

THE ROLE OF ATTITUDE, SUBJECTIVE NORMS,
PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL IN SHAPING
GEN Z'S BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS TOWARDS GIG
ECONOMY PARTICIPATION

BY

ANG JING HUANG
NG WAN PING
CHEAW MEI TENG

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- (2) No portion of this FYP has been submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other university, or other institutes of learning.
- (3) Equal contribution has been made by each group member in completing the FYP.
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Name of Student:	Student ID:	Signature:
1) Ang Jing Huang	2005222	___ANG___
2) Ng Wan Ping	1903610	___NG___
3) Cheaw Mei Teng	2006706	___CHEAW___

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First, we would like to dedicate this project to Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) - the cornerstone of our academic journey, the institution that instilled in us the values of hard work, perseverance, and a thirst for knowledge.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATT	Attitude
WLB	Work-life Balance
LND	Learning and Development
SN	Subjective Norms
SM	Social Media
PBC	Perceived Behavioral Control
LQ	Leadership qualities
TND	Technology and Digitalization
C	Commitment
R	Readiness to engage in gig economy
W	Willingness to engage in gig economy
Gen Z	Generation Z
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
UTAR	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling
CR	Composite Reliability

HOC	Higher Order Constructs
LOC	Lower Order Constructs
CFL	Construct Factor Loading
CVA	Convergent Validity Analysis
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
DVA	Discriminant Validity Analysis
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
VAF	Variance Accounted For

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PREFACE

This study is very important for the completion of our undergraduate course which is Bachelor of Economics (Hons) Financial Economics offered by Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. The topic of this study is “The Role of Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control in Shaping Gen Z’s Behavioral Intentions Towards Gig Economy Participation”. Hence, this study is carried out to find out what factors can significantly influence Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia.

The evolving landscape of the modern economy, with its emphasis on flexibility, autonomy, and technological interaction, is rapidly drawing the attention and interest of the younger generation. Specifically, the Gig Economy has emerged as a prominent alternative work arrangement, particularly enticing for Generation Z. This demographic, characterized by its digital fluency and adaptability, presents a unique context for examining the interplay of attitudes (Work-life balance, and Learning & Development), subjective norms (Social Media use), and perceived behavioral controls (Leadership Qualities, and Technology & Digitalization) and how these factors converge to shape their willingness to embrace gig opportunities.

Furthermore, our exploration goes further, introducing the critical role of readiness as a mediator of the intricate relationship between influencing factors and Gen Z willingness to participate in the gig economy. Moreover, we also examine the commitment as a moderator that may affects the correlation between readiness and willingness. Therefore, this study not only aims to enrich academic research, but also to provide practical insights for policymakers, industry practitioners, educators, etc., to promote a comprehensive understanding of the underlying forces driving Malaysia’s Gen Z to embrace the gig economy.

ABSTRACT

Even though the Malaysian gig economy has been developing rapidly in recent years with the continuous influx of Gen Z, there is little research on the factors that influence the willingness of this younger generation to join the Malaysian gig economy. Therefore, on the basis of the Theory of Self-Determination, Human Capital Theory, and Theory of Planned Behaviour, this study seeks to determine the influences of Learning and Development, Work-Life Balance, Social Media Use, Leadership Qualities, Technology and Digitalization, Readiness to engage (mediator), and Commitment (moderator) on the Gen Z's Willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia. Besides that, in this research, we used a higher order construct approach to classify our independent variables, such as Attitude toward gig economy (learning and development, and work-life balance), subjective norm (social media use), and Perceived behavioral control (leadership qualities, and technology and digitalization). Furthermore, in this research, we have used the questionnaire method to collect relevant data. The questionnaire we designed consists of 43 questions and a total of 405 sets of responses were gathered, followed by PLS-SEM and higher-order construct analysis using SMART PLS4 software. The analysis results show that Learning and Development, Work-Life Balance, Social Media Use, Technology and Digitalization, and Readiness to engage (mediator) have a significant relationship with Gen Z's Willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia. However, the results also found that Leadership Qualities and Commitment (moderator) did not significantly affect Gen Z's Willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia. In addition, it is worth noting the mediation effect (Readiness) in our research, the results show three different situations in our model, which are complete mediation, partial mediation, and no mediation.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

