

A Critical Study of Workplace Factors Determining The Engagement Of Generation Y Employees

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Abstract

According to Malaysia's Department of Statistic, Generation Y (also known as "Gen-Y") has now become the majority of employees within the workplace. Studies have shown that this generation of workers is different from the generations that came before them. Our study further showed that not all conventional wisdoms of what positively engage them in the workplace are proven, within Malaysia's context. Overall, the quantitative research has given us a total of 523 usable data that were collected through convenience and snowball sampling, administered via an online survey website. Using both multiple linear regression and one-way ANOVA statistical approaches, a set of valid and reliable independent variables were able to be tested. The study found that work-life balance (under leisure construct) and having friends at work (under social construct) do not positively impact engagement among Generation Y, whereas the remaining three constructs of extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic have positive correlations. Additionally, the study has given the differences of factors determining the engagement that exist between generational cohorts; of Gen-Y, Gen-X and Baby Boomers. Through the study, even though we do not particularly study the correlation of workplace factors for the older cohorts, it is noteworthy to mention that as the generation becomes older, the more engaged they are in the workplace. Further research is recommended to study the data in understanding the correlation in determining the engagement factors that led to this observation.

Keywords: Generation Y, Gen-Y, Workplace Engagement, Employees.

1. INTRODUCTION

Successful and competitive organizations are expected to be able to manage the large generational cohort that is entering the workplace recently. The cohort known as Generation-Y ("Gen-Y") is gradually taking larger share and dominating the work environment in the labor

market all around the world(Wang, Wang, & Li, 2018)(Arora & Dhole, 2018) and will form the majority of the employees worldwide(Chumba & Gachunga, 2016).The challenges faced by these organizations include unconventional remuneration packages, new ways of approach to work and how the workplace caters to them (PwC, 2011). Updating workplace's rules and policies is just one way a company does to create a conducive environment for them (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). This is mainly driven by Gen-Y having a generally held different beliefs about the aspects of the workplace (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010).

Some of the changes already observed in recent years are 'interior-designer' level workstations and distinct corporate cultures (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). All these are done with the objective of positively bringing up their engagement level. William Kahn (1990), in popularizing the term 'employee engagement', argued that engaged employees will bring with them "physically, cognitively and emotionally" to the workplace. Study showed that engagement matters in building positive employee attitudes towards a diverse generation workforce (Brightenburg, 2018). As one literature defined it, engagement is the company's ability to address issues and needs on behalf of the workforce(Avey, Avolio, Crossley, & Luthans, 2009). Engaged employees connect deeply with the organisation and provide discretionary efforts in their jobs (Krueger & Killham, 2006).

It is important to improve engagement of Gen Y at the workplace because it has a direct impact on: staff performance, financial performance of the organization (Horvathova, Mikusova, & Kashi, 2019) and higher customer satisfaction (Choudhury & Mohanty, 2019).With such impact on performances, the need to understand the factors that keep Gen Y engaged is important to possibly retain & fulfil their full potential (Liyana & Gamage, 2020). Considerably, Gen Y employees opting to continue working with the organization depend on their engagement levels (Mahipalan, 2018). In one particular context, a survey of Malaysia employees conducted found Gen-Y to be the least engaged among other Asian workers (malaymail online, 2017).

However, measuring engagement level is just a superficial questionnaire conducted to assess the probability of the employees propensity in remaining within the same organisations. Engagement level per se does not measure the factors that really contribute to the engagement level. Engagement factors that directly correlate to raising Gen-Y engagement levels will immensely helpful for all organisations, and in particular the Human Resource practitioners. In addition, review of journal articles showed that the majority of studies on employee engagement are mostly conducted in more developed countries such as the United States of America.

Gen-Y career goals seem to be to build a parallel successful track as well as their own personal life. This is unlike the previous generations where building a successful life inadvertently includes a stricter adherence to almost exclusively building a singular career track. This could imply that external factors may have greater influence on job satisfaction of Gen-Y than any other generations before them (Hassan, Jambulingam, Alagas, Uzir, & Halbusi, 2020). Job satisfaction in turn has impact on turnover, and this directly impact the organizational agenda as the unintended excessive cost associated with the loss of productivity combine with the time and effort spent to replace the vacancies. An international HR company that measured such turnover found that it is costing billions for organizations in USA alone (Gallup, 2017). This itself has not taken into account the loss of productivity as people managers are totally distracted from their core tasks at hand. The global scale of such cost will be staggering in the least.

Therefore this study was conducted with 2 main aims in mind:- to review the hypothesis of workplace factors that could have impacted engagement levels, and to establish which of these factors do have correlation to increasing such engagement levels where Gen-Y is concerned. The basis for our study will seek to expand on the research conducted by Twenge, et. al.,(2010) as they have comprehensively proposed the constructs that group workplace factors affecting employee engagement but did not directly measure employee engagement as a dependent variable. Without this measurement, it will be difficult to convince organisations to adopt any of

the workplace factors as the basis to have such transformational changes may have cost and time implications. As such, due to locality, we have decided to focus on conducting a critical study of workplace factors determining the engagement of generation Y from the Malaysian employees' perspective. Overall, this study's objectives are divided into three (3); firstly, to determine the independent factors impacting engagement of Gen-Y employees; secondly, to measure the engagement level of Gen-Y employees and finally; to examine the significant difference in workplace engagement as compare with previous older generation cohorts.

Utilizing quantitative research methods, a questionnaire was developed in Survey Monkey which was disseminated to targeted sample via social media. 523 usable samples of Malaysian employees (with 74% of respondents among Generation Y) were then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The results have shown that Intrinsic rewards (Beta = 0.363, P value <0.05), Extrinsic rewards and Altruistic rewards were statistically significant and are the key factors that impacts engagement level of Generation Y. This paper is expected to further the evidences that will impact both interested seasoned HR practitioners, as well as researchers to make the right choices in changing how workplace engages the majority of their employees meaningfully. This will promote more critical rethinking on how job design is done and to formulate strategies and company policies to modernize benefit schemes (such as flexible work schedule) as well encouraging one's company brand as altruistic (such as greater focus on environmental, social and governance).

2. THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

There are a few differing definitions for the age bracket of Gen-Y as a cohort, due to unique historical events and experiences brought about by social changes (Ng & Johnson, 2015). For the purpose of this study, Gen-Y will be demarcated as those born between 1980 and 2000, generally a period found within most researchers' time span, as shown in Table 1. In 2014, Malaysia had approximately 7.4 million Gen-Y employees, representing 52% of the workforce (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2014).

BIRTH-YEAR	SOURCE
1980 – 1995	Foot and Stoffman, 1998
1982 – 1999	Howe and Strauss, 2000
AFTER 1982	Twenge, 2010

TABLE 1: Compilation of Age Group Considered as Gen-Y.

There are bodies of study indicating that Gen-Y feels frustrated at the workplace and this essentially contribute to their frequent turnover in search of better working environment. Gen-Y faced multiple challenges at workplace, as indicated in their study by (Hassan, Jambulingam, Alagas, Uzir, & Halbusi, 2020). Employer satisfaction remains the key to retain their staying power. Job satisfaction is considered to be an essential factor in affecting the willingness of workers to stay in their workplaces. Job satisfaction is one of the tools used to establish and maintain the stability of an organization (Do, Budhwar, & Patel, 2018).

The findings of the study implicate that career preferences differ across respondents of the three generations. Generation X seeks for job opportunities which align with their career aspirations. They posit an inclination to work with those organizations which provide career opportunities which match with their career aspiration.

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It was found that employee satisfaction much more dependent on the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation that affect employee job satisfaction, remuneration being equal across. Providing quality of working life, good leadership style, regular training, employment security, company's image branding, and employees' personal traits, are deemed as more important aspect. With employees' satisfaction, there is a direct positive relationship with retention. A study conducted among employees in a 5-star hotel in Thailand showed just such a direct relationship (Ashton, 2018). The result shows that the intrinsic work motivation is an important issue for employee retention and especially among generation Y employees in the organization. Effective employee motivation and retention of skilled and talented employees should be the main aim of management. Huge turnover creates problem for not only the employers but also employees and clients.

Now the time has arrived to think out of the box and focus on intrinsic motivational factors which can also affects employee retention if properly used by the management (Mishra & Mishra, 2017). Developmental opportunity also represents a sticky aspect to retain Generation Y employees. The organisations must be committed to their overall human resource development, which should results in a positive reciprocal behavioural outcome, such as, an emotionally-anchored commitment to stay in that particular organisation (Naim & Lenka, 2018).

2.1 Hypothesis Models

Our constructs are replicated from the research done by Twenge (2010) as it is one of the most referenced journal articles and has studied the largest number (16,507) of subjects in relation to engagement throughout the generational cohorts. The following is the model of the constructs by which this study will be based upon:

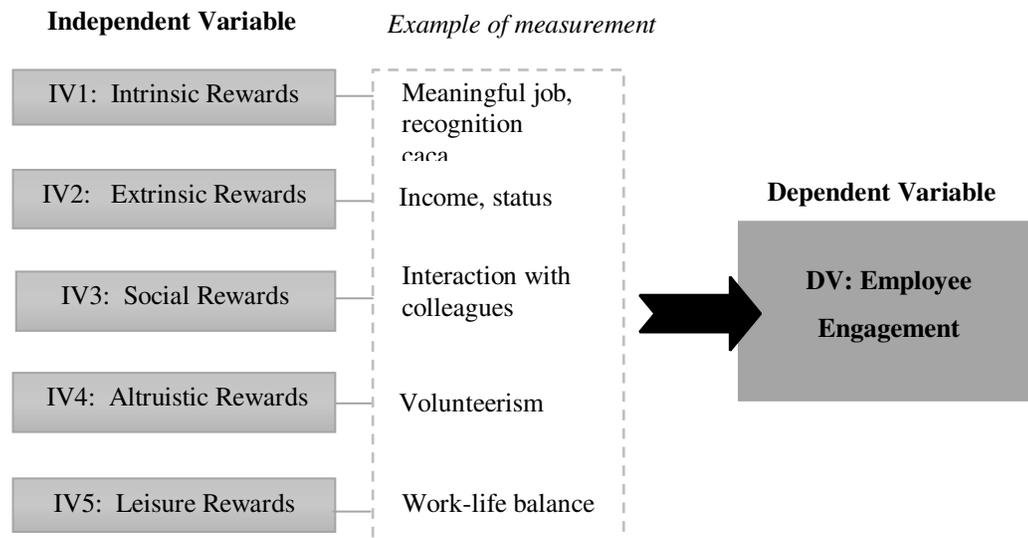


FIGURE 1: Conceptual Framework for Employee (Gen-Y) Engagement.

