managers from e-mail list from previous working peers in the manufacturing sector.

As a set of 300 questionnaires were handed out to these respondents. HR departments of these SMIs were briefed to provide survey forms to middle managers that are confirmed staff in their organisation and gather back the filled-up survey forms. A representative of the HR personnel was informed to explain to respondents on the purpose of the study; the significance of their participation as respondent and most importantly on the confidentiality of data they had provided and further clarified that the whole process is for academic purposes only.

#### 4 Structural equation modelling (partial least square)

The current study used structural equation modelling (partial least square) or SEM (PLS) analysis to test the hypotheses. Therefore, it has used measured model and structural model. Hence, the measured model show the relationship constructs and the variable indicators, and the structural model shows the relationship between variables (Hair et al., 2012).

As previously stated, the measured model is the first step of SMART PLS analysis and it starts to establish the reliability and validity, therefore in this respect, it is stated that measured model evaluation is made in terms of reliability indicator, internal consistency, convergent validity and discriminant validity. Therefore, in the current data analysis, the whole constructs were analysed in reflective model and formative model did not have any meaning in this analysis.

The measurement model is verified in terms of convergent and discriminant validity. The convergent validity is made known with the probing the factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). Traditionally ‘Cronbach alpha’ is utilised internal consistency reliability in social science investigation but it inclines to offer a traditional measurement in PLS-SEM Past literature has recommended application of ‘CR’ as an alternative (Hair et al., 2012). Nevertheless, Cronbach alpha is reported in this study as well as the CR.

**Table 1** Cronbach alpha, CR and AVE

	<i>Cronbach alpha</i>	<i>RHO_A</i>	<i>Composite reliability</i>	<i>Average variant extracted (AVE)</i>
Culture system	0.768	0.799	0.841	0.518
Job performance	0.798	0.829	0.86	0.558
Delegating	0.768	0.773	0.843	0.519
Developing skill	.0711	0.867	0.833	0.51
Motivation	0.825	0.846	0.874	0.581
Org goal	0.834	0.87	0.877	0.588
Org interaction	0.804	0.815	0.864	0.56
Org process	0.76	0.768	0.839	0.511
Talent mindset	0.856	1.036	0.887	0.613

According Hair et al. (2014), who stated that factor loadings which are lower than 0.40 should be deleted. In this research all the factor loadings are greater than the minimum acceptable level of 0.40. Therefore it exhibits the reliability of the measurement scale. From Table 1, the results show Cronbachs alpha, RHO\_A, CR and AVE. AVE is superior to the acceptable limit of 0.5 and that the CR is also higher than the recommended between 0.7 and 0.9 which suggested that the parameter estimates are sound. This shows that the parameters have sufficient convergent validity) as shown in Table 2 show the measurement of factor loading.

**Table 2** The measurement model

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Loadings</i>
Culture system (CS)	cs1	0.849
	cs2	0.801
	cs3	0.671
	cs4	0.63
	cs5	0.618
Delegating (Del)	d1	0.663
	d2	0.777
	d3	0.68
	d4	0.692
	d5	0.781
Motivation (MTV)	mtv1	0.783
	mtv2	0.782
	mtv3	0.761
	mtv4	0.793
	mtv5	0.686
Developing skill (DS)	do1	0.49
	do2	0.567
	do3	0.74
	do4	0.86
	do5	0.836
Organisational goal (OG)	og1	0.765
	og2	0.743
	og3	0.8
	og4	0.805
	og5	0.718
Organisational interaction (OI)	oi1	0.762
	oi2	0.777
	oi3	0.761
	oi4	0.777
	oi5	0.656

Notes: Average variance extracted (AVE) = (summation of the square of the factor loadings) / {summation of the square of the factor loadings} + (summation of error variance)}.

Composite reliability (CR) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings) / {(square of the summation of the factor loadings) + (summation of error variance)}.

*Source:* Developed by the author using data from SmartPLS v.3.2

**Table 2** The measurement model (continued)

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Loadings</i>
Organisational process (OP)	op1	0.736
	op2	0.764
	op3	0.688
	op4	0.762
	op5	0.614
Talent mindset (TM)	tm1	0.645
	tm2	0.736
	tm3	0.809
	tm4	0.82
	tm5	0.882
Job performance (JP)	jp1	0.836
	jp2	0.811
	jp3	0.765
	jp4	0.765
	jp5	0.514

Notes: Average variance extracted (AVE) = (summation of the square of the factor loadings) / {summation of the square of the factor loadings} + (summation of error variance)}.

