

Investigating the Predictors of Job Security Among Gen Z in Manufacturing: A Quantitative Study in Taiping, Perak

Wan Norzubaidah Wan Muaz^{a,b}, Mohamad Ali Selimina^{a*}

^a*Department of Production and Operations Management, Faculty of Technology Management and Business, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, 86400, Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia*

^b*Pusat Tuisyen Impak Maksima & Impak Tinggi Enterprise, No. 1183A & 1184A Persiaran Putri 3/3, Taman Chandon Putri Fasa 3, 33000, Kuala Kangsar, Perak, Malaysia*

*Corresponding author: aliselimin@uthm.edu.my

Article history: Received: 16 March 2026 Received in revised form: 07 July 2026 Accepted: 28 July 2026 Published online: 17 September 2026

Abstract

The acceleration of automation alongside evolving workforce expectations has altered how job security is perceived, particularly among Generation Z (Gen Z) individuals entering the manufacturing sector. This study investigates the level, correlation, and influence of selected workplace factors on job security out of Gen Z employees in Taiping, Perak. The factors examined include employee empowerment, work-life balance, working environment, and leadership style. A quantitative approach was implemented through the use of a structured questionnaire administered to 130 respondents. Statistical analyses involved descriptive measures, Spearman's correlation, and multiple linear regression. The results indicate that all constructs achieved high mean values, suggesting generally favourable evaluations of current workplace conditions. Despite this, the regression findings reveal that only leadership style and work-life balance significantly contribute to job security perceptions. Leadership style shows the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.507$, $p < 0.001$), while work-life balance demonstrates a smaller yet statistically meaningful influence ($\beta = 0.155$, $p = 0.045$). The regression model accounts for 51.9% of the variance in job security, indicating a moderate level of explanatory strength. In contrast, employee empowerment and working environment do not present significant direct effects, implying that these elements function as foundational organisational conditions rather than primary explanatory factors. The findings indicate that job security among Gen Z is influenced more by psychological and relational aspects, particularly confidence in leadership and the ability to sustain personal well-being. These outcomes suggest that organisations should strengthen authentic leadership practices and implement effective work-life balance strategies to support retention and stability. Future investigations may consider mixed-method designs and incorporate additional variables, including career development, to enhance understanding of job security among this workforce group.

Keywords: Job security, Gen Z, employee empowerment, work-life balance, working environment, and leadership style

Abstrak

Perkembangan pesat automasi seiring dengan perubahan terhadap keperluan tenaga kerja telah mengubah persepsi terhadap keselamatan pekerjaan, khususnya dalam kalangan individu Generasi Z (Gen Z) yang mula menceburi sektor pembuatan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti tahap, hubungan dan pengaruh faktor tempat kerja yang dikenalpasti terhadap keselamatan pekerjaan dalam kalangan pekerja Gen Z di Taiping, Perak. Faktor yang dikaji merangkumi pemerkasaan pekerja, keseimbangan kerja-kehidupan, persekitaran kerja dan gaya kepimpinan. Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan melalui soal selidik berstruktur yang diagihkan kepada 130 orang responden. Analisis statistik melibatkan ukuran deskriptif, korelasi Spearman dan regresi linear berganda. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa semua konstruk mencatatkan nilai min yang tinggi, ini menunjukkan penilaian yang secara umumnya positif terhadap keadaan tempat kerja semasa. Walau bagaimanapun, dapatan regresi menunjukkan bahawa hanya gaya kepimpinan dan keseimbangan kerja-kehidupan memberikan sumbangan yang signifikan terhadap persepsi keselamatan pekerjaan. Gaya kepimpinan menunjukkan pengaruh yang paling kuat ($\beta = 0.507$, $p < 0.001$), manakala keseimbangan kerja-kehidupan menunjukkan pengaruh yang lebih kecil tetapi signifikan secara statistik ($\beta = 0.155$, $p = 0.045$). Model regresi menerangkan sebanyak 51.9% varians dalam keselamatan pekerjaan, yang menunjukkan tahap kekuatan penerangan yang sederhana. Sebaliknya, pemerkasaan pekerja dan persekitaran kerja tidak menunjukkan pengaruh langsung yang signifikan, yang mencadangkan bahawa kedua-dua elemen tersebut berfungsi sebagai keadaan asas organisasi dan bukannya faktor penjelas utama. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa keselamatan pekerjaan dalam kalangan Gen Z lebih dipengaruhi oleh aspek psikologi dan hubungan, khususnya keyakinan terhadap kepimpinan serta keupayaan untuk mengekalkan kesejahteraan diri. Dapatan ini mencadangkan agar organisasi memperkukuh amalan kepimpinan yang autentik dan melaksanakan strategi keseimbangan kerja-kehidupan yang berkesan bagi menyokong pengkekalan pekerja dan kestabilan tenaga kerja. Kajian lanjut boleh mempertimbangkan reka bentuk kaedah campuran serta memasukkan pembetulan ubah tambahan, termasuk pembangunan kerjaya, bagi meningkatkan pemahaman terhadap keselamatan pekerjaan dalam kalangan kumpulan tenaga kerja ini.