Intrinsic rewards are psychological accomplishment that employees obtain from performing meaningful work (Obicci, 2015). These are mostly in intangible forms such as meaningful jobs, employee recognition, acknowledgement, respect and appreciation (Ajmal, Bashir, Abrar, Mahroof Khan, & Saqib, 2015). Other intrinsic rewards such as learning opportunities, challenging work and career advancement were considered as high drivers of engagement (Aktar, Sachu, & Ali, 2012). Maslach et al.(2001) suggested that appropriate reward and recognition is important for employee engagement. Researches on Gen-Y showed that this generation’s expectations are to have a fulfilling, interesting and challenging daily work(Arnett, 2007; Lancaster & Stillman, 2003). Against such extensive studies, therefore intrinsic rewards are an important part of employee engagement and should not be overlooked. With this, we propose the first hypothesis.

H₁: Intrinsic rewards have a positive impact on employee engagement.

Extrinsic rewards rely on tangible rewards, such as career advancement, monetary income and visible status (Queiri, Wan Yusoff, & Dwaikat, 2015). Studies have shown that Gen-Y is more ambitious and materialistic than the previous generations, and as such, expect near instant gratification in the form of promotions and salary increases (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). Another study suggested that economic trend and higher cost of living has made Gen-Y to be more indebted and might place more emphasis on extrinsic rewards (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Hence, our second hypothesis.

H₂: Extrinsic rewards have a positive impact on employee engagement.

Social rewards are made-up of psychological pay-offs in relating with other people, such as having friends at work. Studies have shown that it is normal for Gen-Y to rely on social media to fulfill their social needs (Bolton, et al., 2013), that Gen-Y values workplace friendliness and being part of the team (Tolbize, 2008). A very recent survey done among Gen-Y suggested that they prefer their bosses to treat them like a friend (Hays, 2013). The continued blurring of traditional lines separating friends and colleagues may suggest Gen-Y’s engagement can be affected by workplace social rewards (Pedersen & Lewis, 2012). A study by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) shown that a certain measurement of job resources which take into account support from colleagues are correlated with engagement. For the third hypothesis, we propose **H₃: Social rewards have a positive impact on employee engagement.**

Altruistic rewards find meaning through helping the organization or the society it serves. Today many organisations have corporate social responsibility ('CSR') programs and they believe that these will encourage their employees to give back to society. There are evidences that suggest Gen-Y cared more about issues on environment and civil liberties more than their predecessors (Pew Research Center, 2011).The compatibility between an organisation's altruistic values & the altruistic desires of employees shows great organizational-fit (Brightenburg & Miller, 2018).The rates of volunteerism among youth has risen steadily over the years, and provides a clear indicator that Gen-Y are much more interested in participating in public spaces, given the right incentive and opportunity to do so (Delli Carpini, 2000).For our fourth hypothesis, we propose:

H₄:Altruistic rewards have a positive impact on employee engagement.

Leisure rewards are opportunities to pursue relaxation time, vacation, and freedom (Herzog, 1982; Johnson M. K., 2002; Miller, Woehr, & Hudspeth, 2002). According to Johnson (2004), work-life balance is a significant factor in contributing to employee engagement; Lockwood (2007) further suggested that work-life balance even has a positive impact on staff retention. A study done by (Liyanage & Gamage, 2020)shows that work-life balance has a positive relationship with the employee engagement of Gen-Y employees. In comparison with Baby Boomers, Gen-Y value freedom and work-life balance more (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Twenge, 2010). Gen-Y value high leisure work values, favoring jobs that allow more time to travel (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Therefore, the impact of the importance of leisure at the workplace may compel organisations' approach to produce a fun and enjoyable workplace.We like to test this fifth hypothesis.

H₅:Leisure rewards have a positive impact on employee engagement.

Studies involving all 3 generational cohorts (Gen-Y, Gen-X and Baby Boomers) have not been vastly available. However, some studies focusing on one or the other cohort are available, though the limitation faced is that inferences have to be made on the relative differences, if any, between the 3 generations regarding their workplace engagement. One study by Hoole&Bonnema(2015) showed that Baby Boomers are the most engaged comparatively with younger generations due to having attained higher extrinsic and intrinsic rewards in their twilight careers.Another study by (Brightenburg, Whittington, Meskelis, & Asare, 2020) also showed that Baby Boomers were more engaged followed by Gen X and Y.According to study done by White (2011), Baby Boomers were ambitious, competitive and dedicated, and can be assumed that this generation will most likely be more engaged in their job in order to achieve their career objectives as compared to other generations. With the limited existing research, this study would like to measure the differences between the generation cohorts.Our sixth hypothesis will be:

H₆:There are differences between generational cohorts in terms of employee engagement.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative study was conducted through numerical evidence to establish causality. Secondly, the data collected was in ordinal form which requires a quantitative method for analysis. For sample design and data collection, the sampling frame covers working individuals in Kuala Lumpur & Selangor. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, these 2 states have an approximate population of 8 million people, of which 5 million of them are working individuals (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017).The population of this study was approximately 5.5 million working individuals. According to Krejcie& Morgan (1970), a sample size of 384 is representative of a population of 1 million; even if the population exceeds 1 million, the minimum sample size is still 384. Nonetheless, more than 384 samples were collected to remove possible sampling errors.This study sampling mechanism uses a combination of convenience sampling and snowballing. The reason for using convenience sampling is to enable the researcher to collect information from reachable respondents conveniently, whereas snowball method was used as respondents may introduce others to participate in the survey.

For data collection, social media and apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook were used to collect responses. After the survey questionnaire was designed, a pilot test was conducted before the actual survey was distributed on a mass scale. Pilot testing was performed to assure the validity, reliability, and accuracy of questionnaires (Lancaster, Dodd, & Williamson, 2004). Thereafter, the pilot test samples were analyzed for reliability and validity using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. A total of 580 questionnaires were collected, with 523 completed; hence the response rate was 90.2%. The questionnaires collected were screened to ensure that there are no unreadable and incomplete responses (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2010); incomplete questionnaires were excluded from analysis. The information on the questionnaire was coded, processed and analyzed using SPSS. In addition, a Normality Test was performed and outliers were subsequently removed.

In the questionnaire design, multiple items measurement scales were adopted and adapted from two studies; Twenge et al.(2010) for workplace factors constructs and Saks (2006) for employee engagement constructs. A 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) questionnaire was designed online using SurveyMonkey. The questionnaire contained 27 questions and was divided into three sections:

- i. Part A to collect demographics information;
- ii. Part B to measure overall engagement level; and
- iii. Part C to measure the factors that affect the engagement level.

Please refer to 0 for the complete questionnaire. Based on the feedback received during pilot test, the questions in Part C were shuffled and the construct themes (intrinsic, extrinsic etc.) were removed to avoid biasness.

3.1 Data & Findings

In measures of reliability and validity, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test from SPSS was used to examine the internal consistency in the scale of items or how closely related a group of items are (Golafshani, 2003). The six different constructs (Intrinsic Rewards, Extrinsic Rewards, Social Rewards, Altruistic Rewards, Leisure Rewards, and Employee Engagement) were tested for reliability. A score of over 0.70 shows a high internal reliability. The results are depicted in the Table 2.

No.	VARIABLE	NO. OF ITEMS (BEFORE)	NO. OF ITEMS (AFTER)	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
1	Intrinsic Rewards	7	5	0.827
2	Extrinsic Rewards	6	4	0.753
3	Social Rewards	6	6	0.747
4	Altruistic Rewards	6	3	0.850
5	Leisure Rewards	4	3	0.752
6	Employee Engagement	11	6	0.817

TABLE 2: Reliability Test Results.

Face validity is a subjective criterion reflecting the extent to which scale items are meaningful and appear to represent the construct being measured (does the scale appear to measure what it is supposed to). Content validity, on the other hand, focuses on whether the scale items capture the key facets of the unobservable construct being measured. It involves subjective judgment by the experts as to the appropriateness of the measurement (Khatib, 1998). In this research, content and face validity were examined through the following steps:

1. The questions were adapted from theoretically sound past research;
2. The initial questionnaire was reviewed by the qualitative supervisor who is a subject matter expert in the area (practiced HR Manager) who rated the item of its applicability across a variety of organization; and
3. The questionnaire was also has been tested by quantitative academicians who rated the item in terms of its clarity and coherence;

A pilot test was done as a pre-test, by sample of 35 respondents who are similar to the study respondent. Subsequently, changes were made based on their comments and are discussed in pilot study results in **Appendix 2:**.

According to Brown et al (1993), discriminant validity is performed to ensure measures of theoretically related constructs correlate highly with one another; it also ensures that all items fall back into the predetermined construct. With factor analysis, the validity can be tested to ensure all items together represent the underlying construct well (Rattay & Jones, 2007). The value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (0.920 > 0.5) shows that the sample is sufficient to perform the factor analysis. Furthermore, a significant result of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < 0.05$) indicates that all 6 constructs do relate to one another enough to perform a substantial factor analysis. Table 5-2 below shows the KMO and Bartlett's Test results:

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.920
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	df
	Sig.
	6591.067
	351
	.000

TABLE 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test.

A principal component factor analysis was rotated using an orthogonal (varimax) rotation method with Kaiser Normalization and the items and factor loadings were displayed in Table 5-3 below. Originally, there were 27 items: Employee Engagement (6 items), Extrinsic Rewards (4 items), Intrinsic Rewards (5 items), Leisure Rewards (3), Social Rewards (6 items), and Altruistic Rewards (3 items). The results of factor analysis indicate the existence of 6 factors as originally conceptualized; Employee Engagement (4 items), Extrinsic Rewards (3 items), Intrinsic Rewards (6 items), Leisure Rewards (3), Social Rewards (3 items), and Altruistic Rewards (3 items). A total of 5 items were removed due to high cross loadings or loadings different from the original conceptualization.

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Part B: Engagement Level</u>						
Q3 Employee Engagement	.801					
Q4 Employee Engagement	.782					
Q5 Employee Engagement	.755					
Q6 Employee Engagement	.787					
<u>Part C: Workplace Factors</u>						
Q2 Intrinsic Rewards		.528				

Q12 Intrinsic Rewards	.677				
Q13 Intrinsic Rewards	.567				
Q16 Intrinsic Rewards	.759				
Q18 Intrinsic Rewards	.579				
Q21 Intrinsic Rewards	.598				
Q3 Extrinsic Rewards					.747
Q6 Extrinsic Rewards					.622
Q10 Extrinsic Rewards					.625
Q4 Social Rewards				.773	
Q8 Social Rewards				.752	
Q11 Social Rewards				.785	
Q7 Altruistic Rewards			.718		
Q14 Altruistic Rewards			.787		
Q19 Altruistic Rewards			.723		
Q1 Leisure Rewards		.610			
Q5 Leisure Rewards		.811			
Q9 Leisure Rewards		.734			
Extracted Method: Principal Component Analysis Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization					

TABLE 4: Rotated Component Matrix.

