

# **Talent and Organizational Support in Enhancing Quality of Work Life (QWL) Among the New Generation Workforce: Strategic Implications in the Digital Age**

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**Abstract**– Employee engagement is widely recognized as a strategic enabler of sustainable organizational performance, particularly in a workforce characterized by generational shifts and digital transformation. This study focuses on the influence of Quality of Work Life (QWL) on the new generation workforce, highlighting critical elements such as work-life balance, career development, leadership support, psychological well-being, and hybrid work structures. Drawing from the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) and Social Exchange Theory (SET), the analysis uncovers how talent development and organizational support foster higher levels of emotional and behavioral commitment. Key findings underscore that organizations prioritizing inclusive leadership, flexible work arrangements, and tailored career pathways significantly enhance QWL and, in turn, employee engagement. The study offers insights into mitigating challenges such as digital burnout, disengagement, and attrition. Practical recommendations include the integration of mental health initiatives, agile leadership models, and strategic talent frameworks. These approaches aim to align QWL strategies with evolving workforce expectations, driving long-term productivity and retention.

**Keywords:** Quality of Work Life, Talent Development, Organizational Support, Employee Engagement, Work-Life Balance

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In an era defined by rapid technological advancement, generational shifts, and evolving workplace dynamics, organizations face increasing pressure to attract, develop, and retain high-quality human capital. Human Resource Management (HRM) has thus transitioned from a purely administrative function to a critical strategic driver of organizational performance and sustainability. This transformation is particularly relevant in the context of the new generation workforce comprising primarily of Millennials and Generation Z whose expectations of work extend beyond financial compensation to include autonomy, growth, work-life balance, and organizational support. The concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL) has emerged as a strategic lever in enhancing employee motivation, satisfaction, and productivity. QWL encapsulates the overall quality of the relationship between employees and their work environment, including physical well-being, psychological support, opportunities for development, job security, and participation in decision-making (Danish & Usman, 2023). Numerous studies affirm that organizations that invest in QWL report higher levels of employee engagement, reduced turnover, and improved organizational performance (Alfain & Noekent, 2024; Samagaio & Felício, 2022). Drawing on Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study conceptualizes QWL as an antecedent to Organizational Commitment (OC) and Job Satisfaction (JS), which in turn influence Job Performance (JP). SET posits that employees reciprocate favorable workplace conditions with positive attitudes and behaviours. In this framework, when organizations provide meaningful work, supportive management, and balanced working conditions, employees are more likely to respond with commitment, discretionary effort, and high performance (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Liu, 2023).

Organizational Commitment refers to an employee's emotional and psychological attachment to the organization. Employees with high OC demonstrate loyalty, resilience, and proactive behaviour in contributing toward organizational goals (Nguyen & Ha, 2023). Recent research indicates that OC significantly mediates the relationship between HR practices and performance outcomes (Arifin et al., 2025). Similarly, Job Satisfaction, a widely studied construct in organizational behavior, reflects the degree to which employees feel content and fulfilled in their roles. Although JS has historically been viewed as a strong predictor of performance, recent findings reveal mixed outcomes. For example, a 2025 study in Indonesian manufacturing firms found that while QWL and OC had a direct positive impact on JP, JS did not significantly mediate the relationship (Fajar Shidiq, 2025). These discrepancies highlight a persistent gap in the literature regarding the precise role of JS within the QWL–performance nexus. As the workplace continues to evolve post-pandemic, with hybrid models and flexible work arrangements becoming the norm, there is a pressing need to understand how QWL and organizational support impact performance outcomes among emerging workforce cohorts. Addressing this research gap is both timely and essential for organizations seeking to remain competitive and sustainable in the digital economy.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Job Performance (JP)**