Katakunci: Keselamatan pekerjaan, Gen Z, pemerkasaan pekerja, keseimbangan kerja-kehidupan, persekitaran kerja, gaya kepimpinan

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■1.0 INTRODUCTION

The entry of Gen Z into the workforce has introduced a new set of dynamics and challenges for organizations. Born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, Gen Z is characterized by its digital nativity, diverse perspectives, and unique expectations from employers. As the youngest generation in the labor market, they bring fresh energy and innovation but also demand a rethinking of traditional workplace practices. Understanding the factors that influence job security for Gen Z is critical, as this generation is expected to dominate the workforce in the coming decades. Their preferences for flexibility, career growth, and work-life balance, coupled with their vulnerability to job dissatisfaction and frequent job changes, make them a focal point for organizational strategies (Řehoř et al., 2025; Tran et al., 2024; Palmieri & Carrizo, 2025). Existing studies highlight job security as a significant factor influencing job satisfaction and retention among Gen Z employees across various industries, including service and manufacturing sectors (Bou Hatoum & Nassereddine, 2025; Ahmed et al., 2023; Oraibi et al., 2025). However, there is a lack of specific focus on how job security is perceived and influenced within the manufacturing sector, particularly in the context of Gen Z. Furthermore, most research on Gen Z workplace behaviors and expectations has been conducted in countries like India, the USA, and other global regions (Bou Hatoum & Nassereddine, 2025; Reddy, 2024; Pandita, 2022). There is limited empirical evidence from Malaysia, especially in smaller cities like Taiping, Perak, which may have unique socio-economic and cultural factors influencing job security perceptions.

Job security, a key determinant of employee satisfaction and retention, is particularly nuanced for Gen Z. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z places significant emphasis on factors such as financial stability, recognition, and opportunities for personal and professional development. Studies reveal that this generation values clear career progression, a supportive work environment, and benefits that align with their aspirations for stability and autonomy (Řehoř et al., 2025; Palmieri & Carrizo, 2025; Sinha & Dhar, 2025). However, their expectations often clash with the realities of the modern job market, which is marked by economic uncertainty, rapid technological advancements, and evolving organizational structures. This disconnect poses challenges for both employees and employers in fostering long-term job security.

One of the primary challenges in ensuring job security for Gen Z is their high turnover rates. Research indicates that Gen Z employees are likely to change jobs frequently, with many staying at a single job for less than three years on average (Songong & Goris, 2025). This trend is driven by dissatisfaction with factors such as salary, workplace relationships, and the lack of alignment between job roles and personal aspirations. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated the employment landscape, influenced job preferences, and increased the demand for flexibility and remote work options (Songong & Goris, 2025; Li et al., 2023). These factors underscore the need for organizations to adopt tailored strategies to retain Gen Z talent. Another significant issue is the generational gap in workplace expectations and communication styles. Gen Z employees often prioritize intrinsic motivators such as skill development, work-life balance, and meaningful feedback, alongside extrinsic factors like competitive salaries and recognition (Řehoř et al., 2025; Palmieri & Carrizo, 2025; Sinha & Dhar, 2025). However, many organizations struggle to adapt their human resource practices to meet these needs, leading to disengagement and job dissatisfaction. For instance, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in regions like the Mekong Delta have been urged to focus on training opportunities, autonomy, and a positive work environment to enhance job satisfaction among Gen Z workers (Tran et al., 2024). Failure to address these factors can result in a loss of skilled talent and reduced organizational performance.

Furthermore, the global nature of the workforce adds another layer of complexity. International Gen Z employees, particularly those in STEM fields, face unique challenges in securing jobs that align with their skills and aspirations. Factors such as cultural differences, visa restrictions, and limited opportunities for career advancement often led to early job transitions (Songong & Goris, 2025). Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the diverse needs of Gen Z employees and the development of inclusive workplace policies. By focusing on these aspects, organizations can not only improve job security for Gen Z but also build a more resilient and engaged workforce. Research often generalizes findings across industries or focuses on broader themes like work-life balance, career development, and organizational culture (Spada et al., 2024; Zain et al., 2025; Gunnoo et al., 2026). However, the manufacturing sector has unique challenges, such as automation, cybersecurity risks, and economic instability, which may uniquely shape Gen Z's perceptions of job security (Mathebula & Moletsane, 2026; Ayranci et al., 2024).