Tests of normality compared the sample distribution to a normal curve. According to Osborne & Waters (2002), regression requires variables to have normal distributions; hence, the normality test is to affirm the data is suitable for regression analysis. As the sample size was large, skewness and kurtosis was chosen as the suitable method to measure normality (Joanes & Gill, 1998). According to George and Mallery (2005), acceptable range for skewness and kurtosis is within the range of +2 and -2; if the value falls within the range, the data is normally distributed.

Descriptive		Statistic	Std. Error
Intrinsic Rewards	Skewness	-.583	.110
	Kurtosis	.539	.220
Extrinsic Rewards	Skewness	-.121	.110
	Kurtosis	-.219	.220
Social Rewards	Skewness	-.366	.110
	Kurtosis	.118	.220
Altruistic Rewards	Skewness	-.169	.110
	Kurtosis	-.184	.220
Leisure Rewards	Skewness	.001	.110
	Kurtosis	-.562	.220
Employee Engagement	Skewness	-.372	.110
	Kurtosis	-.055	.220

TABLE 5: Normality Test Results.

A graphical representation of distribution observations were presented in histogram, Q-Q plot and box plot diagrams in **Appendix 3**. Based on observations, 30 outliers were identified and subsequently removed to improve the distribution of data.

In descriptive analysis, the distribution of the total sample of 523 is divided into 3 generations. The total sample consists of 45% of male and 55% of female respondents; 62% working in privately-held companies. Please refer to **Appendix 4** for detailed demographics data. Multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis objectively assesses the degree of the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). MLR was used to investigate the relationship between the dependent variable (employee engagement level) and the independent variables (workplace factors). The overall model fit was $R^2 = 0.330$, suggesting that 33.7% of the predictors can be explained. The adjusted R^2 of 0.330 indicates that all 5 dependent variables explained the change in employee engagement by 33.7%, the remaining % can be explained by other factors not included in this study.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.580 ^a	.336	.330	.60188	2.035

a. Predictors: (Constant), Intrinsic Rewards, Extrinsic Rewards, Social Rewards, Altruistic Rewards, Leisure Rewards.

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

TABLE 6: Linear Regression.

The Table 7 below reflects the relationship found for each dimension. When number of drivers of engagement (i.e. rewards) was predicted, it was found that:

- i. Intrinsic rewards (Beta = 0.363, P value < 0.05), Extrinsic rewards (Beta = 0.147, P value < 0.05) and Altruistic rewards (Beta = 0.170, P value < 0.05) were the significant predictors. Hence **Hypothesis 1, 2 & 4 were accepted**.
- ii.
- iii. Leisure rewards (Beta = -0.180, P value > 0.05) and Social rewards (Beta = 0.11, P value > 0.05) were not significant predictors. Hence **Hypothesis 3 & 5 were rejected**.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	.834	.195		4.270	.000		
Intrinsic Rewards	.418	.057	.363	7.306	.000	.552	1.812
Extrinsic Rewards	.154	.049	.147	3.153	.002	.627	1.596
Social	.013	.047	.011	.27	.7	.775	1.29

Rewards				1	87		0
Leisure Rewards	-.015	.033	-.018	.457	.648	.905	1.105
Altruistic Rewards	.169	.048	.170	3.531	.000	.587	1.703

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

TABLE 7: Relationship Between Engagement & Constructs.

One way ANOVA test was employed to determine if there were any significant differences in level of engagement among the three generations. The result shows marginal differences existed among the three generations ($F = 3.361$, $p = 0.019$); therefore, **H6 was accepted**.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.371	3	1.790	3.361	.019
Within Groups	260.486	489	.533		
Total	265.858	492			

TABLE 8: Anova.

4. RESULTS

It is concluded that intrinsic rewards, extrinsic rewards and altruistic rewards conforms to literature findings that they affect employee engagements. In short, as far as these factors are considered, Malaysians seek similar rewards compared to other cultures. However, as opposed to the general stereotypes that are projected on Generation Y, the results of this research indicate that this generation values intrinsic value (i.e. job fulfillment) more than extrinsic value (i.e. monetary benefits). In fact, intrinsic rewards ranked at the top of all work values for all generations (Holt, 2018). Much research shows that compensation is a hygiene factor, not an “engagement” factor. This can be explained via motivation theory in which people are driven by mastery, autonomy and purpose and making work meaningful is of utmost importance.

Differing from literature, Malaysians look at career advancement and promotion as intrinsic value rather than extrinsic value, which is not tied to change in title or additional reward. This can be supported by research in Indonesian startup companies which outlines intrinsic rewards are in the form of fair promotion opportunities, creation of a good work environment, and good communication from superiors (Esthi & Ekhsan, 2020). The reasons for the respondents' interpretation may be two-fold; new skills and knowledge acquired from greater responsibilities offer experiential career experience, and Gen-Y essentially are easily bored (Martin, 2005). Career progression in fact, is viewed as an advancement of one's career which offers internal mobility and taking on new assignments in one chosen area. This is line with the Aon Hewitt report(2012) which states career opportunities is on the top list for employees than compensation benefits or money, and the younger generation is interested in different experiences and wants interesting work that's not repetitive.

In terms of social rewards, with a p-value that is significantly higher than 0.005, our result shows that social rewards do not contribute significantly to engagement and hence, hypothesis H3 is rejected. Our hypothesis was based on the theory that employees given the opportunity to socialize, within or out of the office environment, would give a positive engagement experience. However, the outcome did not support this hypothesis. One theory that supports this outcome is

the possibility that there is a decreasing need for workplace social rewards as Gen-Y moves their social interaction out from the workplace hence valued workplace social interaction less than the predecessors (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). With the proliferation of social media and availability of non-stop connections with their own circles of friends, it can be argued that Gen-Y social needs are being met without having to be involved in more social interactions at the workplace. This differs from older generation cohorts that rely much more on workplace relationships for their social needs.

Another theory is based on the person-environment (PE) fit theory which states that when the environment 'fits' the person's values, personality and attributes, there are positive outcomes from that relationship (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). A study based on this theory showed that in their everyday environment, the subjects chose to spend time in certain situations and to avoid others and that these patterns were predictable from personality trait scores. Given a choice, the subjects would choose to avoid situations where they do not 'fit' or feel comfortable (Emmons, Diener, & Larsen, 1986). Using this theory, social situations and interactions provide a good fit for extraverts but will not be a good fit for introverts. Accordingly, introverts will be less likely to choose social situations and less likely to experience pleasant affect in social situations. In summary, extraverts are more sensitive to social 'rewards' but not introverts (Kai et.al,2020; McCrae & Costa, 1987).

A study of the Five Factor of Personality across 36 countries (including Malaysia), which conclusively found that Asians are more introverted than developed countries in North America and Europe (Allik & McCrae, 2004) and a more localised cross-cultural study of extraversion conducted by Lucas et al.(2000) produced similar results. Therefore, Malaysians who are generally not extraverted, may avoid situations which do not 'fit' with their personalities, and a workplace that provides opportunity to socialize will not bring the 'rewards' expected from the social constructs.

In leisure rewards, with a p-value that is significantly higher than 0.005, our research shows that leisure rewards do not contribute significantly to engagement and hence, hypothesis H5 is rejected. This goes against the established notion that work life balance is a highly desired reward in the workplace among the younger generations, thus requiring further exploration on the non-congruence with established studies.

Research by Randstad (2017) found that millennials in Malaysia prefers a more traditional workplace; as much as 45% preferred to stick to standard working hours. To further support this, Hays found that only 40% of Malaysian employees would stay on their job because of work-life balance (The Star Online, 2017). It also appears that this trend was unexpected (Randstad, 2017), putting Malaysians in contrast with millennials worldwide. It is speculated that this may be caused by the general perception of Malaysia's weak economic outlook, putting priorities on job security rather than benefits.

Besides industry findings, academics also found that national culture moderates the relationships between work-life balance and individual outcomes (Haar, Russo, Suñe, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2014). Including cultural dimensions in work-life balance (i.e. Leisure) research is necessary to obtain accurate results. Furthermore, it is found that in Asian cultures, work life balance is perceived as more important to women than for men, while in Anglo-centric culture it is equally important for workers with family responsibilities, regardless of gender (Chandra, 2012). The differences in cultural norms could explain the differing results of our research in contrast with established academic findings.

It can be concluded that while work-life balances are highly sought after in more developed cultures, Malaysians actually have a different priority in regards to leisure rewards; it is only considered good to have, and hence does not affect engagement.

The differences in engagement levels between the generational cohorts could also be attributed to many factors. Such differences can arise from the different generational experiences that influenced on human behavior (Glass, 2007). Personality factors and temperament might also possibly contribute to the observed results (Langelaan, Bakker, van Doornen, & Schaufeli, 2006). Based on our results, younger Gen-Y cohort (17-25 age groups) exhibited no significant difference in engagement level when compared to Generation X; but there are significant differences when compared with Baby Boomers. The results of this study indicated a significant difference between Baby Boomer generation and the other two cohorts. The Baby Boomer generation are the most engaged among the 3 generations, supporting the findings by Gallup (2013) and Hoole & Bonnema (2015).

Older Gen-Y members are relatively new to the workforce and therefore they need to affiliate themselves to become part of the organization (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008); in addition, older Gen-Y have limited opportunity for training and career recognition (Fenzel, 2013) as compared to Gen-X who have worked relatively longer. As such, this might have led to the differences in employee engagement levels.

Our findings show that four of our hypotheses have been accepted while two have been rejected.

Hypothesis	Description	Result
H1	Intrinsic rewards have a positive impact on employee engagement.	Accepted
H2	Extrinsic rewards have a positive impact on employee engagement.	Accepted
H3	Social rewards have a positive impact on employee engagement.	Rejected
H4	Altruistic rewards have a positive impact on employee engagement.	Accepted
H5	Leisure rewards have a positive impact on employee engagement.	Rejected
H6	There are differences between the generational cohorts in terms of employee engagement.	Accepted

TABLE 9: Summary of Hypothesis Acceptance.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

There are four accepted hypotheses, three of which are in-line with the construct's hypotheses, namely Intrinsic, Extrinsic and Altruistic Rewards positively impact engagement among Gen-Y in Malaysia. The fourth hypothesis that there are generational differences in engagement levels is also accepted.

On the construct of Intrinsic, the recommendations to human resource practitioners and people managers would be to rethink how job design is done. Each function should be made more challenging and flexible; removing the mundane and menial as much as possible. Manual and repetitive tasks should be eliminated altogether or fully automated. If any responsibility can be made into a more entrepreneur-like nature, that would be highly desirable (Martin, 2005). Additionally, programs for identified talent pool should involve a structured job-rotation that allows learning of new skills and exposure. This is essential to keep the engagement high as organisations may not be able to promote employees continuously.

