



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring Gen Z Employee Retention with Authentic Leadership Style as a Moderating Factor

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Employee retention has become a concern for all institutions and organizations, especially with the emergence of Gen Z employees. Literature and recent articles raised concerns about the behavior of this new workplace generation, and it is crucial to develop further analyses of this employee generation. This study investigated the direct relationship between SWE, RC, FCB, and TDO to Gen Z employee retention with SET as the grand theory. This research also studied the moderating effect of AL style on this interaction. Data was collected using convenience sampling and processed quantitatively using the PLS-SEM method at SmartPLS 4.0. All four hypotheses related to direct interaction were supported, while the moderation effect of the Authentic Leadership style was rejected. The findings enriched the literature on employee retention, especially in Gen Z and leadership topics.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The developing workplace is shaped by the arrival of Generation Z (Gen Z), posing new obstacles and prospects for companies. Born between 1995 and 2010, Gen Z is expected to fill a quarter of the global workforce by 2025 (World Economic Forum, 2022). Recent studies show a noteworthy trend: Almost half of Gen Z workers are open to leaving their current jobs within two years (Agata Szczepanek, 2023; Deloitte, 2022), and many are willing to do so even without another job lined up (Deloitte, 2022).

High turnover of Gen Z employees incurs significant costs, including time and resources spent on recruitment and onboarding, alongside the loss of institutional knowledge and productivity. A constant flux of young talent can damage a company's reputation, weaken employee commitment, and hinder future recruitment efforts. Companies must proactively attract, involve, and retain employees to tackle these challenges. Employee retention involves creating a workplace that meets employees' needs (Achmad et al., 2023). Prioritizing retention is essential as recruiting and hiring require substantial time and financial investment.

Recent research has exposed several key factors influencing employee retention, particularly among Gen Z. Findings have found that a supportive work environment (SWE), competitive salaries, clear role expectations, and access to training and development programs are essential for retention (H. Ali et al., 2024). This discovery is consistent with earlier findings, which concluded that SWE and ER are positively related (Naz et al., 2020), specifically how the work environment influences training, development, and employee satisfaction (Xuecheng et al., 2022). SWE also positively influenced organizational commitment and person-organization fit, mediating the relationship between SWE and ER. Another finding further emphasized the importance of SWE, rewards and recognition, work performance, supervisor support, and income in influencing ER (Halim et al., 2020).

Recent research has shown that companies should strive to balance employee turnover (Schulz & Viklund, 2024), suggesting that dynamic capabilities such as early relationship building, flexible employment arrangements, and mentorship programs can contribute to ER.

Recent research suggests that transformational and authentic leadership styles contribute to employee engagement (Lopez-Zafra et al., 2022). This finding also aligns with recent research indicating that AL boosts employee engagement, eventually leading to retention (Baquero, 2023). Like Baquero's (2023) finding, Sigaeva et al. (2022) indicated that AL may be more favorable than servant leadership. (Bautista & Cahigas, 2024) further emphasized that Gen Z values reliable leaders, chances for career growth, fulfilling work, teamwork-oriented settings, constructive feedback, and recognition.

Research on this topic remains debated and inconsistent, indicating a need for further study. This research aims to address two main questions:

- How do a Supportive Workplace Environment, Training and Development Opportunities, Fair Compensation and Benefits, and Role Clarity impact Gen Z Employee Retention?
- How does Authentic Leadership moderate the relationship between a Supportive Workplace Environment, Role Clarity, and Gen Z Employee Retention?

Additional research is encouraged to examine the direct effects of these factors on Gen Z retention and the moderating role of Authentic Leadership.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social exchange theory (SET)

Social Exchange theory (SET) originated from (Blau, 2017) work in 1964, explaining how superiors and subordinates interact by exchanging resources. This theory has become a fundamental framework widely known for understanding behavior in the workplace (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Furthermore, SET is a chain of reactions where one person's action can trigger the other person's response, eventually leading to a give-and-take relationship (Cropanzano et al., 2017). The example of SET in a workplace setting is when employees exchange their work for salary and then have a sense of individual responsibility, gratefulness, and faith (Schroth, 2019), which later enhances the commitment, satisfaction, and intention to stay (Lu & Gursoy, 2016).