In Malaysia, the manufacturing sector faces persistent difficulty in retaining Gen Z workers due to a combination of structural constraints and changing workforce expectations. Ongoing digital transformation, characterized by the integration of automation and artificial intelligence, is expected to reduce reliance on routine labor, particularly within low-skilled job categories. At the same time, relocation of production activities to lower-cost economies continues to weaken domestic employment stability. Such developments contribute to heightened perceptions of job insecurity among younger workers entering the sector. Employment conditions further intensify this issue. A considerable proportion of manufacturing positions are offered on a temporary or contract basis, frequently lacking comprehensive employment benefits such as retirement contributions, social protection, and healthcare coverage. In parallel, a noticeable skills mismatch remains evident, especially in areas linked to advanced manufacturing technologies, including Internet of Things applications and robotics systems. This gap limits career advancement potential and reduces long-term engagement among newly recruited employees.

In addition to structural challenges, attitudinal shifts among Gen Z also influence retention outcomes. Preference patterns increasingly favor flexible working arrangements rather than conventional factory schedules. This inclination is associated with the pursuit of improved work-life balance, exploration of multiple income streams, and dissatisfaction with repetitive tasks and restricted career mobility. Such expectations contrast with the rigid nature of many manufacturing roles. External pressures, including global supply chain disruptions and cautious hiring practices in key industries, further complicate workforce stability. These combined factors create difficulty for manufacturing firms in sustaining a committed labor force. Consequently, there is a clear need to redesign employment practices, enhance skill development pathways, and introduce more adaptive work environments to align organizational requirements with the expectations of Gen Z employees.

In conclusion, the factors affecting job security among Gen Z are multifaceted, encompassing financial, social, and organizational dimensions. While this generation brings unique strengths to the workplace, their distinct preferences and challenges necessitate a rethinking of traditional employment practices. By addressing issues such as high turnover rates, generational gaps, and the needs of

international employees, organizations can create a supportive environment that fosters long-term job security and satisfaction for Gen Z workers. Therefore, this study aims to determine the relationship between factors and job security among Gen Z, as well as to investigate its impact. It will provide useful information about the possible pathways by which the factor may affect the job security of this generation.

■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Gen Z represents a distinct workforce cohort characterized by high digital literacy, preference for flexible employment arrangements, and strong emphasis on meaningful career development. Unlike earlier generations, job security for this group is not limited to long-term employment stability but extends to continuous skill acquisition, access to opportunities, and prospects for professional advancement. Existing literature highlights that understanding the determinants of job security among this cohort is essential for organizations, educators, and policymakers seeking to enhance workforce sustainability in a rapidly evolving labor market.

Job security is commonly defined as an individual's perception regarding the continuity and stability of employment without unexpected job loss. Early conceptualisation by Herzberg (1968) positions job security as an organisational responsibility to ensure stable employment conditions. In addition, the concept incorporates an individual's expectation about future employment continuity and perceived vulnerability to unemployment. Within the context of Gen Z, job security encompasses both financial stability and opportunities for career progression within a reliable organisational structure. Empirical evidence indicates that job security significantly influences employee trust, motivation, and organisational commitment (Moshoeu & Geldenhuys, 2015; Wang et al., 2018). The concept is also aligned with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, particularly the safety dimension, which includes stability and protection from uncertainty. A secure employment condition reduces psychological distress and enhances work engagement, making it a critical factor in retaining younger employees.

Several organisational factors have been identified as influential in shaping perceptions of job security. This study focuses on four primary determinants, namely employee empowerment, work-life balance, working environment, and leadership. These elements are widely examined in organisational behaviour and human resource management literature due to their substantial impact on employee attitudes, performance, and retention.

Employee empowerment refers to managerial practices that grant employees autonomy, authority, and responsibility in performing their tasks. Emam et al. (2019) describe empowerment as the allocation of control over resources and decision-making processes to achieve organizational objectives. For Gen Z, empowerment reflects the ability to participate in decision-making, exercise independence, and experience trust from employers. Empirical findings suggest that empowerment enhances collaboration and enables organisations to fully utilise employee competencies (Mohapatra et al., 2024). Furthermore, widespread adoption of empowerment practices across organisations, as reported by Hasan & Kashif (2021), demonstrates their relevance in contemporary workplaces. Empowered employees tend to exhibit stronger engagement and a higher sense of belonging, which contributes positively to perceived job security. Prior studies confirm that employees who feel valued and trusted are more likely to perceive their employment as stable (Spreitzer, 1995; Mayuran & Kailasapathy, 2022). Therefore, empowerment is considered a critical predictor of job security among Gen Z.