Over at the extrinsic area, it is essential that compensations match the markets' rates to retain Gen-Y employees. However, beyond having the right pay, to improve engagement it is recommended that a more modernized benefits scheme be introduced. For instance, a type of 'flexible benefits' allows the organisations to keep the cost almost at parity while having the flexibility to cater to the needs of their Gen-Y employees better. Gen-Y, from a health perspective

are statistically less in need of medical attention and have fewer or even no dependents, may opt to 'exchange' their medical insurance premiums for more time-off to increase their paid leaves.

In the area of Altruistic, it is not enough to have traditional corporate social responsibility ("CSR") programs such as visitations to old folks' homes or orphanages. These are seen as transactional and do not have lasting impact on the recipients of the programs. It is suggested that sustainable social entrepreneur-type of CSR that brings lasting and scalable projects has the potential to bring much more engagement to both the employees and more benefits to the community they serve (Visser, 2013). In the recent years, businesses have been integrating environmental, social and governance (ESG) into their workplace, providing the employees a clear connection to something essential – a purpose larger than an individual role. Helping the community, in turn helps building employee morale and boost engagement level (Henisz et al., 2019).

Although this study offers several useful insights for readers, some limitations should be noted. On the fourth accepted hypothesis, where the older generations are found to be more engaged than Gen-Y, the differences were not very pronounced. There are limited data points to conclusively identify the root cause of these differences. More research is recommended to study in greater depth, especially in the intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic constructs, among the generation cohorts. This is because these three constructs were found to have a positive impact on employee engagement comparatively with social and leisure constructs. The second limitation is the disproportionate age group sample size and work sector, which may have caused inconsistency due to individuals' level of maturation and experience, rather than generational difference. Furthermore, another study (Gan & Yusof, 2018) showed that findings on Gen Y preference between intrinsic rewards and extrinsic rewards are not consistent throughout the years. To overcome this limitation, it is suggested to conduct a longitudinal study in which individuals of same age group are compared over different time period in a different sector, with a proportionate sample size. Thirdly, researchers began to perceive the need to determine the actual generation cohorts in their respective countries, given the practicability as the existing generational framework was popularized in United States. This is because cohort's values and attitudes are shaped and determined by their attachment to the external events which are different across countries. As such, future studies may delve into the values and lifestyles of each generation cohort, and the differences across the cohorts in greater detail to look into the implication of generations on the subjects under investigation (Ting et al., 2018).

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Appendix 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

PART A: Demographics

1. Please indicate your Gender
 - Male
 - Female

2. Please indicate your Age Group
 - 17 – 25
 - 26 – 37
 - 38 – 57
 - 58 and above

3. Please indicate the Race you affiliate with
 - Malay
 - Chinese
 - Indian
 - Others

4. Please indicate the total years of working experience you have
 - 1 – 5
 - 6 – 10
 - 11 – 15
 - 16 – 20
 - 21 – 25
 - 26 – 30
 - 31 and above

5. Please indicate your employment sector
 - Privately held company
 - Government-linked company
 - Public-listed company
 - Non-governmental organization

6. Please indicate the position you are holding in your current employment
 - Non-Executive
 - Junior/Senior Executive
 - Manager (Junior/Assistant/Senior)
 - General Manager / Director
 - Others (Pls specify) _____

7. Which of the following best describes your monthly income?
 - Below RM5,000
 - RM5,000 – RM9,999
 - RM10,000 – RM19,999
 - RM20,000 – RM49,999

- RM50,000 or above
- Prefer not to answer

PART B: Engagement Level

The following statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and select the choice most indicative of how you feel. On a five-point scale, where “5” is strongly agree and “1” is strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
This job is all consuming; I am totally into it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am highly engaged in this job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being a member of this organization is very captivating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being a member of this organization make me come “alive”	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being a member of this organization is exhilarating for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am highly engaged in this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PART C: Workplace Factors

The following statements are about your job or workplace. Please read each statement carefully and select the choice most indicative of your experience. On a five-point scale, where “5” is strongly agree and “1” is strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
My job allows me to have long vacation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have an interesting job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a high status and prestige job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job gives me chances to make friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job leaves a lot of time for other things in my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most people look up to and respect my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a job that is worthwhile to society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job permits contact with a lot of people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have an easy pace job that allows me to work slowly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job pays me a good deal of money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job allows me to expand my social network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job allows me to see the results of my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job gives me good chances for advancement and promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job allows me to perform meaningful contributions to society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job allows me to have fun after working hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job allows me to utilize my skills and abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job provides 'fun at work'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job allows me to be who I am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job allows me to have a positive impact on my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job allows me to collaborate with other Colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job allows me to be creative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 2: SUMMARY OF PILOT TEST

A checklist item was used to get respondents to fill it up during the pilot test which contains questions such as if simple words are used, if there is any ambiguity in the questions, etc.

Summary of key comments obtained from the first pilot test are as below:

No	Comment	Action taken
1	Simple and straightforward questionnaire	N/A
2	For part B, segmenting the questions by rewards may introduce bias as the reader knows the underlying constructs for the questions.	The questions in part B were merged as one and shuffled.
3	For part C, "I have no intention to search for a new job in the next 12 months" and "If I have my own way, I will still be working for this organization one year from now" may have similar meaning.	The whole questions for part B were reconstructed. Hence, this comment was disregarded.