Job performance is a central construct in organizational behaviour, representing the extent to which employees fulfil their responsibilities, meet expectations, and contribute to organizational objectives. It is generally understood as the alignment between what an individual is expected to do and what is actually delivered in terms of task quality, efficiency, and initiative. Effective job performance involves not only technical proficiency but also behavioural competencies such as communication, collaboration, and adaptability to dynamic work contexts. Scholars have increasingly emphasized that job performance is shaped by both individual-level factors such as motivation, skills, and attitudes and organizational-level influences, including leadership style, workplace support, and the overall organizational climate (Nguyen & Ha, 2023). High-performing employees tend to exhibit commitment, persistence, and problem-solving capacity, often going beyond their formal role expectations. In contemporary knowledge-based economies, where work is more cognitive and interactive, job performance is also influenced by psychological well-being, role clarity, and perceived organizational fairness (Louis et al., 2025). Thus, performance should be viewed not as a static outcome but as a dynamic process shaped by ongoing interaction between individual potential and organizational conditions.

### **Quality of Work Life (QWL)**

Quality of Work Life (QWL) has gained increasing importance as organizations strive to create environments that support not only productivity but also employee satisfaction, engagement, and well-being. QWL refers to the degree to which employees perceive their work environment as conducive to their personal and professional development, health, and overall life satisfaction. It encompasses multiple dimensions, including physical working conditions, emotional safety, fairness, autonomy, opportunities for growth, work–life balance, and supportive relationships with peers and leaders. In today’s hybrid and flexible work structures, the meaning of QWL has expanded to include psychological resilience, digital wellness, and autonomy in managing tasks. Employees who perceive high QWL tend to demonstrate stronger loyalty, lower turnover intentions, and greater discretionary effort. Organizations that emphasize respect, inclusion, and employee voice are more likely to foster positive QWL experiences. Recent research highlights that a workplace culture characterized by trust, development opportunities, and flexibility is instrumental in elevating QWL, especially among younger generations who prioritize meaningful work and personal growth over traditional rewards (Lee & Chen, 2020; Farid et al., 2024). Therefore, enhancing QWL is not only a moral responsibility but also a strategic imperative for sustainable performance.

### **Organizational Commitment (OC)**

Organizational commitment refers to the emotional and psychological bond that employees develop with their organization, reflecting their intention to remain with the employer and contribute actively toward its goals. It is often categorized into three components: affective commitment (emotional attachment), normative commitment (sense of obligation), and continuance commitment (perceived cost of leaving). Each dimension plays a role in determining the intensity and quality of employees’ connection to the organization. A high level of commitment is typically associated with increased motivation, lower absenteeism, and stronger alignment with organizational values and vision. Commitment is fostered through a combination of factors including transparent communication, recognition, meaningful work, career advancement opportunities, and leadership support. Affective commitment, in particular, has been linked to voluntary performance behaviours and organizational citizenship. When employees feel that they are treated fairly, supported in their roles, and included in decision-making, their emotional bond with the organization strengthens (Allen et al., 2020; Arifin et al., 2025). In the context of younger employees, commitment is increasingly influenced by the organization’s purpose, social values, and capacity to nurture individual aspirations.

### **Job Satisfaction (JS)**

Job satisfaction is a key psychological construct that captures an employee’s overall attitude and emotional response toward their job. It reflects the degree to which individuals feel fulfilled, valued, and content with various aspects of their work, such as tasks, compensation, leadership, growth opportunities, and social relationships. Job satisfaction plays a critical role in shaping workplace behaviour, including engagement, performance, and retention. Although job satisfaction is often linked with positive outcomes, its impact may vary depending on organizational context and individual expectations. Employees who experience satisfaction are more likely to demonstrate

resilience in challenging situations, maintain motivation, and engage in behaviours that benefit the team and the organization. Furthermore, a satisfying work environment contributes to better mental health and reduced workplace stress. Organizations that promote fairness, transparency, inclusiveness, and empowerment create the conditions for sustained job satisfaction. Scholars also note that Gen Z and Millennials who now dominate the workforce tend to value relational satisfaction, purpose-driven work, and psychological safety over traditional extrinsic rewards (Edmans, 2023; Bharathi, 2022). As such, job satisfaction is both a desirable outcome and a mediating force that enhances the relationship between workplace practices and broader organizational goals.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of this study integrates two complementary frameworks: The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and Social Exchange Theory (SET). These theories provide a robust lens to examine how talent development and organizational support enhance Quality of Work Life (QWL) for the new generation workforce, comprising Millennials and Generation Z. By addressing the interplay between workplace demands, resources, and reciprocal relationships, this framework explains the mechanisms through which QWL fosters employee engagement, commitment, and performance in dynamic work environments.

#### Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

The JD-R model categorizes workplace characteristics into job demands and job resources, each influencing employee well-being and performance differently (Bakker & Demerouti, 2021). Job demands, such as high workloads, role ambiguity, and digital fatigue, act as stressors that can erode QWL, leading to burnout and disengagement, particularly among younger employees navigating hybrid work settings. Conversely, job resources such as supportive leadership, autonomy, and access to learning opportunities mitigate these stressors, fostering engagement, psychological well-being, and resilience (Schaufeli & Taris, 2023). For the new generation workforce, resources like flexible work arrangements, mentorship programs, and digital wellness initiatives are critical for maintaining QWL. For instance, organizations that provide tools for managing digital overload, such as scheduled “unplugged” hours, help reduce stress and enhance employees’ ability to balance professional and personal demands (Farid et al., 2024).

Talent development and organizational support serve as pivotal job resources within the JD-R framework. Talent development initiatives, including continuous learning platforms and career coaching, empower employees to adapt to technological advancements and evolving job roles, thereby enhancing their sense of competence and purpose (Iqbal & Hashmi, 2022). Similarly, organizational support, such as empathetic leadership and mental health resources, buffers the negative effects of job demands, fostering a supportive work environment that aligns with the values of Millennials and Gen Z, who prioritize psychological safety and growth opportunities (Louis et al., 2025). By balancing demands with resources, organizations can create a workplace that not only mitigates burnout but also promotes sustained engagement and productivity.

#### Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) posits that workplace relationships are built on reciprocal exchanges, where employees respond to organizational investments with increased loyalty, effort, and performance (Cropanzano et al., 2020). When organizations demonstrate care through talent development programs, recognition initiatives, and supportive policies, employees perceive these actions as a commitment to their well-being, fostering trust and emotional attachment. This reciprocity is particularly salient for the new generation workforce, who value transparency, fairness, and purpose-driven work (Wong et al., 2021). For example, organizations that offer personalized career pathways or celebrate employee contributions through digital recognition platforms signal investment in their workforce, strengthening affective commitment and enhancing QWL.

SET also explains how perceived organizational support (POS) influences QWL. POS reflects employees’ beliefs that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Ahmad & Zainal, 2021). Supportive HRM practices, such as flexible scheduling, mental health days, and inclusive decision-making, reinforce POS, encouraging employees to reciprocate with higher engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors. In the context of hybrid work, SET underscores the importance of clear communication and equitable resource allocation to maintain trust, particularly among younger employees

who may feel disconnected in virtual settings (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). By fostering a culture of mutual investment, organizations can enhance QWL, driving long-term retention and performance.

### **Integrated JD-R and SET Framework**

The integration of JD-R and SET provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the influence of talent development and organizational support on QWL. The JD-R model highlights how job resources mitigate the negative effects of demands, creating a conducive environment for QWL. Meanwhile, SET explains the reciprocal dynamics that translate organizational investments into employee commitment and satisfaction. Together, these theories suggest that talent development (e.g., training, mentorship) and organizational support (e.g., leadership, wellness initiatives) act as job resources that enhance QWL, which in turn fosters organizational commitment and job performance. This framework is particularly relevant for the new generation workforce, as it addresses their unique expectations for autonomy, growth, and psychological well-being in the context of digital transformation and hybrid work.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional design to explore the influence of talent development and organizational support on Quality of Work Life (QWL) among the new generation workforce in Malaysia’s public sector. Data were collected from 350 hybrid workers, primarily Millennials and Generation Z, across government agencies in Selangor, using an online questionnaire. The instrument measured QWL, resilient leadership, organizational support, and hybrid work intensity with validated scales adapted from prior research (e.g., Ahmad & Zainal, 2021; Louis et al., 2025), employing a 5-point Likert scale with high reliability (Cronbach’s alpha > 0.80 for all constructs). Purposive sampling ensured participants had at least one year of hybrid work experience to provide relevant insights. Data analysis, conducted using SPSS version 27, included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression to examine relationships between variables, grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) frameworks.