Work-life balance represents the ability to effectively manage professional responsibilities alongside personal commitments. It involves maintaining equilibrium between occupational demands and individual well-being. From a behavioural perspective, this balance reflects an individual's capacity to allocate time and energy across different life domains without excessive strain. Gen Z demonstrates a strong preference for maintaining mental health, social relationships, and personal development, often prioritising these aspects alongside career goals (Benitez-Marques et al., 2022). The increasing global concern regarding excessive working hours and work-related stress further highlights the importance of work-life balance (Beckers et al., 2004; Wong et al., 2019). Adequate balance has been associated with reduced burnout, improved well-being, and sustained productivity. Empirical research also indicates that employees with better work-life balance exhibit lower turnover intention, suggesting a positive relationship with perceived job security. Findings by Jaharuddin & Zainol (2019) support the existence of a significant association between work-life balance and intention to remain in employment within the Malaysian context. Consequently, organisational initiatives that promote flexible working arrangements and support personal well-being are likely to promote better job security perceptions among Gen Z employees.

The working environment encompasses both physical and social conditions under which employees perform their duties. Physical aspects include factors such as lighting, temperature, and workplace design, while social aspects involve interpersonal relationships, organisational culture, and inclusivity (Ahmad & Jameel, 2018; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017). A supportive and safe work environment is essential for maintaining employee well-being and productivity. Gen Z employees typically expect a workplace that ensures safety, comfort, and positive social interaction. Research indicates that favourable working conditions contribute to reduced stress levels and improved job satisfaction, which in turn enhance overall performance (Kerdpitak & Jermisittiparsert, 2020). Conversely, exposure to unsafe or hostile environments, including discrimination and harassment, increases emotional strain and perceptions of job insecurity. Abolade (2018) highlights that adverse workplace conditions are strongly associated with psychological distress and reduced organisational commitment. A conducive working environment, therefore, plays a significant role in strengthening employees' confidence in job continuity and organisational support.

Leadership is another critical determinant influencing employee perceptions and organisational outcomes. Leadership style refers to the ability to guide, influence, and motivate individuals towards achieving shared objectives (Nzinga et al., 2021). It involves strategic decision-making, vision development, and effective problem-solving within organisational contexts (Sen & Eren, 2012). For Gen Z, leadership expectations extend beyond traditional authority structures to include emotional support, transparency, and ethical behavior. Effective leadership has been linked to innovation, employee engagement, and organisational performance (Naguib & Naem, 2018). In particular, Authentic Leadership Theory provides a relevant framework for understanding leadership influence on job security. Introduced by Luthans & Avolio (2003), this theory emphasizes self-awareness, integrity, and transparency as key leadership attributes. Authentic leaders act consistently with their values, foster trust, and create supportive work environments (Kleynhans et al., 2022). Such leadership behaviour is highly aligned with the expectations of Gen Z, who value honesty and respect.

Empirical studies suggest that authentic leadership enhances psychological capital, including optimism, resilience, and confidence, which subsequently improves employee engagement and job satisfaction (Sigaeva et al., 2022; Wong et al., 2021). Through positive role modelling and transparent communication, authentic leaders strengthen trust and organisational attachment. Although direct examination of job security may be limited, existing evidence indicates that increased engagement and satisfaction contribute to stronger perceptions of employment stability (Wirawan et al., 2020). Employees who perceive leadership as supportive and ethical are less likely to experience uncertainty regarding their job continuity.

Based on the reviewed literature, four hypotheses are proposed to examine the relationships between key organisational factors and job security among Gen Z employees. First, employee empowerment is expected to have a significant positive relationship with job security due to its role in enhancing autonomy and perceived organisational support. Second, work-life balance is anticipated to influence job security positively by improving well-being and reducing turnover intention. Third, a supportive working environment is hypothesised to strengthen job security through its impact on psychological safety and organisational trust. Finally, leadership, particularly authentic leadership, is expected to contribute positively to job security by fostering transparency, engagement, and emotional support.

Overall, the literature indicates that job security among Gen Z is shaped by both organisational practices and individual expectations. A wide-ranging understanding of these predictors is essential for emerging functional strategies to retain this emerging workforce segment in contemporary organisational settings. Thus, these hypotheses were developed based on the above conditions:

- H1 There is a significant relationship between employee empowerment and job security among Gen Z.
- H2 There is a significant relationship between the work-life balance and job security among Gen Z.
- H3 There is a significant relationship between the working environment and job security among Gen Z.
- H4 There is a significant relationship between leadership style and job security among Gen Z.