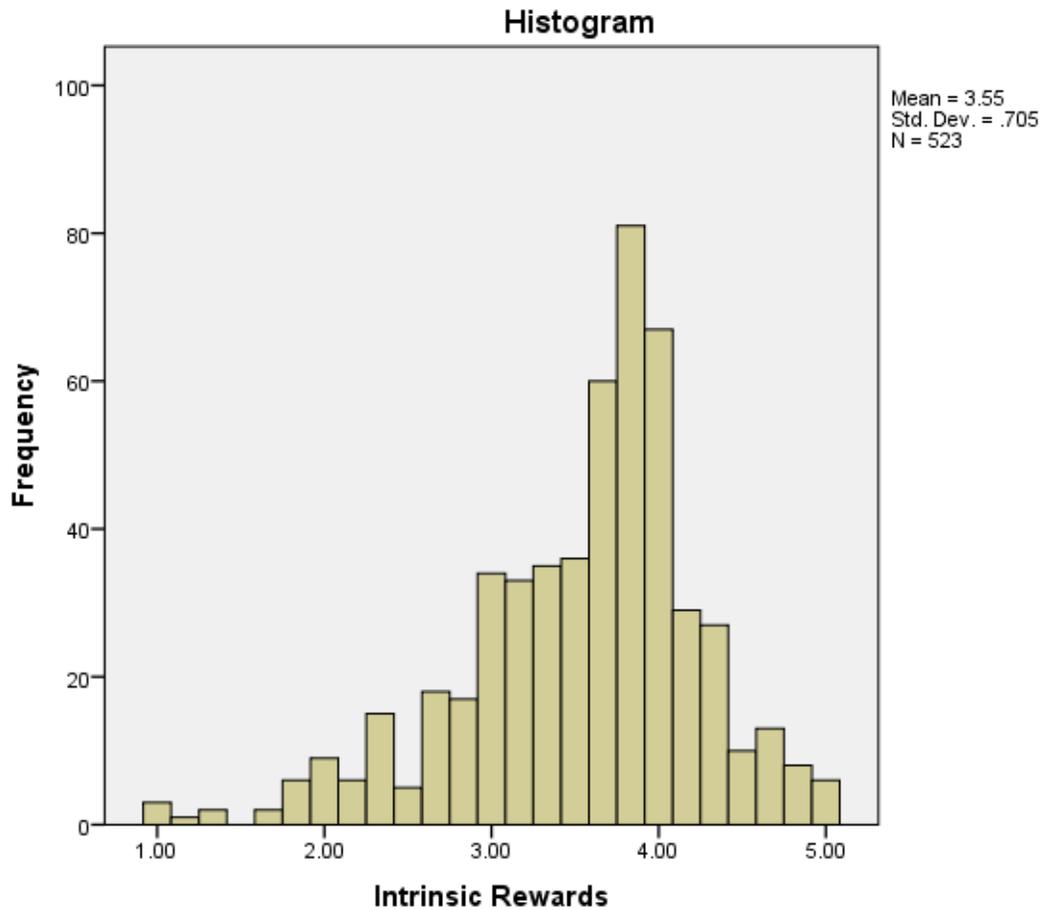
Appendix 3: NORMALITY TEST

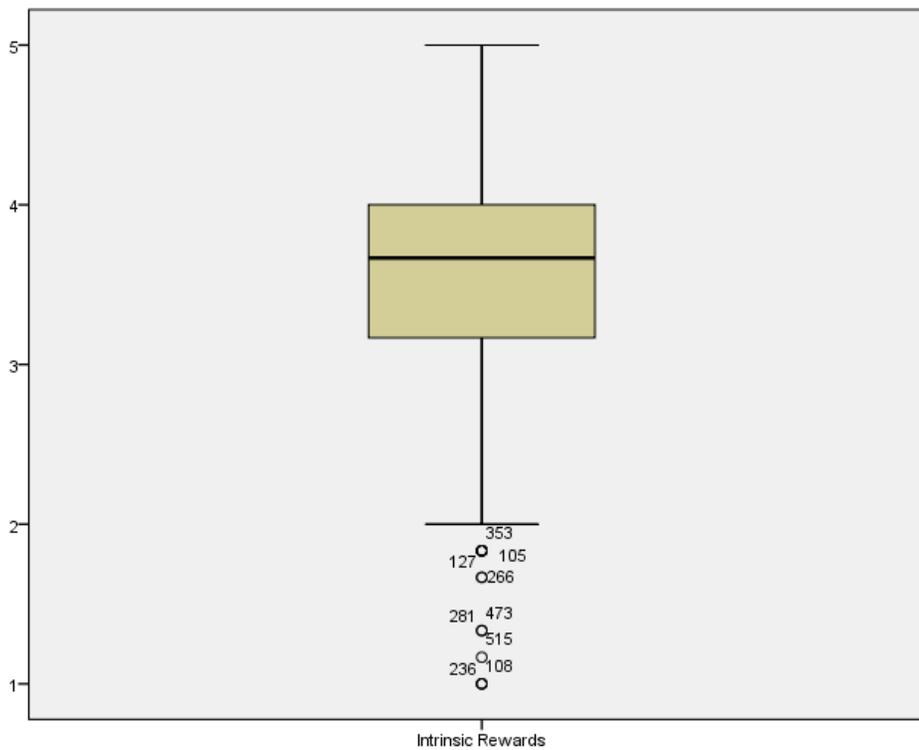
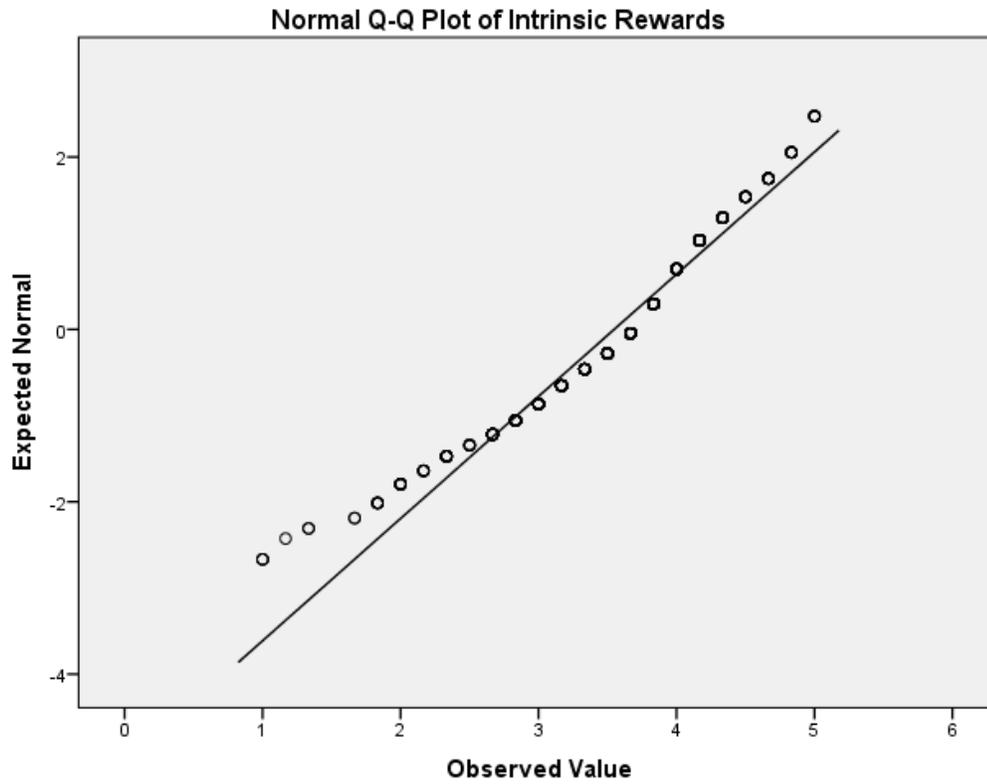
Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Intrinsic Rewards	.142	523	.000	.953	523	.000
Extrinsic Rewards	.116	523	.000	.974	523	.000
Social Rewards	.163	523	.000	.948	523	.000
Altruistic Rewards	.125	523	.000	.966	523	.000
Leisure Rewards	.084	523	.000	.980	523	.000
Employee Engagement	.112	523	.000	.963	523	.000

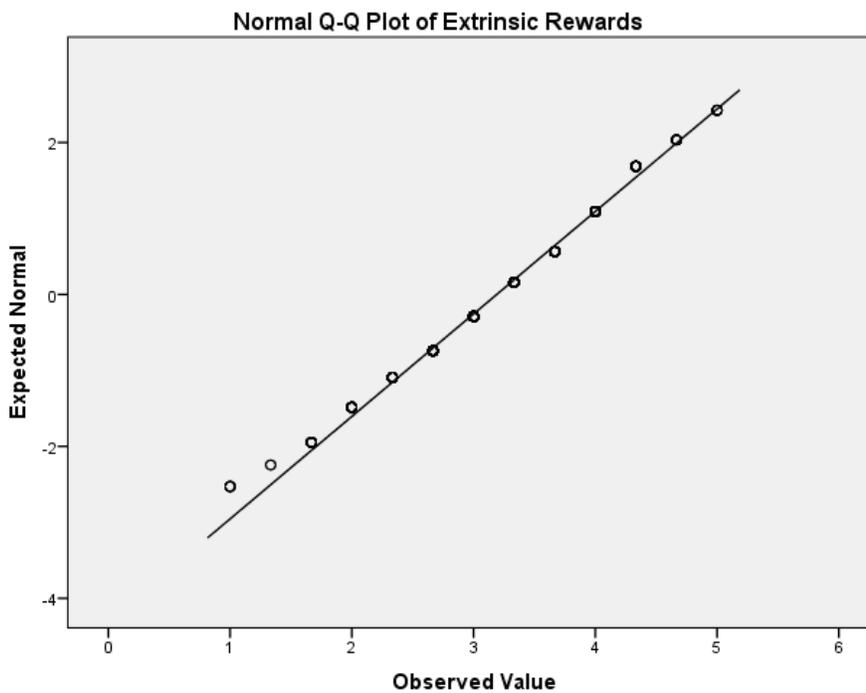
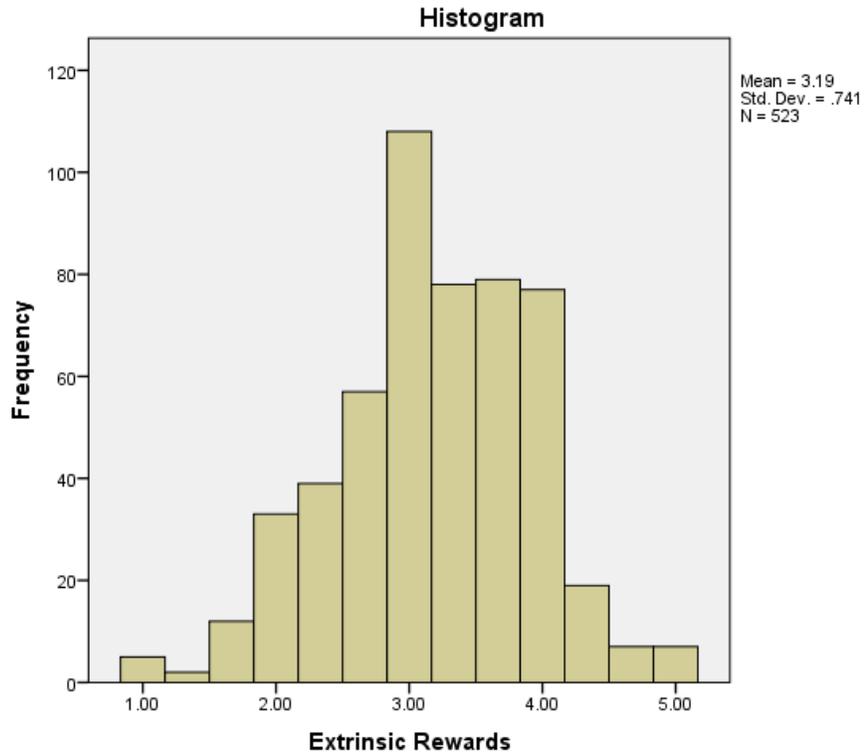
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

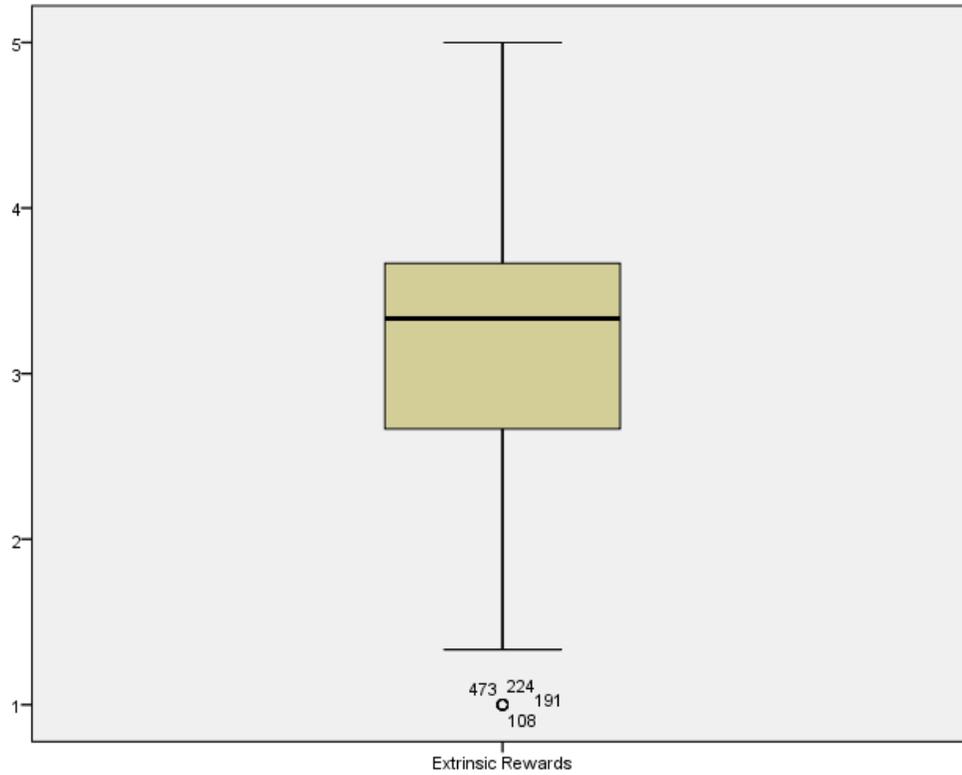
Appendix 3.1: HISTOGRAM, NORMAL Q-Q PLOT & BOX PLOT (INTRINSIC REWARDS)