Composite reliability (CR) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings) / {(square of the summation of the factor loadings) + (summation of error variance)}.

*Source:* Developed by the author using data from SmartPLS v.3.2

#### 4.1 Discriminant validity

The discriminant validity of the measures (to show that measures that should not be related are in reality not related or the degree to which the items differentiate amongst the constructs or measure distinct concepts) is evaluated using the criteria established by Fornell and Larker (1981) of comparing the correlations between the constructs and the squared root of the AVE (Henseler et al., 2014). Table 3 shows the Fornell-Larker criterion analysis for checking discriminant validity.

Moreover, Henseler et al. (2014) show by method of a reproduction research that Fornell-Larker criterion and cross loading do not reliably detect the lack of discriminant validity in common research situations. So, they propose an alternative approach, based on multi-trait multi-method matrix to assess discriminant validity: the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation. If the value of HTMT is below 0.90, discriminant validity has been recognised amongst two reflective constructs. Table 4 show the HTMT results.

**Table 3** Fornell-Larker criterion analysis for checking discriminant validity

	<i>CS</i>	<i>JP</i>	<i>Del</i>	<i>DS</i>	<i>MTV</i>	<i>OG</i>	<i>OI</i>	<i>OP</i>	<i>TM</i>
CS	<i>0.72</i>								
JP	0.525	<i>0.747</i>							
Del	0.147	0.236	<i>0.72</i>						
DS	0.119	0.169	0.423	<i>0.714</i>					
MTV	0.175	0.24	0.079	0.141	<i>0.762</i>				
OG	0.368	0.414	0.118	0.101	0.107	<i>0.767</i>			
OI	0.306	0.421	0.226	0.071	0.007	0.286	<i>0.748</i>		
OP	0.377	0.547	0.16	0.139	0.076	0.399	0.366	<i>0.715</i>	
TM	0.218	0.257	0.202	0.15	0.064	0.103	0.252	0.22	<i>0.783</i>

Notes: Values in the diagonal (italic) represent the square root of the AVE while to of-diagonals represent the latent variable correlations (LVC). Square root of AVE > LVC, so discriminant validity is met.

Source: Developed by author using data from SmartPLSv.3.2

**Table 4** HTMT analysis

	<i>CS</i>	<i>JP</i>	<i>Del</i>	<i>DS</i>	<i>MTV</i>	<i>OG</i>	<i>OI</i>	<i>OP</i>	<i>TM</i>
CS									
JP	0.638								
Del	0.21	0.312							
DS	0.208	0.215	0.501						
MTV	0.224	0.272	0.197	0.287					
OG	0.442	0.464	0.166	0.204	0.142				
OI	0.38	0.508	0.283	0.116	0.101	0.334			
OP	0.493	0.683	0.205	0.165	0.141	0.486	0.463		
TM	0.262	0.249	0.232	0.161	0.089	0.12	0.273	0.251	