Based on this theory, further studies have examined the relationship between retention and turnover intentions among Gen Z employees (Gaan & Shin, 2023). Hence, this study examines the influence of SWE, FCB, RC, and TDO built in SET on the intention to stay in Gen Z workers influenced by Authentic Leadership as the moderating factor.

2.2 Employee retention (ER)

Typically, Gen Z as young workers is characterized by their self-confidence, better educational background, multitasking, technology updates, desire for independence, focus on recognition, respect, and ability to control themselves (Ampofo & Karatepe, 2022). The entry of this generation into the labor force will require the organization or company to understand its characteristics better (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021).

Retaining Gen Z is concerning because of their motivation to be committed to the company for a long duration. Low employee retention drains their commitment and creates negative impressions of the company (Hadj, 2020), while keeping employees is crucial to the company's priority and necessity

(Dwipayana & Suwandana, 2021). It is necessary to investigate the key factors that impact young adult workforce retention (Yousaf et al., 2020), (Li et al., 2021).

2.3 Supportive workplace environment (SWE)

A Supportive Workplace Environment, which characterizes workplace safety (Aman-Ullah et al., 2022), a conducive workplace (A. Wu et al., 2021), openness to decision-making (Serhan et al., 2024), and support from superiors and peers (Hughes et al., 2020), exerts a beneficial influence on employees retention.

2.4 Fair compensation and benefits (FCB)

The worker's compensation consists of cash payment and additional supplementary benefits.

This includes their salary, bonuses, and perks like health insurance or paid time off (Y. Chen et al., 2023; Hong et al., 2024), which suggests that compensation is the primary factor driving employee behavior.

2.5 Role clarity (RC)

Role clarity occurs when employees clearly understand what is expected of them (Majid et al., 2023). Role clarity indicates how effectively employees grasp the expectations and conduct associated with their positions (J. Chen et al., 2022).

2.6 Training and development opportunity (TDO)

According to A. R. S. I. Ali and Dahana (2023), training and development means increasing knowledge, abilities, and new skills to work effectively and efficiently. Other opinions suggest that specific techniques and skills are provided through training and development to fill gaps and improve employee performance (Rahaman et al., 2023). Personal and professional development is also needed to work effectively and adapt to work dynamics (Uy et al., 2024).

2.7 Authentic leadership (AL)

Authentic Leadership is a complex idea encompassing a leader's self-understanding, open communication, ethical value, and balance processing (Walumbwa et al., 2008). It is built by the leader's self-concept, the subordinate's development, the company's cultural influence, and specific knowledge (Khilji et al., 2015).

Self-understanding means being aware of someone's values, emotions, goals, knowledge, and talents (Gardner et al., 2005), while open communication is more about showing the true self to others transparently and openly (Gardner et al., 2005). Ethical values are about the willingness to positively make a difference against others (Shamir & Eilam, 2005), and balance processing is discussing and keeping an objective mind but still considering other's input (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

2.8 Hypotheses development

2.8.1. Supportive workplace environment (SWE)

Recent research found that SWE promotes ER (H. Ali et al., 2024). This result aligns with earlier studies indicating that SWE positively influences ER (Halim et al., 2020), enhances the commitment to stay in the company (Naz et al., 2020), and improves employee satisfaction with the job, which eventually leads to retention (Y. Wu et al., 2020; Xuecheng et al., 2022).

H1: SWE positively influences Gen Z ER

2.8.2. Fair compensation and benefit (FCB)

Earlier studies have also shown that bonuses and salaries significantly impact employee retention (Kannan et al., 2024). High salaries are crucial for keeping the youngest generation of workers (Acheampong, 2021). (Bharath, 2023), suggested that both salary and other employee benefits are essential for retaining staff. In contrast, other research indicated that no significant relationship exists between compensation and retention or turnover intention (Budi et al., 2024; Rohman & Parimita, 2024). This invention is not consistent with another study, which showed that fair and competitive pay would have the ability to maintain the youngest generation workforce and positively improve employee loyalty (H. Ali et al., 2024).