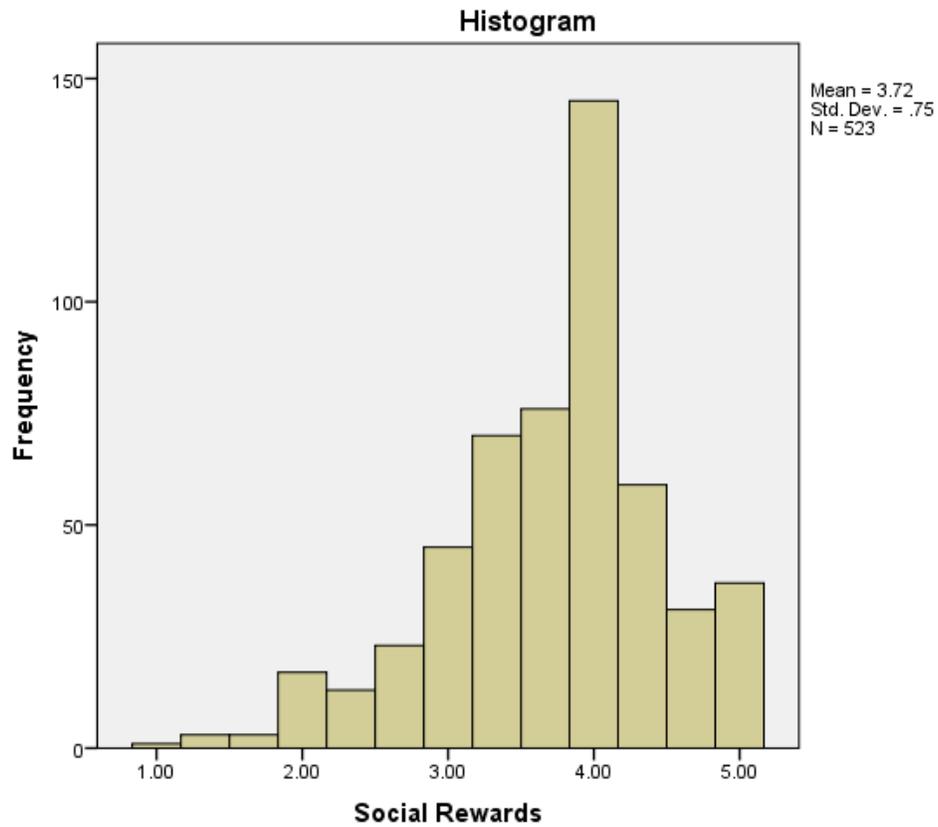


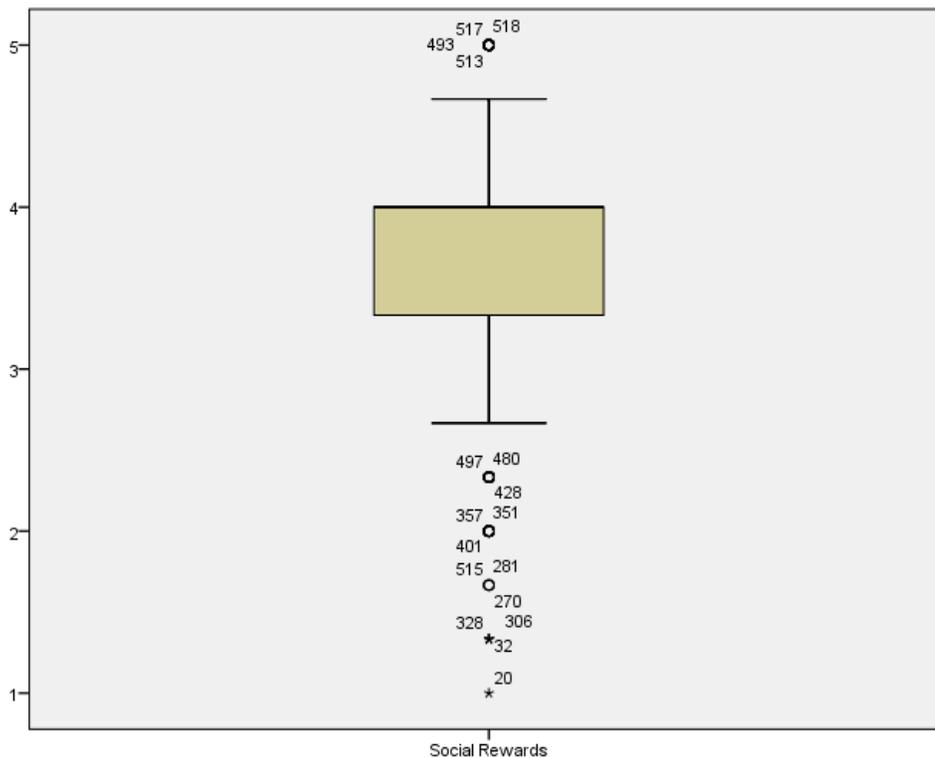
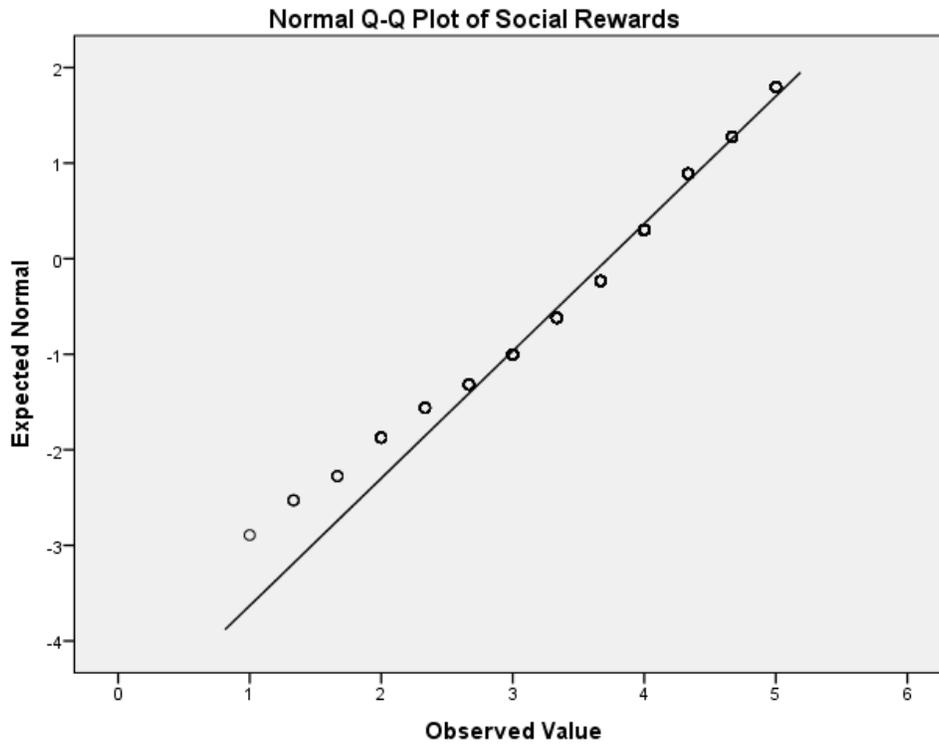
Appendix 3.2: HISTOGRAM, NORMAL Q-Q PLOT & BOX PLOT (EXTRINSIC REWARDS)