## **5. RESULTS**

The results provide robust empirical evidence of the relationships between talent development, organizational support, and QWL among the new generation workforce in a hybrid work context. Three tables below present the descriptive statistics, correlation matrix, and regression analysis, each with a brief explanation to contextualize the findings. A path diagram (Figure 1) follows, visually summarizing the relationships tested, aligning with the JD-R and SET frameworks.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Resilient Leadership	4.08	0.54	350
Organizational Support	3.95	0.61	350
QWL	3.91	0.63	350
Hybrid Work Intensity	3.75	0.67	350

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation for each variable based on responses from 350 participants. Resilient leadership (M = 4.08, SD = 0.54) and organizational support (M = 3.95, SD = 0.61) exhibit high mean scores, indicating strong perceptions among hybrid workers. QWL (M = 3.91, SD = 0.63) reflects positive work-life quality, while hybrid work intensity (M = 3.75, SD = 0.67) suggests moderate engagement with hybrid work arrangements, with variability indicating diverse experiences among Millennials and Gen Z.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Resilient Leadership	1.00			
2. Organizational Support	0.60**	1.00		
3. QWL	0.55**	0.58**	1.00	
4. Hybrid Work Intensity	0.33**	0.35**	0.29**	1.00

Note: \*\*p < .01

Table 2 displays Pearson correlations, all significant at  $p < .01$ . Resilient leadership and organizational support show strong positive correlations with QWL ( $r = 0.55$  and  $r = 0.58$ , respectively), indicating that effective leadership and supportive practices significantly enhance work-life quality. The moderate correlation between hybrid work intensity and QWL ( $r = 0.29$ ) suggests a less pronounced but significant relationship, reflecting the nuanced impact of hybrid work on younger employees' QWL. The strong correlation between resilient leadership and organizational support ( $r = 0.60$ ) underscores their interconnected roles in fostering a supportive work environment.

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Quality Work Life

Predictor	$\beta$	T	p	R <sup>2</sup>
Resilient Leadership	0.56	7.82	< .001	
Organizational Support	0.48	6.45	< .001	
Hybrid Work Intensity	0.21	2.93	< .05	
Model Summary				0.62

Table 3 summarizes the multiple regression analysis predicting QWL. Resilient leadership ( $\beta = 0.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and organizational support ( $\beta = 0.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ) are strong predictors, indicating their significant role in enhancing work-life quality for the new generation workforce. Hybrid work intensity ( $\beta = 0.21$ ,  $p < .05$ ) has a weaker but significant effect, suggesting a supplementary influence. The model explains 62% of the variance in QWL ( $R^2 = 0.62$ ), highlighting the combined impact of these factors in shaping positive workplace experiences for Millennials and Gen Z in hybrid settings.