■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

To address the limited empirical understanding of job security determinants among Gen Z, this study focuses on individuals born between 1997 and 2012 who are currently employed in the manufacturing companies in Taiping, Perak. This population is selected due to its growing representation in the workforce and its distinctive employment expectations shaped by technological and social changes. A convenience sampling technique was employed to obtain respondents, taking into account accessibility, and practical constraints during data collection. Access to respondents was constrained by organizational policies, shift-based work schedules, and time limitations during data collection. This approach enabled efficient access to eligible participants and is considered appropriate for exploratory studies involving specific workforce segments where probability sampling is difficult to implement. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design and applied a quantitative approach leveraging a structured questionnaire as a measurement instrument. Data collection is carried out through both physical distribution and online administration via Google Forms to enhance participation and coverage. The questionnaire requires approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The minimum sample size of 129 respondents is determined using the G*Power software to ensure sufficient statistical power for regression analysis. A total of 130 valid and fully completed responses were obtained and included for further analysis. The measurement instrument is adapted from prior validated studies, including Anand et al. (2023), Ernes and Meilani (2023), Hanaysha and Tahir (2016), and Balamurugan and Sreeleka (2020). The instrument captures four independent variables, namely employee empowerment, work-life balance, working environment, and leadership style. Content validity was done through evaluation by an academic expert prior to the pilot study, ensuring the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of the measurement items. Ethical approval was ensured through an embedded statement in the questionnaire. Participants provided informed consent after being informed of the study's purpose and their voluntary participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, with no identifying information disclosed and all data reported in aggregate form to protect respondents' privacy. Each construct is operationalised using self-reported items that reflect respondents' perceptions of their workplace experiences. In total, 20 items are utilised to measure these constructs, based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Higher scores represent stronger agreement with the respective dimensions. Reliability assessment indicates acceptable levels of internal consistency, with Cronbach alpha values ranging from 0.790 to 0.928 for the independent variables, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. The dependent variable, job security, is measured using five items based on the same Likert scale and demonstrates satisfactory reliability with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.738. Data analysis was conducted using statistical techniques appropriate for the research objectives. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were applied to summarize respondent characteristics and variable distributions. Subsequently, linear regression analysis is performed to evaluate the influence of the selected independent variables on job security. This approach enables the identification of significant predictors and the assessment of their relative contributions within the proposed model.

■ 4.0 RESULTS

The demographic profile indicates that a slightly higher proportion of respondents are male (53.1%), while female participants represent 46.9% of the sample. In terms of educational background, the majority possess a diploma qualification (46.9%), followed by those holding a bachelor's degree (40.8%). Regarding employment status, more than half of the respondents (56.2%) are engaged in full-time positions within the manufacturing sector. Table 1 presents the descriptive results for the key variables, including employee empowerment, work-life balance, working environment, leadership, and job security among Gen Z employees. The findings show that respondents generally report high levels across all measured constructs, indicating positive perceptions towards their current work conditions. Among the variables, work-life balance records the highest mean score ($M = 4.375$, $SD = 0.841$), suggesting a strong preference among Gen Z employees for balancing professional responsibilities with personal well-being. In addition, the level of perceived job security is also found to be high ($M = 4.310$, $SD = 0.669$). This result reflects a relatively stable perception of employment continuity among the respondents. Overall, the

descriptive analysis suggests that Gen Z employees in the manufacturing sector demonstrate favorable attitudes towards both workplace factors and their sense of job security.

Table 1 Level of factors and job security

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Employee empowerment	4.349	0.717	High
Work-life balance	4.258	0.841	High
Working environment	4.375	0.744	High
Leadership style	4.442	0.635	High
Job security	4.310	0.669	High

Mean value (Low = 1.00 - 2.33; Moderate = 2.34 - 3.65; High = 3.66 - 5.00)

Normality assessment was conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, which is appropriate for studies with sample sizes exceeding 50. In this case, the dataset consists of 130 responses, making this method suitable for evaluating distributional assumptions. The decision rule applied indicates that a significance value greater than or equal to 0.05 suggests normal distribution, whereas a value below 0.05 indicates deviation from normality. The test results reveal that the significance values for all examined variables, including employee empowerment, work-life balance, working environment, leadership style, and job security, are below 0.05, with reported values less than 0.001 as presented in Table 2. This outcome demonstrates that the data do not follow a normal distribution. Therefore, the assumption of normality is not satisfied for the variables included in this study.