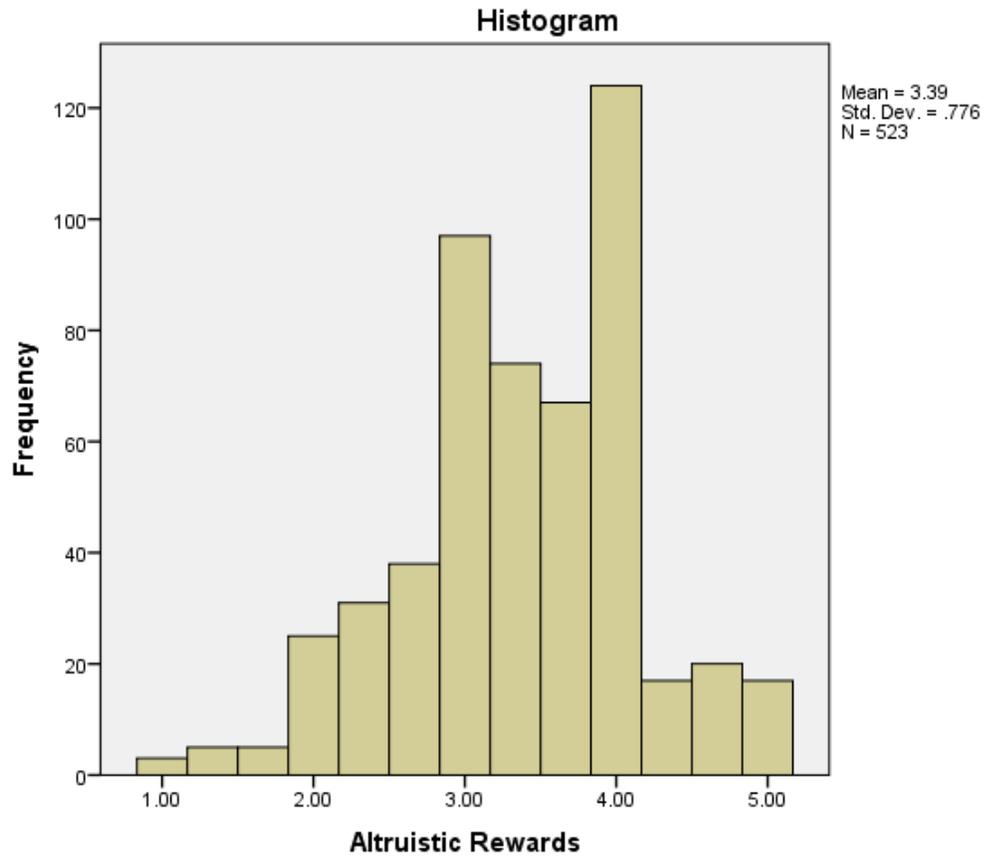


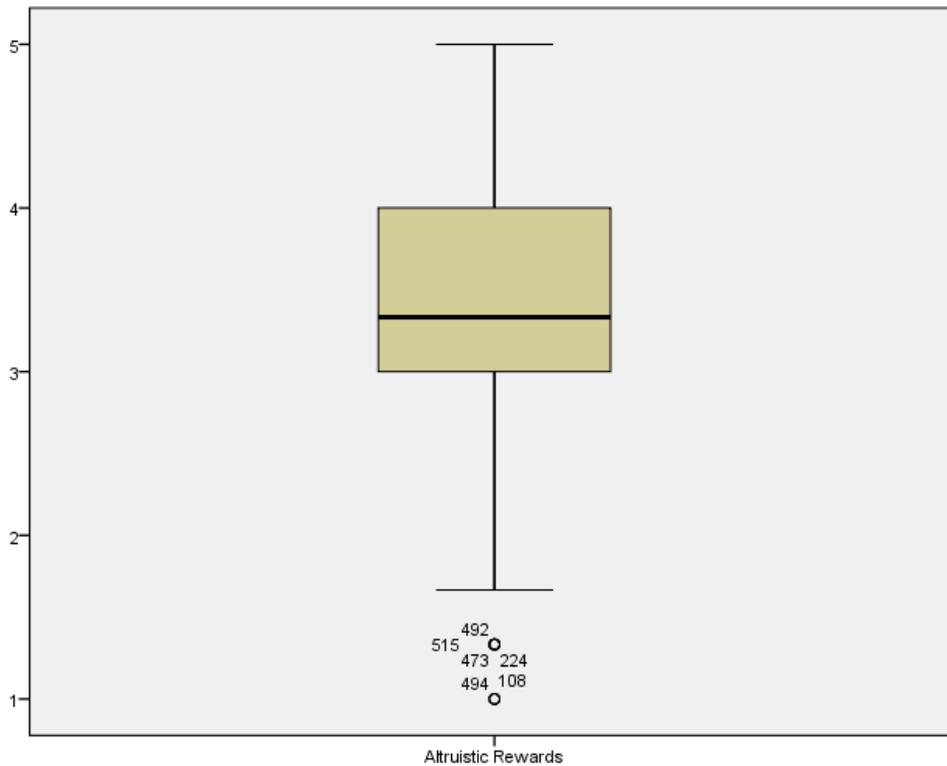
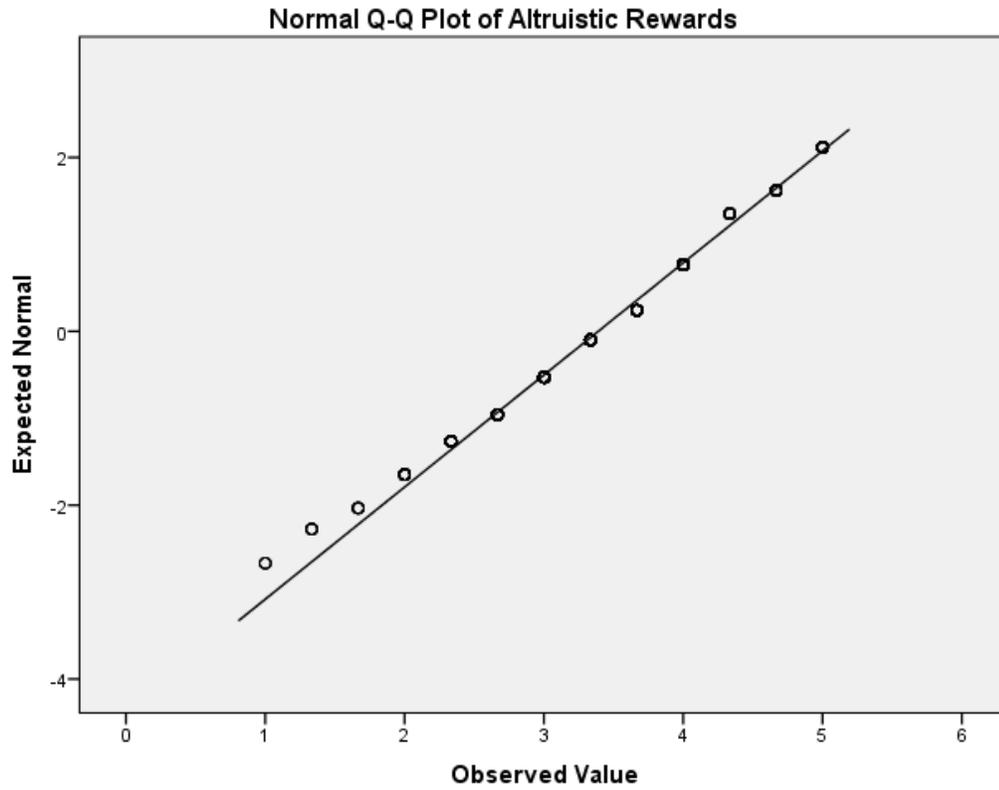
Appendix 3.3: HISTOGRAM, NORMAL Q-Q PLOT & BOX PLOT (SOCIAL REWARDS)



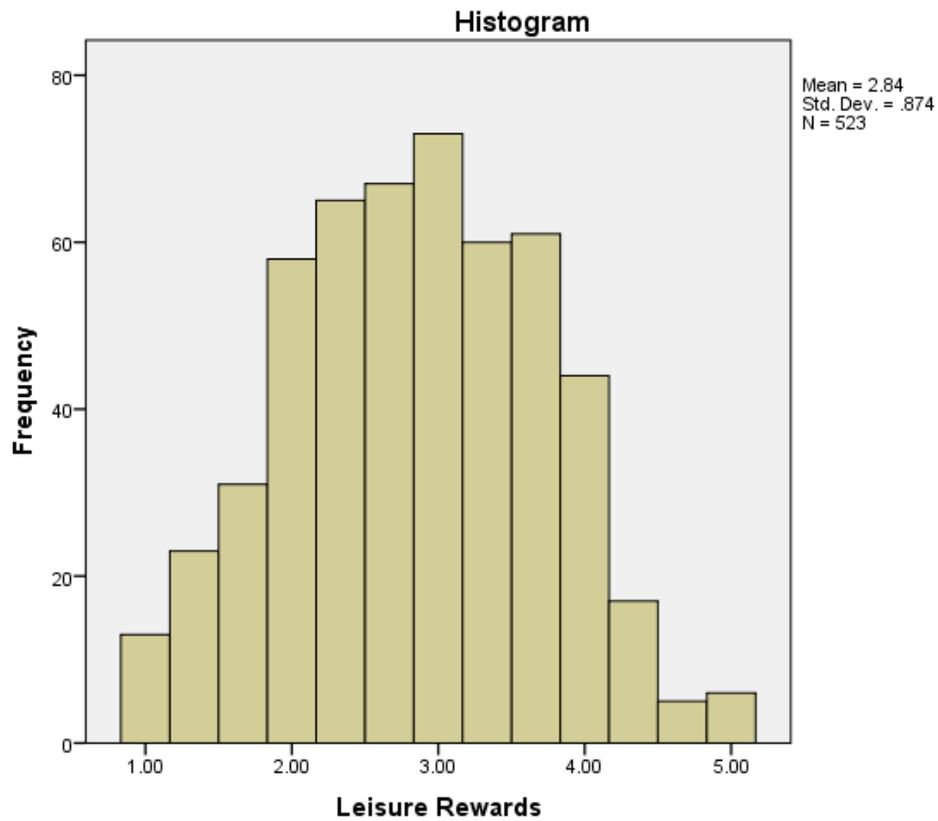


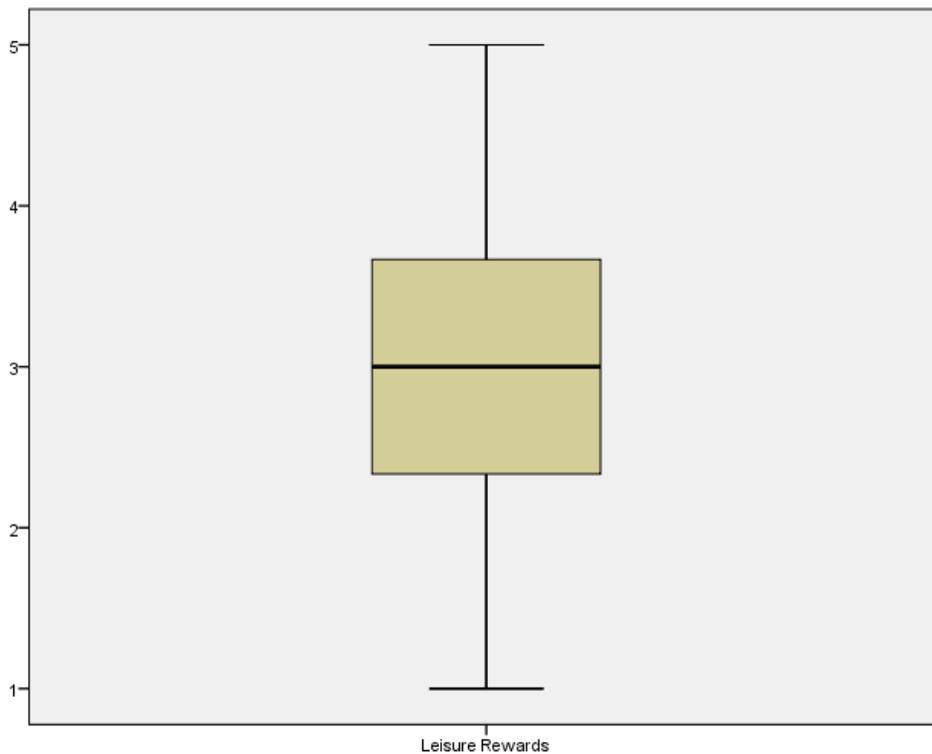
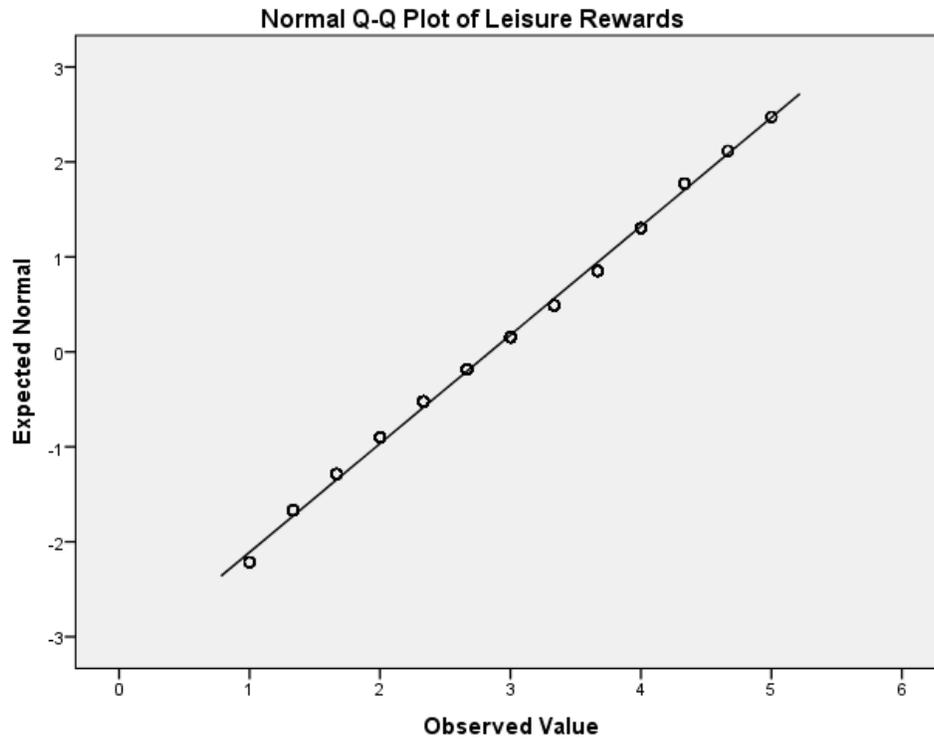
Appendix 3.4: HISTOGRAM, NORMAL Q-Q PLOT & BOX PLOT (ALTRUISTIC REWARDS)