## 5 Structural model assessment

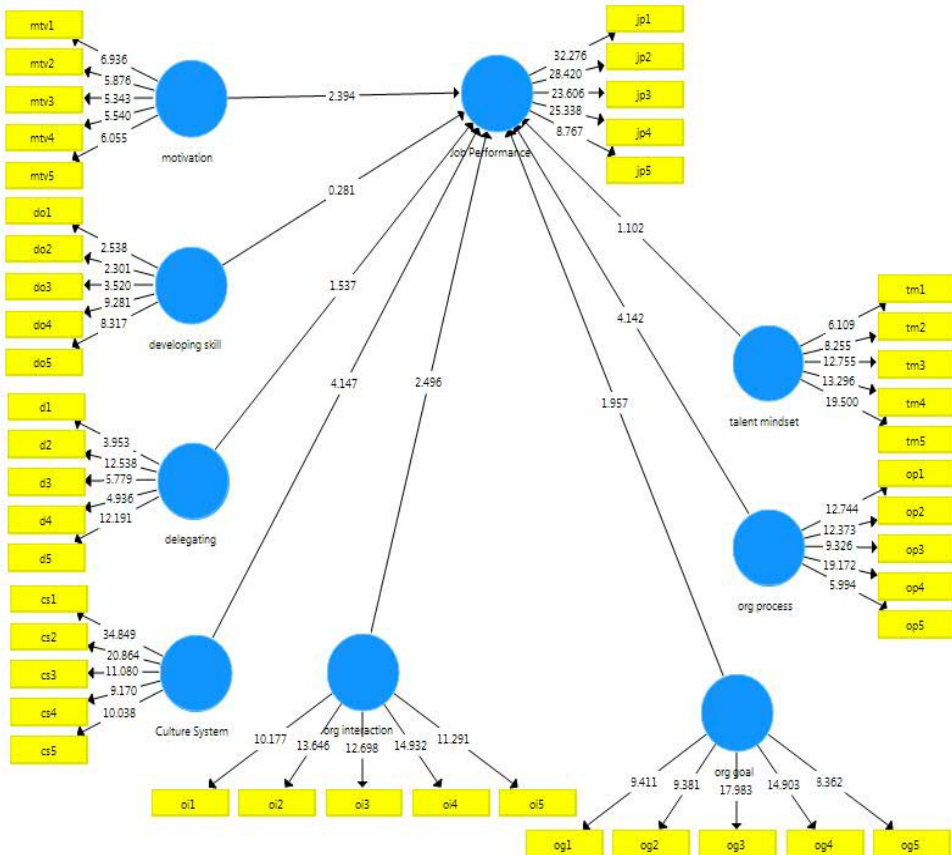
In evaluating collinearity among exogenous constructs, Table 5 shows the collinearity results from using culture system delegating, developing skill of others, motivation, organisation goal, organisation interaction, organisational process and talent mindset as predictors of job performance. It should be recalled that Hair et al. (2011) suggested 5 as the minimum threshold for detecting multicollinearity among indicators. In this study the results show that all VIFs are well below the threshold of 5. Hence, collinearity among the predictor constructs is not a problem in the structural model, as a result all the reflective items are appropriately retained.

In Figure 4, the results show that the use of standardised path coefficient ( $\beta$ ), significance level (T-statistics), and  $R^2$  estimates to create a structural model, by analysing the inner model. It should be noted that T-statistics is used to identify significance between constructs and a bootstrapping method that employed to test for significance; it shows that not all of the constructs tested were significant.

**Table 5** Collinearity assessment

Constructs	VIF
Culture system	1.329
delegating	1.295
Developing skill of others	1.252
motivation	1.054
Organisational goal	1.299
Organisational interaction	1.293
Organisational process	1.383
Talent mindset	1.134

**Figure 4** Standardised path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) (see online version for colours)



## 6 Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ value)

Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) measures the amount of variance in the construct explained by the exogenous variables in the model. In general  $R^2$  values of 0.75, 0.50, 0.25 for endogenous latent variable can, as simple rule of thumb, be respectively described as substantial, moderate, or weak (Hair et al., 2011). As shown in Table 6, the  $R^2$  value of job performance (jp) is 0.492 and this is considered rather moderate. Therefore, the model has predictive accuracy. The  $Q^2$  value from blindfolding analysis for job performance (jp) is 0.245. Since the value is more than 0, it implies that the model has predictive relevance. Therefore, it can be concluded the predictive capability of the model is accepted.

**Table 6** Results coefficient of determination ( $R^2$  value)

<i>Endogenous latent variable</i>	<i>R<sup>2</sup> value</i>	<i>Q<sup>2</sup></i>
Job performance (jp)	0.492	0.245

Notes:  $Q^2$  is 1-SSE/SSO value as shown in the 'construct cross validated redundancy' section in blindfolding.

*Source:* Developed by the author using data from SmartPLS v.3.2

Table 7 displays the corresponding outcomes for the total effects of the exogenous constructs of culture system (cs), delegating (d), motivation (mtv), developing skills of others (do), organisational goal (OG), organisational interaction (oi), organisational process (op) and talent mindset (tm) on target construct of job performance (jp).