H2: FCB positively influences Gen Z ER

2.8.3. Role clarity (RC)

Researchers have shown that role ambiguity and conflict can negatively affect work engagement (Walia & Narang, 2015)—another study by J. Chen et al. (2022) showed that role clarity significantly influences employee burnout, increasing turnover intentions. Role clarity-related stress can lead to burnout (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). In addition, role clarity has been shown to positively impact employee outcomes, innovative behavior, intrinsic motivation, and work engagement (Kundu et al., 2019).

H3: RC positively influences Gen Z ER

2.8.4. Training and development opportunity (TDO)

The research results by (Xuecheng et al., 2022) highlight that Training and development opportunities significantly impact ER. On the other hand, research based on (Adeyemo et al., 2024) explains that training and assisting employees in their development can help their career growth. The more employees are involved, the lower the employee turnover rate because the satisfaction level becomes higher. On the other hand, research says that the effectiveness of training impacts job satisfaction. Moreover, it does not directly impact employee retention (Adeyemo et al., 2024).

H4: TDO positively influences Gen Z ER

2.8.5. Authentic leadership (AL)

According to previous research, this leadership style positively correlates with employee engagement (Winton et al., 2022). It also greatly affects retention within the company (Sigaeva et al., 2022) and subordinate proactive behavior (Liu et al., 2018). Thus, we hypothesize that Authentic Leadership will positively impact Gen Z retention as a moderating variable. This retention is affected by training and development opportunities, a supportive workplace environment, role clarity, and fair compensation and benefits.

Research suggests that Authentic Leadership in a superior can lessen the effects of social exclusion in a workplace and the intention to leave the company (S. Singh et al., 2024). As part of authentic leadership, the employee's role transparency contributes to work engagement (A. Singh et al., 2023), leading to employee retention (Memon et al., 2021).

H5: Authentic leadership positively moderates SWE on Gen Z ER.

H6: Authentic leadership positively moderates RC on Gen Z ER.

The proposed research framework is illustrated as follows:

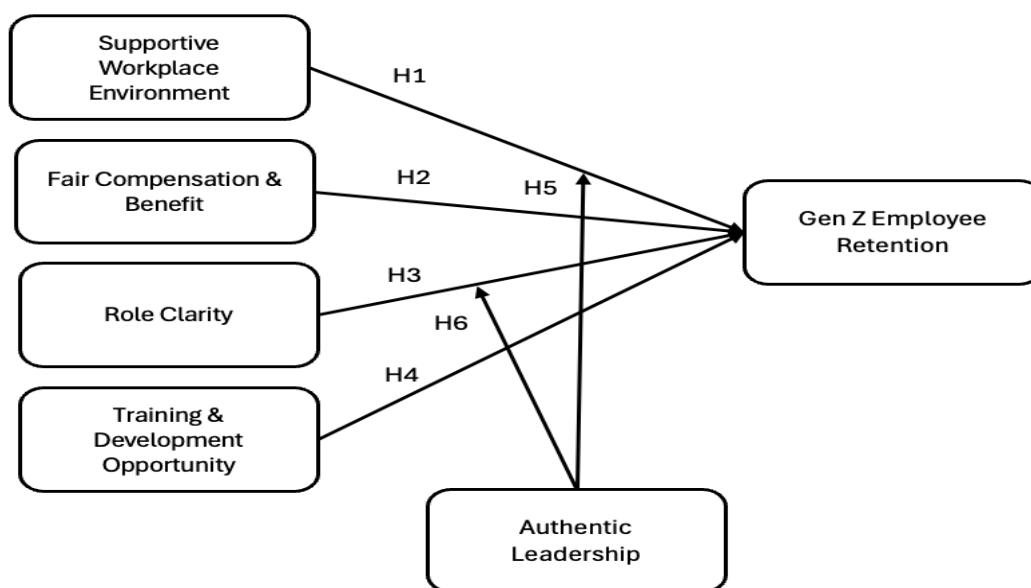


Figure 1: Gen Z employee retention research model

3. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

3.1 Research design & measurement

This study will adopt an explanatory approach to explore the connection between human resource management practices, such as SWE, FCB, RC, TDO, and Gen Z retention. Table 1 shows all the variables that comprise each measurement indicator for this research.