A new generation terminology is formed every 15 to 20 years, which largely shaped by important world events and developing cultural trends (Sladek & Grabinger, 2014). For example, Generation (Gen) X is used to describe the generation born between 1965 and 1980, Gen Y (MILLENNIALS), they are people born between 1981 and 1996, and Generation Z is to describe the people born between 1997 to 2012 (Hecht, 2023). Many academics and marketers like to focus on or study on Gen X and Y, because they have all joined the market, they are working, they have income, they have purchasing power, and they are affecting the national economy. However, now, Generational professionals and marketers have turned their attention to Generation Z as most of them have entered the market and started working as fresh graduates, the oldest Gen Z turns 26 this year (Sladek & Grabinger, 2014).

Gen Z was born and grew up with the Internet, they are also digital-centric, and technology can be said to be their identity (Dangmei et al., 2016). In other words, when a person is born into a world where the internet, the social web, laptops, smartphones, and digital media are beginning to develop, they are considered as Gen Z (Bascha, 2011). And what sets them apart from other generations is that their existence is more tied to the digital media and electronics world (Tulgan, 2013).

Since different generations have different preferences for work and the workplace, it is important to understand the work preferences of Gen Z, which will help establish a good communication channel between organizations and Gen Z and create a better working environment for them (Dangmei et al., 2016). According to the research of Bascha (2011), most Gen Z prefer a work environment with transparency, self-reliance,

flexibility, and personal freedom. A work environment that fosters their entrepreneurial talents, allowance for flexible schedules, and a pleasant work environment are also the traits that Gen Z looks for a job (Bridge, 2015). Besides that, Gen Z prefers a workplace that is easy to adapt to, prioritizing organization and predictability while disliking complicated office designs (Knoll, 2014). Furthermore, Mihelich (2013) stated that mobile phones or tablets are indispensable things for most of them since childhood, and they also hope to have these gadgets when they are working (Mihelich, 2013).

In Malaysia, the work preference of Gen Z is about the same as that of the worldwide. According to Gaidhani et al. (2019), it is pointed out that Gen Z in Malaysia is more inclined to materialism, technological savvy, self-reliance, pursuit of personal freedom, and flexibility. It also mentioned that Gen Z in Malaysia are not afraid to frequently switch jobs and change jobs throughout their careers, because their skills and abilities are very much in demand in the current industry. According to the research and survey of Mardhiah (2022), about 30% of the 2524 Gen Z in Malaysia want to change their current jobs in order to improve their work life balance (Mardhiah, 2022). Besides, there are many factors that affect Gen Z in Malaysia to choose a job, but according to the research results of Nuralieya et al (2022), the most influential factors are achievement, salary and benefits, recognition and working conditions. Gen Z in Malaysia attaches great importance to salary and benefits to meet their financial security they desire when choosing a job (Hekmat, 2022). They also attach great importance to having flexible working hours to meet their work life balance (Rajaendram, 2022). Other than that, according to research by the Asian Institute of Finance, due to monetary reasons, Gen Z in Malaysia are very interested in starting their own business or doing other side hustles to earn more income (The Star, 2018).

On the other hand, the gig economy is growing and expanding rapidly due to increased digitization and job requirements changes. According to Lee (2020), part-time workers and freelancers have existed for decades. But these jobs have become more visible in recent years due to the rise of digital platforms, increased internet penetration and improvements in smartphones or computers. The different working styles in the gig