**Table 7** Significance testing results of the total effects

	<i>Total effect</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>Significance level</i>	<i>P value</i>
cs -> jp	0.269	4.521	<i>Supported</i>	0.000
d -> jp	0.069	1.507	Not supported	0.132
do -> jp	0.013	0.273	Not supported	0.785
mtv -> jp	0.145	2.221	<i>Supported</i>	0.027
og -> jp	0.117	1.795	Not supported	0.073
oi -> jp	0.163	2.575	<i>Supported</i>	0.010
op -> jp	0.304	4.296	<i>Supported</i>	0.000
tm -> jp	0.053	1.156	Not Supported	0.248

## 7 Discussion of findings

Adapting from Mitchell's job performance motivation model, this study examines factors influencing the job performance of Malaysia manufacturing sector SMIs. Eighth major factors are identified and grouped as individual related factors, organisational related factors and macro related factors and these factors are moderated by TMP skills. Based

on these factors, 88 hypotheses were developed. The survey results indicate that from the SMIs manufacturing perspective hypotheses job performance (subjective). Motivation, culture system, organisational interaction and organisational processes are significantly influencing managers' perception of job performance well done. On the other hand, developing skill of others, delegating, organisational goal and talent mindset have no significant influence on managers' perception on their job performance.

Following is the discussion of the factors influencing managers' job performance in Malaysia manufacturing SMIs to show their perception on how they perceive job performance level.

## *7.1 Individual related factors (H1)*

### *7.1.1 Motivation (H1a)*

Motivation is one of the most important predictors which significantly influence in improving SMI manufacturing managers' subjective job performance. This result implies that when the managers are motivated and felt highly motivated, the managers are more likely to feel better on their job performance. Therefore, organisation or HRM departments should emphasise the benefits of having a motivated leader by providing, competitive wage; conducive or interesting work surroundings, feeling of being involved and job security. Within Malaysian studies Rahman et al. (2015) supported the hypothesis.

### *7.1.2 Developing skill of others (H1b)*

Developing skill of others (H1b) is rejected. One of the possible explanations to the results might due to poor management skills or inability to rapport well by having effective communication that requires sharing feelings, imparting knowledge/skills, providing frequent feedback, coaching one-to-one and having objective assessment of individual needs with their subordinates (Rahman et al., 2015). As the results shows respondents are relatively more disagree to developing skill of others. It can be interpreted that managers may feel that it is the responsibility of HR department function to carry out such tasks and perceived as disturbance to their other day to day work routines. Therefore organisations through their HR department should organise more training and development to enhance workers skills routinely on a different platform.

### *7.1.3 Delegating (H1c)*

Delegating ability and skill (H1c) is rejected. Tough in western context, delegating skills plays as crucial role in satisfying managers needs for achievement and autonomy, hence providing a stimulus for motivation and more entrepreneurial behaviour (Joiner et al., 2006), but I Malaysian context, which still holds strong on eastern value system where hierarchical pyramid of roles which entails fairly well established norm governing how people should act and behave in relation to people in other roles thus most of the managers in Malaysia SMIs sees delegating – the process of assigning responsibilities to subordinates and giving them the discretion and authority to carry out them without supervision shows less delegating behaviour and therefore does not affect their job performance perception.



## *7.2 Organisational related factors (H2)*

### *7.2.1 Culture system (H2a)*

The indicator for organisational related construct shows that it is an important predictor that significantly influences SMIs manufacturing managers' perception towards their job performance. Echoing from most of other studies which places when an organisation has a strong culture system in place, it creates and supports the vision, mission and values which influence the workers behaviour, keeping them actively passionately engaged (Sharma, 2017). This implies that organisation culture values such as fairness, growth opportunities, job enthusiasm, a place of sharing and caring with proper established procedures governs what people do would influence leaders perceived job performance and thus encourage innovation, creativity that strengthen overall business competitive advantage. Within Malaysian studies Halim et al. (2014) culture system as an important factor that significantly drive organisation and job performance.

### *7.2.2 Organisational interaction (H2b)*

Organisational interaction refers to the relations amongst single individualities and persons of the employed and administrative surroundings thus there is significant of a well-being in the workplace and the person who capable of influencing the well-being which contains being confident, good communication, able to handle organisational technical hitches and struggles (Biggio and Cortese, 2013). This result reveals that Malaysia SMIs manufacturing managers value relational interaction where innate physiological necessities for proficiency, independence, and sincerity in relationship, if happened will deliver superior self-motivation that leads to better job performance.

## *7.3 Macro related factors (H3)*

### *7.3.1 Organisational goal (H3a)*

Organisational goal (H3a) is rejected and its relates to organisational macro process level where features of the organisation's strategy, structures and contingencies when clearly set and appropriately in place will direct employees effort and tasks on hand towards producing better work performance. The results suggest that most SMI manufacturing managers find that organisational goal does not significantly improve their job performance perception. This suggests that managers do not simply accept organisational set goals if that goal is difficult to accomplish as an impetus to influence their job performance outcome. A study by Lunenburg (2011) mentioned that without the leaders participation in the process of creating goals, no positive welcoming attitude is observed.