Table 1: Variable and indicator

No	Variable	Measurement Indicator	Reference	
1	Supportive Work Environment	SWE1	I am satisfied with the policies toward employees of my company.	(H. Ali et al., 2024)
		SWE2	I am satisfied with the pleasantness of the working conditions.	
		SWE3	I feel treated with courtesy	
		SWE4	I feel listened in this company	
		SWE6	I feel invited to express my feelings	(Bibi et al., 2018)
		SWE7	I always feel safe working here in this environment.	
		SWE8	My company does everything to ensure the well-being of its employee	
2	Role Clarity	RC1	I know exactly what I am supposed to do on my job.	(H. Ali et al., 2024)
		RC2	My responsibilities at work are obvious and specific.	
		RC3	I know how my performance will be evaluated.	(Kundu et al., 2019)
		RC4	I feel certain about the level of authority I have	
		RC5	Clear planned goals/objectives exist for my job	
3	Fair Compensation and Benefits	FCB1	I am satisfied with the amount of pay I receive for the work that I do.	(H. Ali et al., 2024)
		FCB2	I receive reasonable pay when compared to similar positions at other organizations	
		FCB3	I feel appreciated by my company when I think about they pay me	
		FCB5	Current leave policy is reasonable.	(Ashraf, 2020)
4	Training and Development Opportunity	TDO1	My company provides developmental training programs for employees periodically	(H. Ali et al., 2024)
		TDO3	In my company, there is formal developmental training to teach new employees the skills they need to perform their jobs	
		TDO4	My company provides extensive training for the organization's development.	
		TDO5	My company identify training needs based on business strategy of the organization.	(Ismael et al., 2021)
5	Authentic Leadership	SA1	My superior is aware of his/her emotions as experienced.	(Butterworth et al., 2023)
		SA2	My superior is aware of the non-verbal messages he/she sends to the others.	
		SA3	My superior presents him/herself in a way that makes a good impression on others.	
		SA4	My superior accurately describes how others view his or her capabilities	

		SA5	My superior shows that he/she understands his/her strengths	
		SA6	My superior shows that he/she understands his/her weaknesses	
		OC1	My superior is willing to admit mistakes when they are made.	(Butterworth et al., 2023)
		OC2	My superior clearly states what he/she means	
		OC3	My superior encourages everyone to speak their mind	
		OC4	My superior seeks feedback to improve interactions with others	
		OC5	My superior openly shares information with others	
		EV1	My superior demonstrates beliefs that are consistent with actions	(Butterworth et al., 2023)
		EV2	My superior makes difficult decisions based on high standards of ethical conduct	
		EV3	My superior uses his/her core beliefs to make decisions	
		EV4	My superior resists pressures on him/her to do things contrary to his/her beliefs	
		EV5	My superior is guided in his/her actions by internal moral standards	
		BP1	My superior listens carefully to different points of view before coming to conclusions	(Butterworth et al., 2023)
		BP2	My superior seeks feedback to improve interactions with others	
		BP3	My superior analyses relevant data before coming to a decision	
		BP4	My superior encourages others to voice opposing points of view	
		BP5	My superior carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion	
6	Employee Retention	ER1	If I were completely free to choose, I would prefer to continue working in this company.	(H. Ali et al., 2024)
		ER2	I expect to continue working as long as possible in this company.	(Bibi et al., 2018)
		ER3	I see a future for myself within this company	

3.2 Population and sample

This study's focus group includes the youngest generation already enrolled in the Indonesian workforce, those born after 1995 (Jayatissa, 2023). It will employ non-probability sampling methods, focusing on convenience sampling. According to the multivariate rule of thumb, the sample size falls between 160 and 300 (Memon et al., 2020). Therefore, this study took 280 responses based on the above methods.

According to (Wang & Cheng, 2020), it will be cross-sectional quantitative research to profile the impact of four factors, including SWE, FCB, RC, and TDO on Gen Z retention with AL as a moderating factor. This research will be non-contrived in its natural environment and the workplace, and the samples will not be changed. The interference level of this research is moderate since, later, the data collected will be manipulated to observe how the independent and moderating variables influence the dependent variable of interest.