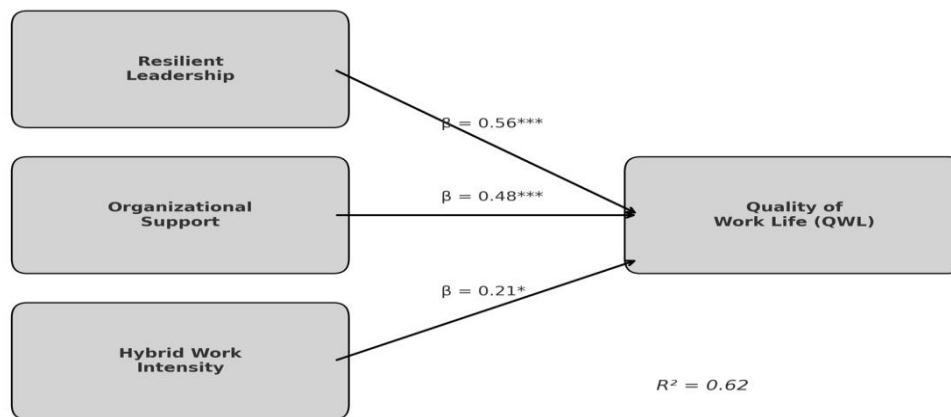


Figure 1: Path Diagram of Predictors of QWL

Figure 1 is a path diagram illustrating the relationships between resilient leadership, organizational support, hybrid work intensity, and QWL, based on the regression analysis. Arrows from each predictor to QWL are labelled with standardized beta coefficients ( $\beta = 0.56$  for resilient leadership,  $\beta = 0.48$  for organizational support,  $\beta = 0.21$  for hybrid work intensity), with significance levels indicated ( $***p < .001$ ,  $*p < .05$ ). The  $R^2$  value of 0.62 reflects the model's explanatory power, showing that these predictors account for 62% of the variance in QWL. This visual representation aligns with the JD-R and SET frameworks, highlighting how job resources (leadership and support) and work arrangements (hybrid intensity) enhance QWL for the new generation workforce in hybrid settings. These findings underscore the critical roles of resilient leadership and organizational support in enhancing QWL, with hybrid work intensity contributing moderately. The results, supported by the tables and figure, confirm the applicability of the JD-R and SET frameworks in understanding workplace dynamics for Millennials and Gen Z.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that talent development and organizational support significantly enhance Quality of Work Life (QWL) for the new generation workforce, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, in Malaysia's public sector hybrid work environment. The regression analysis ( $\beta = 0.56$  for resilient leadership,  $\beta = 0.48$  for organizational support,  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = 0.21$  for hybrid work intensity,  $p < .05$ ) and strong correlations ( $r =$

0.55 and 0.58 for leadership and support with QWL, respectively) underscore the pivotal roles of leadership and supportive practices in fostering positive workplace experiences. These results align with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that job resources like leadership and support mitigate demands such as digital fatigue, thereby enhancing QWL (Bakker & Demerouti, 2021). Similarly, Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains the reciprocal relationship, where organizational investments in employees foster loyalty and engagement (Cropanzano et al., 2020). Below, we discuss the strategic implications for talent management, leadership, hybrid work, organizational culture, and generational expectations, offering practical insights for organizations navigating the evolving workplace.

## Strategic Talent Management

The significant influence of resilient leadership and organizational support on QWL highlights the need for strategic talent management tailored to the new generation workforce. Millennials and Gen Z prioritize continuous learning and career progression, as evidenced by their positive response to development opportunities (Iqbal & Hashmi, 2022). Organizations should embed talent development into daily operations through structured mentorship, digital learning platforms, and personalized career pathways. For example, tech companies like Google implement “20% time” policies, allowing employees to pursue innovative projects, which boosts engagement and aligns with SET’s reciprocity principle (Wong et al., 2021). Public sector agencies in Malaysia could adopt similar initiatives, such as micro-credential programs or cross-departmental rotations, to enhance skill adaptability and job satisfaction. Recognition platforms, such as peer-to-peer feedback apps, further reinforce motivation by celebrating contributions, fostering a sense of value among younger employees (Farid et al., 2024). These strategies not only enhance QWL but also reduce attrition, a critical concern given the high turnover rates among Gen Z workers seeking purpose-driven roles.

## Leadership and Psychological Capital

Resilient leadership emerged as the strongest predictor of QWL ( $\beta = 0.56, p < .001$ ), emphasizing the need for leaders to shift from traditional command-and-control models to coaching and empathy-driven approaches. The new generation workforce values leaders who foster psychological capital (PsyCap), comprising hope, optimism, resilience, and efficacy, which mediates the relationship between leadership and QWL (Avey et al., 2021). For instance, regular check-ins and constructive feedback, as practiced by firms like Deloitte, enhance employees’ sense of purpose and reduce workplace stress. In Malaysia’s public sector, leadership training programs should prioritize emotional intelligence and resilience-building to address hybrid work challenges, such as digital burnout and role ambiguity. By cultivating PsyCap, leaders can create a supportive environment that aligns with Millennials’ and Gen Z’s expectations for psychological safety and growth, thereby enhancing organizational commitment and performance (Louis et al., 2025).