### *7.3.2 Organisational process (H3b)*

Organisational process for macro related factors construct shows that it is an important predictor that significantly influence Malaysia SMIs manufacturing managers' perception towards their perceived job performance. This suggest that when managers are equipped with strong knowledge of the organisation's philosophy, tactical management, operational and administration process and as well the work process that influence managerial behaviours where their abilities and qualities are clearly can be seen,

therefore managerial role can be more coherent and orderly, hence impacts the outcome of the managers' job performance. This relates to prior studies undertaken by Garvin (1998).

### 7.3.3 *Talent mindset (H3c)*

Talent mindset is rejected and it relates as specific set of behaviours and beliefs that reside within the leader that emphasise talented people as the core of its competitive advantage. This can be achieved when managers finds a certain degree of job satisfaction as precondition prior to acknowledge of their job performance level. Arocas and Morley (2015) study indicates similar result. The main reason for this results is that the respondents may find that the organisation that they serve are not sharing or foster a similar understanding that talented human capital focus should be major commitment on achieving the most important strategic and business goal. This can be noted in the Malaysia manufacturing sectors, over reliance of cheap and unskilled workers from the labour market thus talent base work force has lacked behind the developed nation (Bourlès et al., 2013).

## 7.4 *Discussion on research objective 3 (the moderating effect – H4)*

H4 TMP (competency) moderates the relationship between individual-related variables), organisational goal and macro-related variables and managers' job performance.

SmartPLS v.3.2 analysis revealed that for moderator variable, TMP not all the factors have interaction effect between the independent variables and managers' job performance. This study following Stahl et al. (2004, 2012) and Liu and Pearson (2014) TM practices into ten strategies moderator interactions were observed between:

- 1 H4c<sub>1</sub>: Individual related factor, motivation, moderated by TMP – engaging towards job performance.
- 2 H4h<sub>1</sub>: Individual related factor, motivation, moderated by TMP – pools of talent.
- 3 H4g<sub>2</sub>: Individual related factor, developing skills of others, moderated by TMP – learning and development.
- 4 H4b<sub>4</sub>: Organisational related factor, culture system, moderated by TMP – selecting.
- 5 H4c<sub>4</sub>: Organisational related factor, culture system, moderated by TMP – engaging.
- 6 H4j<sub>6</sub>: Macro related factor, organisational goal, moderated by TMP – pivotal talent.
- 7 Hf<sub>8</sub>: Macro related factor, talent mindset, moderated by TMP – rewarding.
- 8 H4j<sub>8</sub>: Macro related factor, talent mindset, moderated by TMP – pivotal talent.

The study reveals that from the individual related factor, motivation is moderated by TMP – engaging towards job performance. This suggests that when individual motivation level is high, with effective engagement with their subordinates', managers are exhibiting better sense of commitment as there will be effective communication, cooperation. Therefore with overall good rapport with subordinates, managers turned out to feel valued and thus enhancing their job performance perception, agreeing from the study by Shaheen and Farooqi (2014).

The current findings yield similar when study compares with other studies. For instance, the evaluation of individual related factor, motivation is moderated by TMP – pools of talent. Highly motivated managers have a quick access of hiring of talented employees from pools of talent made available for them where it ensures the right hire, to have a reserved competent applicant when a spot requirement to be occupied speedily and continually evaluated talent requirements. This eventually achieves the attainment of the leaders' fulfilment through his job performance outcome and completing strategic business goal and this noted in the study by Khan et al. (2013).

Further, the current finding reveals that Individual Related factor, developing skills of others is moderated by TMP – learning and development towards managers' job performance. The ability to impart and develop skills of their subordinates improves performance where managers able to develop and coach others, as well constructively review the work of others in order to improve and advance the skills, knowledge and performance levels of those who report to them, which is similar to findings by Wedman (2017). Additionally, with the ability to help their subordinates learn and grow. This skill makes a real driving force, a positive agent for change and therefore enhances the managers personal effectiveness, thus leads to better job performance because of their skills of learning and development, it increases the organisation's staff efficiency, skills and productivity confirming findings by Engetou (2017).