3.3 Data collection method

The questionnaire for this research was provided in an online form that the respondents could easily access and fill out anywhere and anytime based on their convenience. It will only take about 10 minutes. The questionnaire introduction outlined the study's purpose, provided contact details, and explicitly stated that participant information would be kept confidential and used exclusively for academic research. The questionnaires included 46 items that assessed all study variables, including the moderating variable that will be pilot-tested to verify the questionnaire's accuracy and consistency (Ranganathan & Caduff, 2023).

3.4 Data analysis method

The study examines how four independent variables affect a dependent variable, with one additional variable potentially moderating their relationship. We used a convenience sampling technique to collect data. The survey link was distributed to all respondents via email, social media, and chat. Recommendations from other participants were utilized to expand the survey's reach and response rate. We used pre-existing scales to measure all the variables and collected employee responses using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (Mohiuddin et al., 2022; Robinson, 2023).

The supportive work environment will be evaluated using five items from (H. Ali et al., 2024), reliability 0.93, and one adapted from (Bibi et al., 2018), reliability 0.94. Fair compensation and benefits are measured with one item from (H. Ali et al., 2024), reliability 0.89, and two items from (Ashraf, 2020), reliability 0.85. Role clarity is assessed using two items from (H. Ali et al., 2024), reliability 0.89, and three from (Kundu et al., 2019), reliability 0.84. Training and development opportunities are measured with four items from (H. Ali et al., 2024), reliability 0.89. Employee retention is evaluated with items from (Bibi et al., 2018), reliability 0.95. The moderating factor of Authentic Leadership style uses items from (Butterworth et al., 2023), with specified reliability 0.95. This study involves a complex research model for predicting outcomes. Due to the intricate relationships between independent, dependent, and moderating variables, we employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), guided by the methodology proposed by Hair et al. (2020).

This research analyzed data by assessing the measurement model through two metrics: reliability and validity. Validity and reliability assessments are conducted in the outer model analysis. Validity tests to assess whether the research instrument has measured what should be measured (Ming et al., 2022). Validity was tested for convergent and discriminant. Convergent validity is sufficient if the indicator factor is 0.708 or more and the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) is 0.5 or more (Hair et al., 2020), having a notable t-value (>1.645 when $p < 0.05$). We assessed discriminant validity through the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) correlation ratio, utilizing a defined threshold value of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). The Reliability tests evaluate how consistently the measuring instrument captures respondents' answers (Hair et al., 2020; Ming et al., 2022). Sufficient reliability requires Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability to be above 0.708 (Hair et al., 2020).

Since the research hypotheses are directional, the statistical test used a one-tailed t-test ($p < 0.05$). The impact and explanatory capability of independent variables on the dependent variable was analyzed using a bootstrapping technique (Henseler et al., 2009).

The PLS-SEM analysis was employed to test the significance of the moderation effect and whether authentic leadership significantly moderates SWE and RC in ER. The effect is declared significant if the p-value < 0.05 . The significance of the moderation effect uses F^2 , where the moderation effect is 0.005 low and 0.025 high (Hair et al., 2020), and then it is interpreted using simple slope analysis.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic result

The overall count of respondents is 280, with only 252 data considered valid for data analysis. It comprised 23% of the manufacturing industry, 21% of the health and social industry, 8% of financial and insurance services, and the remaining from other sectors. In addition, 39% of respondents work

in Jakarta, 16% in Banten, and the remaining came from other Indonesian provinces. Male respondents were 43% of the total respondents, while 57% were female. Most of the respondents, about 48%, work in their first job. Figure 2 shows the measurement model assessment of this research, sourcing from Smart PLS 4.0 output, 2024.