Table 2 Normality analysis

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Interpretation
	Statistic	df	Sig.	
Employee empowerment	0.180	130	<0.001	Not normal
Work-life balance	0.149	130	<0.001	Not normal
Working environment	0.191	130	<0.001	Not normal
Leadership style	0.219	130	<0.001	Not normal
Job security	0.220	130	<0.001	Not normal

Given that the data do not satisfy the assumption of normality, Spearman's correlation analysis was applied to examine the relationships between job security and its predictors. This non-parametric technique is suitable for assessing associations when the data distribution is not normal. The findings presented in Table 3 indicate that all independent variables exhibit significant positive relationships with job security at the 0.01 significance level. Among the examined factors, leadership style shows the strongest correlation, suggesting a more pronounced association with employees' perception of job stability. This is followed by the working environment, which also demonstrates a relatively strong relationship. In comparison, work-life balance and employee empowerment display positive but weaker correlations. Overall, the analysis confirms that all selected factors are significantly associated with job security, indicating that improvements in these organizational aspects may contribute to stronger perceptions of employment stability among respondents.

The model summary results presented in Table 4 demonstrate a strong association between the independent variables and job security, as reflected by an R value of 0.721. This indicates a substantial level of correlation within the proposed model. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is reported at 0.5169, implying that approximately 51.9% of the variance in job security can be explained by the selected predictors. The remaining 48.1% is likely attributed to other factors not included in the current analysis. In addition, the Durbin–Watson statistic is recorded at 2.172, which falls within the acceptable range for indicating the absence of autocorrelation among residuals. This outcome suggests that the assumption of independence is satisfied. Overall, the model demonstrates an adequate level of explanatory power and meets key statistical assumptions, indicating its suitability for examining the relationship between the identified variables and job security. Figure 1 shows the residual histogram and Normal P-P Plot of the regression standardized residuals. Although the normality tests indicated deviations from normality, the examination of residual histograms and normal probability plots indicated no significant evidence of non-linearity in the regression model. The assumption of linearity is supported.

Table 3 Correlation coefficient analysis

Variables	EE	WB	WE	LS	JS
Employee empowerment (EE)	1.000				
Work-life balance (WB)	.416**	1.000			
Working environment (WE)	.409**	.538**	1.000		
Leadership style (LS)	.400**	.390**	.557**	1.000	
Job security (JS)	.357**	.413**	.467**	.599**	1.000

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 Model summary

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.721 ^a	0.519	0.504	0.33143	2.172

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_EE, Mean_WB, Mean_WE, Mean_LS