Organisational related factor – culture system is moderated by TMP – selecting towards managers' job performance. A stable culture system can affect the performance of the employee thereby increasing productivity that's ends up affecting the profile of the organisation positively as it can increase the benefit, which is the employee. Similar justification is available in Paschal and Nizam (2017) studies. A good employee selecting skill and practice has positive impact because effectively selected employees' possessing the right qualification that matches the job requirement saves time and contributes positively to organisational success. The better the success rate of their subordinates leaders and managers consistently rate their own performance, which is also mentioned by Sarinah et al. (2016), and Oaya et al. (2017).

The study suggests that organisational related factor – culture system is moderated by TMP – engaging towards job performance. Again, a stable culture system can affect the performance of the employee. A conducive organisation environment with unwritten customs, behaviours and beliefs that determines the tradition of the organisation combined with leadership values and engaging attitude of the leaders towards subordinate facilitates assimilation and personal success, which agrees to findings by Serrat (2010) and Wambugu (2014). The skill of engaging employees enhances job performance perception

Macro related factor – organisational goal is moderated by TMP – pivotal talent towards managers' job performance. The study reveals that the impact of having organisational goal as the employees can manage these goals by facilitating available organisation's resources to attain their goal and provide a focus guide for task attainment on a specified period of time, agreeing to study by Tang et al. (2008). The availability of pivotal talent who are employees more talented than others and also high performers, high potential enhances the confidence of managers. These employees also can sit anywhere in the organisation and consider game changers because their performance can make or break the organisation. A similar result is note by Collings and Mellahi (2009)

and Hartmann et al. (2010). Therefore having them in their stable enhances the confidence of managers, hence improving their job performance perception.

In this study it is revealed that macro related factor – talent mindset is moderated by TMP – rewarding towards managers’ job performance. Although there is no direct significant impact when managers have a grasp on talent mindset aptitude towards managers’ job performance, but when it is moderated by their skill of rewarding their subordinates, it enhances their job performance level higher because when the leader have a sound fair rewarding plans for his subordinates, the workers would feel their endeavours are remunerated and compensated. Not only were the workers under his care motivated as a result of well rewarded by their leader, the person in leadership who provided the action of rewarding to is in a way elevates their mood and feeling of a job well done to make their subordinates happy (win-win situation both subordinates and leader).

Similarly, macro related factor – talent mindset is moderated by TMP – pivotal talent towards managers’ job performance. This yield a similar result from previous studies linking a leader’s true belief in the value of talent mindset is key to building a successful, agile and innovative organisation or team (Forman et al., 2004; Arocas and Morley, 2015; Snyders, 2015) and by possessing pivotal talent, a person who has niche abilities that others does not have, therefore add value to the organisation or department he/she is serving definitely enhances leaders’ perception of job performance to a higher level, which is also revealed by Jooss (2018).

These findings further implicate that not all the independent variables when moderated with TMP influence managers’ job performance in Malaysia SMI manufacturing sector context; therefore outcomes of study confirmed some of the finding from previous research that TMP have interaction between the independent variables and job performance, though not all the factors in TMP causes a change how managers’ view their job performance eventually. This study also suggests managers in Malaysia manufacturing sector SMIs are not overly impacted by the moderating elements of TMP. The finding indicated engaging, pools of talent, learning and development, selecting, Pivotal talent and rewarding have notable enhancing effect on managers’ job performance. This findings itself is a crucial attribution towards enhancing better individual perceived job performance contentment by SMI managers’ in Malaysia.

## **8 Conclusions and implications**

This study is considered to be one of the significant studies related to the effect of moderating role of TMP that could influence Malaysia SMIs manufacturing sectors managers’ job performance. This study has established number of elements of TMP that considered valid as moderators in the enhancement of managers’ subjective job performance in the Malaysia manufacturing sector SMIs. The TMP moderating elements are engaging, pools of talent, learning and development, selecting, pivotal talent and rewarding. Given the changing nature of managing SMIs in general and therefore manufacturing sector in specific, these six important elements identified should be given priority apart from keeping an important focus on the other elements like attracting, retaining, talented pools and evaluating employee skill program.