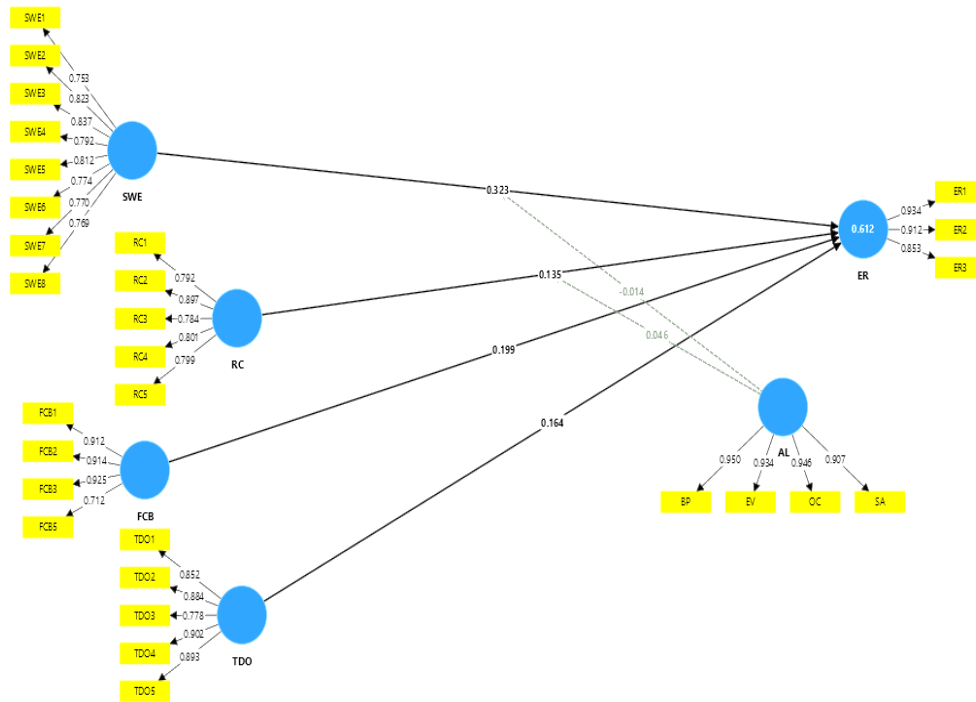


Figure 2: Measurement model assessment

4.2 Validity test

This research used two validity test approaches: convergent and discriminant validity. Factor loading determines convergent validity, with a value above 0.708 considered valid (Hair et al., 2020), as shown in Table 2. Table 3 shows that the AVE is above 0.5, which indicates validity (Hair et al., 2020). The lowest AVE value is in SWE, 0.627, but it is still considered valid.

Table 2: Outer loadings

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Result	Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Result
Supportive Work Environment (SWE)	SWE1	0.753	Valid	Authentic Leadership (AL)	Balance Processing:		
	SWE2	0.823			BP1	0.872	Valid
	SWE3	0.837			BP2	0.852	
	SWE4	0.792			BP3	0.795	
	SWE5	0.812			BP4	0.859	
	SWE6	0.774			BP5	0.882	
	SWE7	0.770			Ethical Value:		
	SWE8	0.769			EV1	0.848	Valid
Fair Compensation & Benefits (FCB)	FCB1	0.912	EV2		0.872		
	FCB2	0.914	EV3		0.817		
	FCB3	0.925	EV4		0.852		
	FCB5	0.712	EV5		0.914		
Role Clarity (RC)	RC1	0.792	Open Communication:				
	RC2	0.897	OC1		0.830	Valid	
	RC3	0.784	OC2		0.858		
	RC4	0.801	OC3		0.868		
	RC5	0.799	OC4		0.896		
Training & Development (TDO)	TDO1	0.852	OC5		0.844		
	TDO2	0.884	Self-Awareness:				
	TDO3	0.778	SA1		0.778	Valid	
	TDO4	0.902	SA2	0.826			

Opportunity (TDO)	TD05	0.893	Valid		SA3	0.859	
	Employee Retention (ER)	ER1			0.934	SA4	
ER2		0.912		SA5	0.771		
ER3		0.853		SA6	0.779		

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

Table 3: AVE (average variance extracted) result

Construct	AVE
AL	0.873
ER	0.810
FCB	0.757
RC	0.665
SWE	0.627
TDO	0.745

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

We utilized Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) testing to assess discriminant validity, as illustrated in Table 4. The HTMT results indicate that all variables have values below 0.85, demonstrating their reliability (Henseler et al., 2015). This result strengthens the overall robustness of the analysis and provides more confidence in each variable relationship.