b. Dependent Variable: Mean_JS

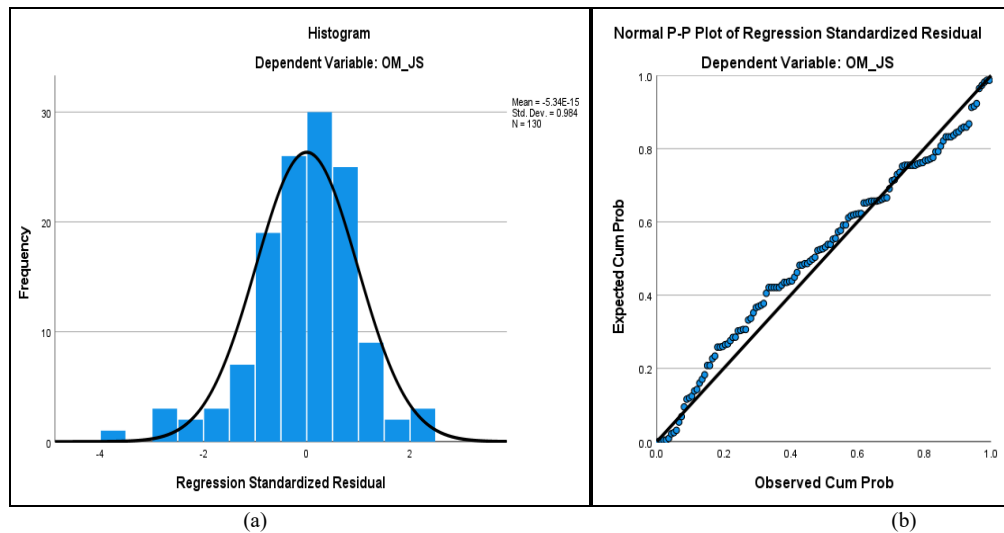


Figure 1 (a) Regression standardized residual, and (b) Normal P-P plot

The regression analysis results in Table 5 indicate varying levels of influence among the independent variables on job security. Leadership style demonstrates the strongest effect, as reflected by the highest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.507$) and t-value ($t = 6.084$), indicating a substantial contribution to explaining job security. Work-life balance also shows a statistically significant relationship ($\beta = 0.155$, $p = 0.045$), suggesting its relevance as a predictor, although its effect size is comparatively smaller. In contrast, employee empowerment ($\beta = 0.068$, $p = 0.335$) and working environment ($\beta = 0.123$, $p = 0.142$) do not exhibit statistically significant effects, indicating limited predictive influence within this model. The collinearity statistics reveal acceptable tolerance values and variance inflation factor (VIF) levels below critical thresholds ($VIF < 10$), suggesting no multicollinearity concerns among the variables. Overall, the findings highlight leadership style as the most influential determinant of job security, followed by work-life balance, while other factors show weaker and non-significant contributions.

Table 5 Multiple regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	β	Std. Error				Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.945	.302		3.132	.002		
Employee empowerment	.055	.056	.068	.969	.335	.770	1.299
Work-life balance	.114	.056	.155	2.025	.045	.657	1.521
Working environment	.088	.060	.123	1.477	.142	.553	1.809
Leadership style	.509	.084	.507	6.084	<.001	.553	1.807

a. Dependent Variable: Job security

5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The first objective of this study was to identify the level of selected predictors that influence job security amongst Gen Z employees. The descriptive findings indicate consistently high mean values across all variables, including employee empowerment, work-life balance, working environment, leadership style, and job security, with scores ranging between 4.26 and 4.44. This pattern reflects generally favourable perceptions among respondents towards their organisational context. Such findings are consistent with recent generational studies suggesting that Gen Z enters employment with relatively high expectations regarding career development, ethical practices, and supportive workplace systems (Khan & Yunis, 2024; Bassi & Bacher, 2023).

Despite the uniformly high ratings, the results provide important insight into the differing roles of these factors in shaping job security perceptions. Employee empowerment and working environment, although highly rated, appear to function as baseline conditions rather than primary determinants. This observation aligns with Herzberg's two-factor theory, where certain elements operate as hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily enhance motivation (Herzberg, 1968). For Gen Z, empowerment is often perceived as a standard organisational practice, while a conducive working environment is regarded as a fundamental requirement rather than an added advantage (Dhanpat et al., 2023; Khan & Yunis, 2024). In contrast, work-life balance and leadership style demonstrate characteristics of motivator factors that actively influence perceptions of job security. Contemporary research indicates that Gen Z places significant emphasis on personal well-being, flexibility, and meaningful interpersonal relationships within the workplace (Rane et al., 2023; Lee & Kim, 2024). Job security, therefore, is not solely defined by contractual stability but is closely associated with daily work experiences, particularly the ability to manage personal time effectively and maintain a positive relationship with leadership.

The second objective focused on examining the relationships between the selected factors and job security. The regression model indicates a strong overall association, with an R value of 0.721 and an explanatory power of 51.9%. This suggests that the selected variables account for a substantial proportion of variation in job security perceptions. Among the predictors, work-life balance and

leadership style exhibit the most meaningful relationships with job security. These findings are consistent with existing literature that identifies work-life balance as a critical determinant of job satisfaction and retention among Gen Z employees (Aruna & Poerwita, 2025). A balanced integration between work responsibilities and personal life contributes to reduced stress, increased organisational commitment, and enhanced perception of employment stability (Tanoto & Tami, 2025). The influence of leadership style, particularly authentic leadership, is also strongly supported by prior studies. Authentic leadership is associated with increased trust, higher levels of engagement, and improved psychological well-being (Avolio et al., 2009). Employees who perceive leaders as transparent and ethical tend to report lower levels of job insecurity and stronger attachment to the organisation. This relationship is often mediated by psychological capital, including optimism, resilience, and confidence. Furthermore, leadership that promotes psychological safety and mindfulness contributes to subjective career success and reinforces perceptions of long-term stability (Zhang et al., 2024). These findings highlight the importance of interpersonal dynamics in shaping the employment experience of Gen Z.

The third objective examined the direct impact of the selected factors on job security. The regression results reveal a clear distinction in the relative influence of each variable. Leadership style emerges as the most significant predictor, with a strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.507$, $p < 0.001$), followed by work-life balance, which also demonstrates a statistically significant contribution ($\beta = 0.155$, $p = 0.045$). These results indicate that relational and psychological dimensions of work play a more prominent role in shaping job security perceptions than structural or environmental conditions. The strong influence of leadership style reflects the increasing importance of trust and authenticity in organisational settings. Gen Z tends to value leaders who demonstrate integrity, openness, and genuine concern for employee well-being. In uncertain economic conditions, leadership behaviour serves as a critical source of reassurance, shaping employees' confidence in organisational stability (Zhang et al., 2024). A leader who communicates clearly, supports development, and fosters inclusivity can significantly enhance perceptions of job continuity, even in dynamic work environments.