Secondly, the most significant contribution of this study to the body of knowledge is adding TMP important elements such as pivotal talent positions that ignored in past

studios. The pivotal element is key element for the organisations and recognised as great performance personnel element that provides organisational effectiveness and the organisation that has pivotal positions' makes substantial contribution to organisational performance. Moreover, engaging element considered to be a significant contribution of this study that creates the emotional connection in place of work method causing in the correct situation for the employees of a business to provide their best every day, dedicated to their establishments' objectives and purposes, inspired to extend support to organisation's achievement, by heightened wisdom of their individual welfare as explained by Amabile et al. (2004). This includes the ability of the leader to be sensitive to the needs and interest of his/her subordinates and show genuine interest, seeing from their perspective as well. Finally, the study includes pools of talent, selecting, learning and development and rewarding elements as they equally needed to be given attention to improve managers' job performance.

The outcomes of this research delivered an answer to the above mentioned particular study purposes. The investigation shows that the overall managers subjective job performance which was measured by their perceived job performance were moderate. As far as the independent variables, generally there are number of variables that do significantly influence managers' job performance in the Malaysia SMIS manufacturing sector context. These variables are delegating, developing skill of others, organisational goal and talent mindset. However, culture system, motivation, organisational interaction, and organisational process shows these variables do have significant effect on individual managers' subjective job performance.

Subsequently, the results of correlation coefficient revealed that not all the individual related factors were positively related to managers' job performance as mentioned above. The findings lent support to human capital and motivational theories that emphasise the importance of individual variable of motivation in achieving individual job performance satisfaction. Similarly, the findings also demonstrated that all relationship between organisational related factors positively affect individual job performance. Culture system and organisational interaction were associated with managers' job performance. Contrary to expectation organisational goal and talent mindset was not related to managers' job performance.

These findings further implicated that not all the independent variables when moderated with TMP influence managers' job performance in Malaysia SMIS manufacturing sector context; therefore outcomes of study confirmed some of the finding from previous research that TMP have interaction between the independent variables and job performance, though not all the factors in TMP causes a change how managers' view their job performance eventually. These studies also suggest managers in Malaysia manufacturing sector SMISs are not overly impacted by the moderating elements of TMP. The finding indicated engaging, pools of talent, learning and development, selecting, Pivotal talent and rewarding have notable enhancing effect on managers' job performance. This findings itself is a crucial attribution towards enhancing better individual perceived job performance contentment by SMIS managers' in Malaysia.

The main findings generated from this study on the explanation of the Malaysia manufacturing sector SMISs managers' job performance which is subjective measure are firstly, the study suggested a profile of SMISs manufacturing sector managers' individual personal feelings showing the differential profile of factors for perceived job performance. Secondly, manufacturing sector SMISs managers' subjective job

performance is a function of individual, organisational and macro factors. Thirdly, in Malaysia SMIs context, culture system, motivation, organisational interaction and organisational process are instrumental for managers' subjective job performance. Finally, the impact of TMP as moderating effect is not pervasive but few noted elements in TMP do influence Malaysia manufacturing SMI's managers' subjective job performance.

While some of the studies propositions were supported and others were not supported, as well as research limitations, this study raised new questions for further research. This study ought to be deliberated as a maiden investigation, and additional longitudinal work is desirable to establish the causal interactions between the factors and subjective managers' work performance. Since this study is correlational field study, there can be no assertiveness about causality. Another rewarding avenue for further research may include the moderating role of gender at its effect on managers' job performance.

The findings of this study were limited to samples of managers in manufacturing SMIs only. Therefore, future studies on job performance in other manufacturing sectors, such as in agricultural, food industries, services sector or across various job leadership category employees such as supervisors. It would be also be exciting if future studies on job performance could be done qualitatively, as this type of study might produce knowledge based on experience concerning to work performance.

Due to limitations of resources, this study has to limit the factors and measures of subjective managers' job performance involved. It is anticipated that forthcoming investigation could incorporate further elements such as mental ability, gender et cetera in order to scrutinise the possible explanatory power of these factors. Similarly, work performance enhancement could also be considered to be measured in terms of job performance objective. As highlighted earlier, the interpretation of job performance satisfaction varies between individuals, and differs according to circumstances. Thus, an inductive approach or method employing a qualitative methodology is necessary in order to explore more meaningful for subjective work performance. Additionally, future investigation should also embraces other techniques of data collection such as direct observation, interviews, behavioural measures, psychological measures to deepen the findings of job performance studies. Furthermore, study examining cultural and contextual dissimilarities would also spread present understanding in respect to both objective and subjective job performance.

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