Table 4: HTMT result

	AL	ER	FCB	RC	SWE	TDO	AL x RC	AL x SWE
AL								
ER	0.646							
FCB	0.576	0.696						
RC	0.506	0.663	0.509					
SWE	0.685	0.793	0.672	0.743				
TDO	0.562	0.669	0.610	0.613	0.635			
AL x RC	0.285	0.137	0.141	0.050	0.165	0.132		
AL x SWE	0.135	0.037	0.025	0.168	0.057	0.108	0.534	

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

4.3 Reliability test

Composite reliability assesses the dependability of the constructs employed in this research, as shown in Table 5. A reliability value of more than 0.708 is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 5: Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
AL	0.951	0.952	0.965
ER	0.882	0.883	0.928
FCB	0.889	0.904	0.925
RC	0.873	0.881	0.908
SWE	0.915	0.915	0.931
TDO	0.914	0.915	0.936

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability both demonstrate values >0.708. The lowest in the RC with Cronbach's alpha is 0.873. The composite reliability is only 0.881 and 0.908, but this construct is still considered reliable.

4.4 Effect of F-Square and R-Square

F-squared (f^2) is used to measure effect size in moderation analysis, quantifying the strength of the moderating effect and showing how the relationship between independent and dependent variables

varies with different levels of the moderator variable. Generally, values above 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large f^2 effect sizes, respectively (Cohen, 1988).

Table 6: F-Square

	ER
AL	0.024
ER	
FCB	0.056
RC	0.022
SWE	0.095
TDO	0.037
AL x RC	0.000
AL x SWE	0.004

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

The R-squared value indicates the fit of the moderated regression model, which accounts for both direct and interaction effects on the data and explains the variability of the outcome variable. R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. (Henseler et al., 2009).

Table 7 illustrates that the model's R^2 is 0.612. This means that the 61.2% variation in employee retention as a dependent variable can be explained by fair compensation and benefits, role clarity, a supportive workplace environment, and training and development opportunities as independent variables, with authentic leadership as an interaction variable.

Table 7: R-Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
ER	0.612	0.601

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

4.5 Hypotheses testing

From Table 8, the structural model analysis revealed that fair compensation and benefit ($O = 0.209$, p-value 0.001), role clarity ($O = 0.147$, p-value 0.010), supportive workplace environment ($O = 0.330$, p-value 0.001) and training and development opportunities ($O = 0.122$, p-value 0.047) as independent variables are significantly and positively influencing employee retention. Thus, hypothesis H1, H2, H3 and H4 are supported.

In this research, two hypotheses featuring moderating variables were also examined. The original sample stands at -0.014 and p-values 0.384, suggesting a statistically insignificant indirect impact of RC on ER moderated by AL. Therefore, hypothesis H5 is rejected.

The original sample value of 0.044 and p-value of 0.205 indicate a statistically insignificant indirect impact of SWE on ER moderated by AL. Therefore, hypothesis H6 is rejected.

Table 8: Path analysis and hypotheses testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
AL → ER	0.142	0.140	0.070	2.026	0.021
FCB → ER	0.209	0.199	0.065	3.229	0.001
RC → ER	0.147	0.148	0.064	2.314	0.010
SWE → ER	0.330	0.349	0.102	3.243	0.001
TDO → ER	0.122	0.112	0.073	1.675	0.047
AL x RC → ER	-0.014	-0.010	0.048	0.294	0.384
AL x SWE → ER	0.044	0.043	0.054	0.824	0.205

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

4.6 The impact of SWE, RC, FCB, TDO to ER

The empirical findings of this research indicate that Gen Z can be retained in an organization by providing SWE, FCB, RC, and TDO. This finding is consistent with the previous findings in the literature about employee retention despite the different countries and cultures in which the research was conducted.

This study supports the first hypothesis (H1) that SWE positively influences ER, consistent with earlier research (H. Ali et al., 2024; Xuecheng et al., 2022). Therefore, the company must create a supportive work environment that encompasses its guidelines and internal policies (Yam et al., 2018), a conducive workplace (A. Wu et al., 2021), openness (Serhan et al., 2024), and support from superior (Stirpe & Zárraga-Oberty, 2017), and a safe workplace (Aman-Ullah et al., 2022).