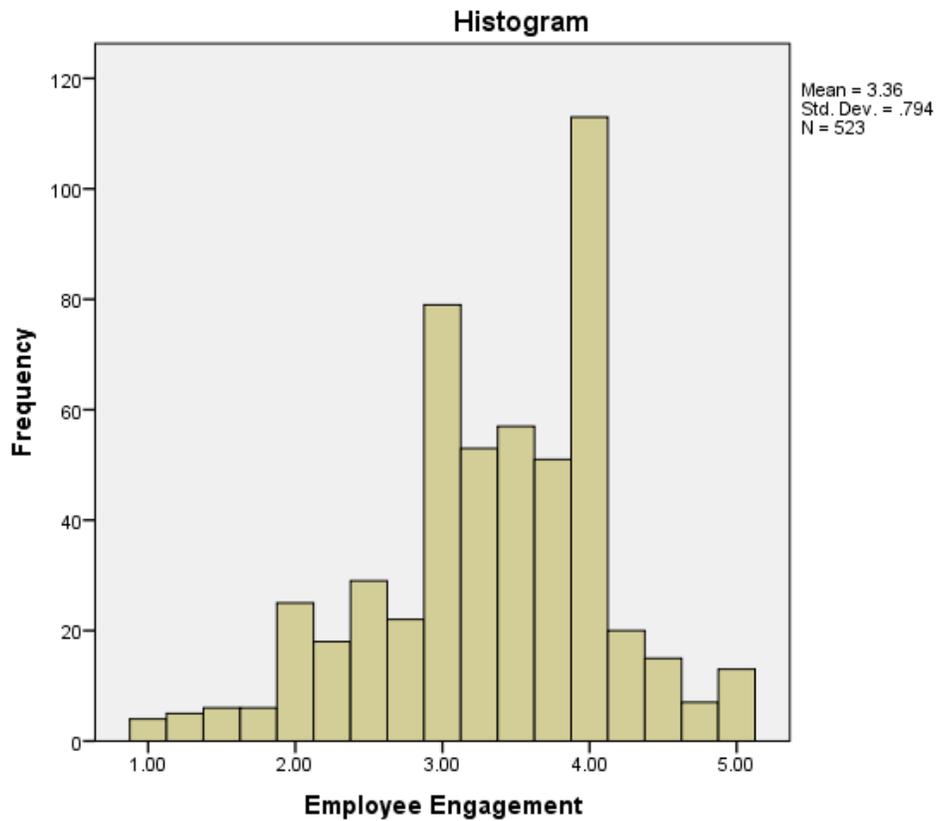


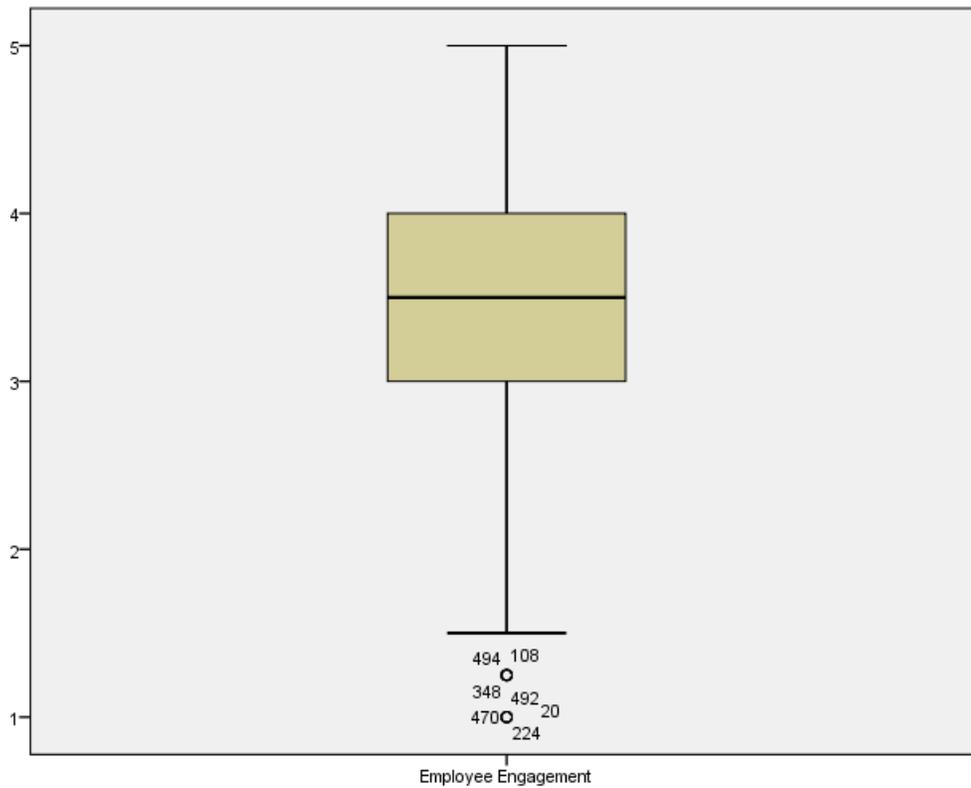
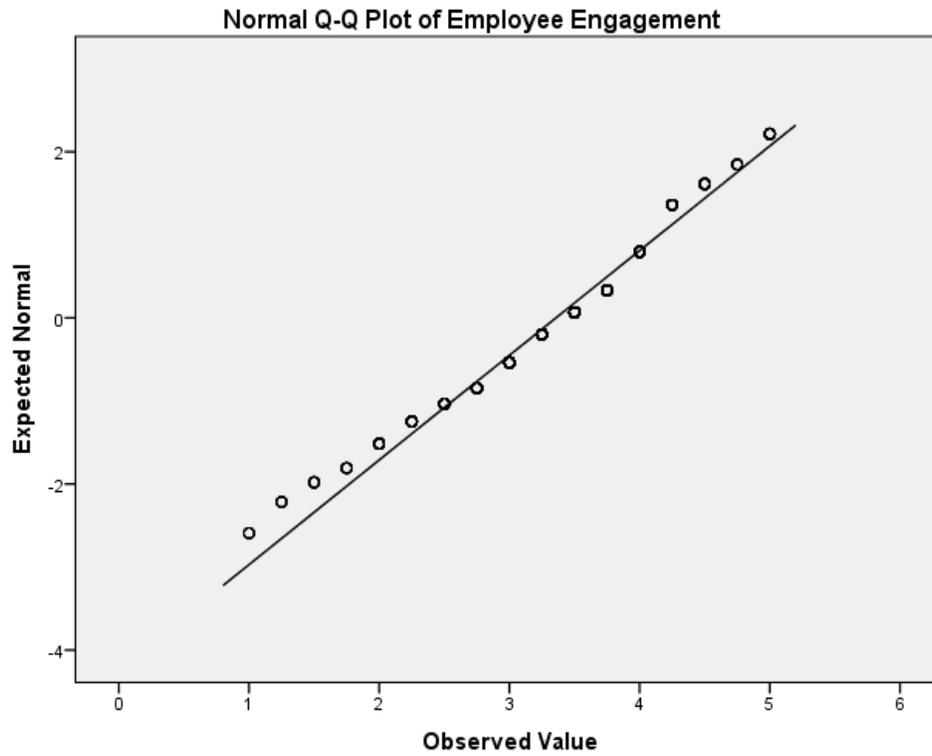
Appendix 3.5: HISTOGRAM, NORMAL Q-Q PLOT & BOX PLOT (LEISURE REWARDS)





Appendix 3.6: HISTOGRAM, NORMAL Q-Q PLOT & BOX PLOT (EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT)





Appendix 4: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ON RESPONDENT PROFILE

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	236	45%
	Female	287	55%
Age group	17-25	51	10%
	26-37	335	64%
	38-57	130	25%
	58 and above	7	1%
Race	Malay	56	11%
	Chinese	368	70%
	Indian	84	16%
	Others	15	3%
Working experience	1-5 years	158	30%
	6-10 years	159	30%
	11-15 years	86	16%
	16-20 years	65	12%
	21-25 years	28	5%
	26-30 years	12	2%
	31 and above	15	3%
Employment sector	Privately held company	322	62%
	Government linked company	39	8%
	Public listed company	149	28%
	Non-governmental organization	13	2%
Position	Non-executive	40	8%
	Junior/Senior executive	428	41%
	Manager	693	44%
	(Junior/Assistant/Senior) General Manager/ Director	152	7%
Monthly income	Below RM5,000	191	37%
	RM5,000-RM9,999	189	36%
	RM10,000-RM19,999	93	18%
	RM20,000-RM49,999	15	3%
	RM50,000 and above	8	2%
	Prefer not to answer	27	5%

Appendix 5: LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS**Model Summary^b**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.580 ^a	.336	.330	.60188	2.035

a. Predictors: (Constant), Intrinsic Rewards, Extrinsic Rewards, Social Rewards, Altruistic Rewards, Leisure Rewards.

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	89.436	5	17.887	49.377	.000 ^b
Residual	176.421	487	.362		
Total	265.858	492			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Intrinsic Rewards, Extrinsic Rewards, Social Rewards, Altruistic Rewards, Leisure Rewards.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	.834	.195		4.270	.000		
Intrinsic Rewards	.418	.057	.363	7.306	.000	.552	1.812
Extrinsic Rewards	.154	.049	.147	3.153	.002	.627	1.596
Social Rewards	.013	.047	.011	.271	.787	.775	1.290
Leisure Rewards	-.015	.033	-.018	-.457	.648	.905	1.105
Altruistic Rewards	.169	.048	.170	3.531	.000	.587	1.703

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

Appendix 6: ONE-WAY ANOVA**Descriptives**

Employee Engagement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
17-25	47	3.3404	.86355	.12596	3.0869	3.5940	1.25	5.00
26-37	315	3.3714	.68548	.03862	3.2954	3.4474	1.50	5.00
38-57	124	3.5363	.79486	.07138	3.3950	3.6776	1.50	5.00
58 and above	7	4.0357	.39340	.14869	3.6719	4.3995	3.50	4.50
Total	493*	3.4194	.73509	.03311	3.3543	3.4844	1.25	5.00

*Note: N=493 due to removal of 30 outliers (from N=523) during Normality Test.

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Employee Engagement

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.346	3	489	.072

ANOVA

Employee Engagement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.371	3	1.790	3.361	.019
Within Groups	260.486	489	.533		
Total	265.858	492			

Multiple ComparisonsDependent Variable: Employee Engagement
LSD

(I) A2	(J) A2	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	26-37	-.03100	.11413	.786	-.2552	.1932
17-25	38-57	-.19586	.12502	.118	-.4415	.0498
	58 and above	-.69529*	.29569	.019	-1.2763	-.1143
	17-25	.03100	.11413	.786	-.1932	.2552
26-37	38-57	-.16486*	.07738	.034	-.3169	-.0128
	58 and above	-.66429*	.27891	.018	-1.2123	-.1163
	17-25	.19586	.12502	.118	-.0498	.4415
38-57	26-37	.16486*	.07738	.034	.0128	.3169
	58 and above	-.49942	.28354	.079	-1.0565	.0577
	17-25	.69529*	.29569	.019	.1143	1.2763
58 and above	26-37	.66429*	.27891	.018	.1163	1.2123
	38-57	.49942	.28354	.079	-.0577	1.0565

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.