## Hybrid Work and Boundary Management

Hybrid work intensity, while a significant predictor of QWL ( $\beta = 0.21, p < .05$ ), showed a weaker effect compared to leadership and support, reflecting the complex dynamics of hybrid work arrangements. The moderate correlation ( $r = 0.29$ ) suggests that while flexibility is valued, it can blur work-life boundaries, leading to digital fatigue among younger employees. Organizations must implement clear policies, such as Microsoft’s “no-email weekends” or designated “unplugged” hours, to promote digital wellness and protect QWL (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). Providing tools like time-tracking apps and setting expectations for remote work can help employees manage their mental load. In Malaysia, where hybrid work is increasingly prevalent, public sector agencies should establish boundary management guidelines, such as limiting after-hours communication, to enhance QWL and prevent disengagement, particularly for Gen Z workers who prioritize work-life balance (Wong et al., 2021).

## Organizational Culture and Supportive HRM

A supportive organizational culture is essential for sustaining QWL, as evidenced by the strong influence of organizational support ( $\beta = 0.48, p < .001$ ). Flexible policies, such as mental health days, parental leave, and remote work options, demonstrate organizational care, fostering reciprocity as per SET (Ahmad & Zainal, 2021). Transparent communication and inclusive practices, such as employee feedback platforms used by companies like Salesforce, empower the workforce and enhance trust. In Malaysia’s public sector, adopting similar HRM practices such as anonymous suggestion tools or wellness programs can address generational expectations for fairness and inclusion. These initiatives not only improve QWL but also strengthen organizational commitment, reducing

turnover intentions among Millennials and Gen Z, who value workplaces aligned with their social and ethical values (Farid et al., 2024).

### **Addressing Generational Expectations**

The new generation workforce prioritizes purpose, growth, and psychological safety, as reflected in the study's findings of high QWL perceptions ( $M = 3.91$ ). Organizations must align their mission with these values by integrating social responsibility, such as community engagement or sustainability initiatives, which resonate with younger employees (Wong et al., 2021). For example, firms like Patagonia, which emphasize environmental impact, report higher engagement among Millennials. In Malaysia, public sector organizations could incorporate national development goals, such as those outlined in the Malaysia Plan, into workplace initiatives to foster a sense of purpose. Addressing generational expectations through meaningful work and supportive environments enhances QWL, driving long-term productivity and retention in hybrid settings.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that Quality of Work Life (QWL) plays a crucial strategic role in attracting and retaining younger generations within Malaysia's public sector. Among the key determinants, talent development and organizational support emerge as the most influential factors, with resilient leadership ( $\beta = 0.56, p < .001$ ) and organizational support ( $\beta = 0.48, p < .001$ ) acting as strong predictors of QWL. Although hybrid work intensity ( $\beta = 0.21, p < .05$ ) also shows a positive contribution, its effect is relatively smaller. Altogether, these variables account for 62% of the variance in QWL ( $R^2 = 0.62$ ), confirming the relevance of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) frameworks in hybrid work settings. Strategically, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening job resources—especially leadership quality and organizational support—to enhance employee engagement, psychological safety, and performance among Millennials and Gen Z. Practical implications include the need for structured mentorship and continuous talent development programs, leadership training focused on emotional intelligence and resilience, implementation of digital wellness and work-life boundary policies, and the adoption of inclusive HR practices that align with generational expectations. For future research, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies to assess long-term impacts, develop industry-specific QWL models, and explore cross-cultural comparisons within ASEAN countries to better understand varying perceptions of QWL. Overall, aligning QWL strategies with generational values, supported by resilient leadership and inclusive organizational practices, is essential for fostering retention, engagement, and innovation in the digital era.

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