This study also supports the second hypothesis (H2) that FCB positively influences ER since FCB is the primary factor driving employee behavior (Arnold, 2005). In addition, the third and fourth hypotheses also support the idea that RC and TDO positively influence ER. This aligns with a previous study, which found that the unavailability of RC significantly influences employee burnout and increases turnover intention (J. Chen et al., 2022). TDO, which also positively influences ER, is consistent with earlier studies (Xuecheng et al., 2022).

4.7 The impact of AL as a moderating factor on ER

AL does not significantly moderate the interaction between SWE and RC with ER. The presence of AL in the interaction between RC and ER lowers the individual effects of each AL and RC impact on ER. Thus, the hypotheses related to the moderating factor (H5 and H6) are rejected. This finding indicates that Gen Z employees prioritize SWE and RC even without a leader's authenticity. A previous study by Xuecheng et al., 2022, regarding how Transformational Leadership influences the relationship between training and development, work environment, and job satisfaction in affecting employee retention, the findings were similar to this research. Previous research has shown that transformational leadership has no significant effect on turnover intention (Mufidah et al., 2022). Despite numerous discussions about leadership styles that directly affect employee retention, previous research on the moderation effect of authentic leadership style on Gen Z employee retention has yet to be found.

Supportive workplace environments and role transparency are sufficient to meet Gen Z employees' needs for psychological safety and dissemble the needs of a leader's authenticity. This also emphasizes the conclusion that Gen Z values environment and transparency more than the leadership style promoted by their superiors.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Implication and recommendation

According to the research results, the implications that can be proposed related to the Importance of SWE, FCB, RC, and TDO, companies must focus on cultivating a supportive workplace that enhances employee satisfaction and offers equitable pay benefits, clear responsibilities to reduce employee confusion and stress and provide opportunities for training and development aimed at enhancing their skills and motivation.

This study found no significant moderating role for authentic leadership in the relationship between other variables and employee retention. Additional studies might be required to understand the subtle effects of authentic leadership across various organizational contexts.

Recommendations can be implemented to enhance employee well-being, such as flexible work options, stress management initiatives, employee assistance programs, clear career pathways, and a supportive organizational culture that appreciates employee contributions and acknowledges their efforts and achievements. Providing leadership development programs to grow authentic leaders is expected to increase employee retention and foster a more involved and efficient workforce.

5.2 Limitations and future research

This study has limitations, such as the potential bias of relying on self-reported data, where respondents might give socially desirable answers or hold a restricted perspective on self-awareness. The population's sample size might restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research with

more significant, diverse samples may provide more robust results. This research occurred in a particular cultural and organizational context, and the findings may not directly apply to other cultural or industry environments.

Future research could benefit from conducting longitudinal studies to establish causal relationships between variables and monitor changes in employee retention over time. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods offers a deeper insight into the factors that impact employee performance retention. It compares the findings of this study with studies conducted in different cultural and organizational contexts to offer insight into the generalizability of the results.

Future research can address these limitations and explore these research directions, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of employee retention and providing practical insights for organizations to improve their retention strategies.

5.3 Conclusion

This study investigated how SWE, FCB, RC, and TDO directly affect Gen Z ER. Additionally, it examined the influence of authentic leadership as a moderator between a supportive workplace environment and role clarity on Gen Z retention, using data gathered from employees in manufacturing. The findings confirm that all four factors significantly impact Gen Z retention, with role clarity having the most substantial positive effect. However, the statistical results do not support the idea that authentic leadership moderates the relationship between a supportive workplace environment, role clarity, and Gen Z employee retention.

Author's contributions

ODS conceptualized the study, contributed to the literature review, assisted in collecting data, and managed the manuscript submission process. DS oversaw the literature review and the study's methodology design, aided in data collection, and completed the manuscript. DB played a role in the literature review, supported data collection, handled the PLS-SEM analysis, interpreted the results, and drafted the manuscript. AR offered essential feedback and enhanced the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version manuscript.

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