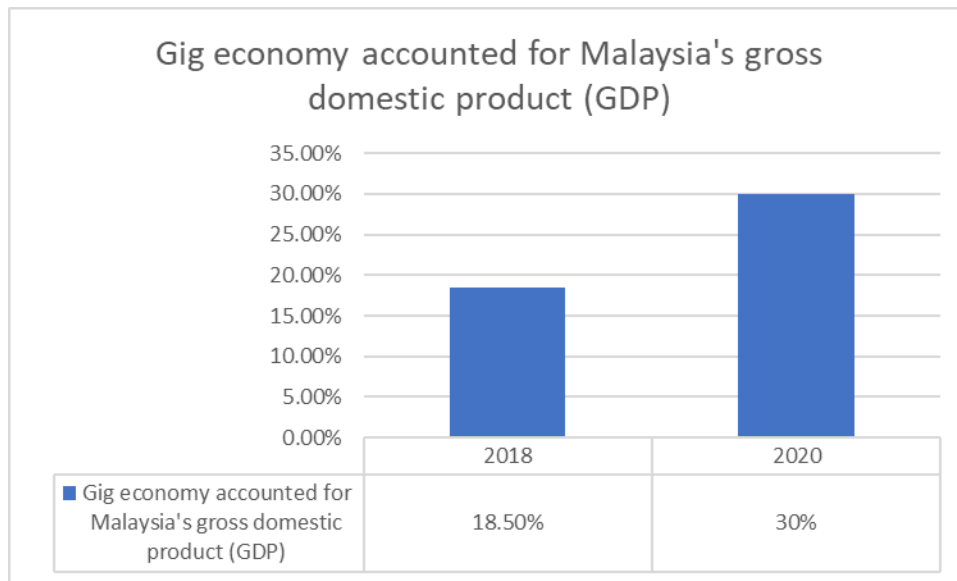
economy (low barriers to entry and flexible working hours) are also the factors attract many people to become gig workers, especially the younger generation (Lee, 2020).

Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the factors influencing Gen Z engage in gig economy. Besides, In the first chapter, a complete and clear research background, problem statement, research objectives and research questions, significance of study and structure of study are all very important.

1.1 Background

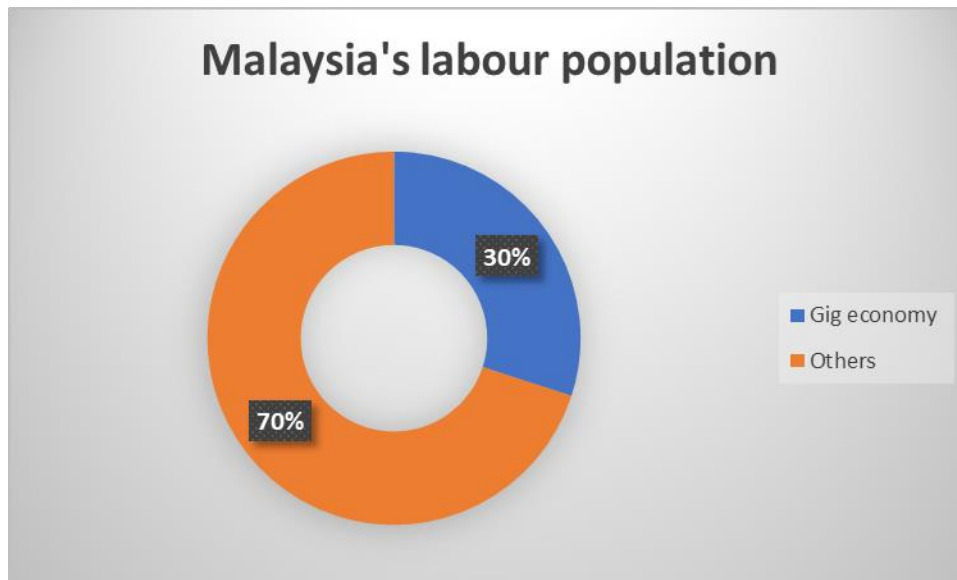
The gig economy is a job market where most part-time and temporary jobs are filled by freelancers and independent contractors, rather than full-time employees (Lim, 2021). According to Lutkevich and Gillis (2022), although various forms of gig work have been present in multiple sectors of the economy for a long time, the gig economy facilitated by digital platforms is experiencing significant expansion and is progressively supplanting traditional non-platform gig work. Nonetheless, Malaysia's gig economy has grown rapidly, particularly following the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic (Pang, 2020). The concept of gig economy has been developing for quite some time in Malaysia. Based on Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) data shows that from 2018 to 2020, the gig economy accounted for Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) from 18.5% to 30% (Figure 1.1). Besides, based on Figure 1.2 the gig economy employs around 5 million individuals, which is roughly 30% of Malaysia's labour population, and the figure is continuing to expand. However, noting that Gen Z is currently the largest age group, comprising 29% of the total Malaysian population, their work preferences will have a great impact on the Malaysian labor market (Tjiptono et al., 2020).