Work-life balance also emerges as a key determinant, reinforcing its role as a fundamental expectation rather than a supplementary benefit. For Gen Z, the ability to integrate work and personal life is closely linked to overall job satisfaction and long-term commitment. Employment conditions that interfere with personal well-being are likely to be perceived as unstable, regardless of formal job security measures. This finding supports previous research indicating that flexible work arrangements and supportive organisational policies are essential for maintaining engagement and retention within this cohort (Tanoto & Tami, 2025). In contrast, employee empowerment and working environment do not demonstrate statistically significant effects in the regression analysis. While both variables show positive relationships with job security, their influence appears to be indirect. The high mean scores associated with these factors suggest that they are widely expected and therefore do not differentiate perceptions of job security among respondents. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that certain organisational practices, although important, may not directly drive employee attitudes when they are perceived as standard conditions (Goh & Lee, 2018). The non-significant results for these variables may also indicate the presence of mediating mechanisms. For instance, empowerment and working environment could influence job security through their impact on leadership effectiveness or organisational culture. A supportive environment and opportunities for autonomy may enhance the quality of leader-employee relationships, which in turn shape perceptions of stability. This perspective suggests that structural and contextual factors remain relevant but operate through more complex pathways.

Overall, the findings provide a nuanced understanding of job security among Gen Z employees. While foundational workplace conditions such as empowerment and environment are necessary, they are insufficient on their own to influence perceptions of stability. Instead, factors that directly affect daily experiences, particularly leadership behaviour and work-life integration, play a more decisive role. This indicates a shift from traditional views of job security towards a more experience-based perspective, where psychological and relational aspects are central. The study contributes to existing literature by highlighting the evolving nature of job security in the context of a younger workforce. It emphasises the importance of aligning organisational practices with the expectations of Gen Z, particularly in relation to leadership authenticity and flexible work arrangements. These insights are valuable for organisations seeking to enhance employee retention and engagement in competitive labor markets.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study examined the determinants of job security among Gen Z employees within the manufacturing firms in Taiping, Perak. The findings provide a detailed understanding of how various workplace dimensions contribute to the perception of employment stability among this cohort. Although employee empowerment, work-life balance, working environment, and leadership style were all rated at high levels, their influence on job security was not uniform. The regression analysis demonstrated a strong explanatory capacity ($R^2 = 0.519$), indicating that the selected variables collectively account for a significant share of variation in job security perceptions.

Among the examined factors, leadership style and work-life balance emerged as significant predictors. Leadership style, particularly authentic leadership, showed the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.507$, $p < 0.001$), stressing the meaningful extent of transparent, ethical, and supportive leadership in shaping employees' sense of stability. Work-life balance also displayed a significant relationship ($\beta = 0.155$, $p = 0.045$), indicating that the ability to manage personal and professional responsibilities remains a critical element of sustainable employment for Gen Z. In contrast, employee empowerment and working environment did not demonstrate significant direct effects. Despite high mean scores, these factors appear to function as baseline expectations that reduce dissatisfaction rather than actively enhance perceptions of job security. Their contribution may operate indirectly through leadership practices and organizational culture. This study extends job security literature by demonstrating that leadership style and work-life balance are more influential than structural factors for Gen Z employees. Thus, organizations should priorities authentic leadership development and work-life balance initiatives to enhance job security perceptions, retention, and workforce stability among Gen Z employees.

Future studies are encouraged to extend this investigation across different industries, such as services and technology, as well as diverse geographical regions within Malaysia, to examine the generalizability of these findings. The incorporation of mixed-method approaches, including qualitative techniques, may also provide deeper insights into underlying perceptions. The use of convenience sampling may introduce sampling bias, as respondents were selected based on accessibility rather than random selection. Consequently, certain groups of Generation Z employees may be underrepresented, limiting the generalizability of the findings beyond the study

population. Overall, job security among Generation Z appears to be shaped more by psychological and relational factors than by structural conditions, emphasizing the importance of leadership quality and work-life integration in contemporary organizational settings.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) for the support and assistance provided throughout the conduct of this study. The authors also acknowledge the support and cooperation received from all parties who contributed to the successful completion of this research.

Conflicts of Interest

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper

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