Figure 1.1 Gig economy accounted for Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product



Source: Supramani (2021)

Figure 1.2 Malaysia's labour population



Source: Paul (2022)

In recent years, while Gen Z has continued to pour into the labour market, the gig economy is also developing and expanding rapidly due to increased digitization and job requirements changes. The advancement of technology has benefited the online

platforms in terms of easy accessibility to anybody, anywhere and at any time, encouraging more and more individuals to engage in the gig economy (Paul, 2022). Companies such as Uber, Grab, and also Foodpanda have altered modes of transport and meal delivery, while freelancing sectors such as Upwork, GoGet, and Fiverr have rendered gig occupations more approachable by linking gig workers to open positions (Jaafar, 2020). High internet penetration, widespread smartphone usage, and the emergence of digital platforms have all played a part in driving this trend, providing Gen Zers with efficient and flexible methods for making money.

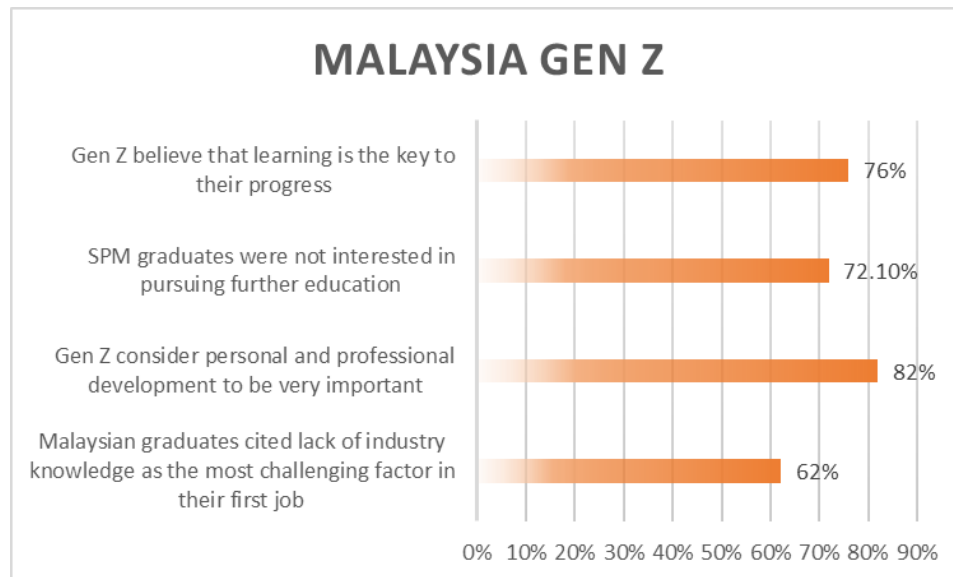
The attractiveness of the gig economy is massive among Malaysian Gen Zers, due to several important factors. First and foremost, Gen Zers honour the opportunity to balance work and personal goals, education, or other responsibilities. Working as a gig worker provides them the flexibility to work at any time and place they desire, as well as the freedom to pick the career to engage, which aligns well with their motivations to seek alternatives in the gig economy (Business Today, 2022). The Workforce Institute said that as many as 55% of Gen Z are interested in gig jobs because they give them the freedom to work on their own terms. This lets them go at their own pace and avoid breakdowns (Tay, 2020).

Furthermore, Gen Zers all over the world have been growing up in an era of technology, and have witnessed the development of gig industries in various countries. This worldwide trend has established gig employment as a legitimate career choice. The use of digital labour platforms, which let employers find pools of on-demand workers, is becoming more and more common in the gig economy (Graham et al., 2017). It is anticipated that by 2025, digital platforms would mediate about 33% of labour transactions (Standing, 2016), and more than 70 million people find jobs through the platforms (Heeks, 2017). Gen Zers, who are known as digital natives, are exceptionally skilled when it comes to technology and mobile applications (Dangmei et al., 2016), resulting in Gig-based platforms a perfect fit for their skill sets. Moreover, most gig jobs are done entirely on the internet, which makes them a very popular choice among young people (Woodcock & Graham, 2019).

Additionally, Supramani (2021) stated that due to the growing trend of digitization, the gig economy will emerge as a significant contributor to GDP within the next five years. Furthermore, according to Harun et al. (2020), Gen Z accounted for about 12% of the Malaysian gig economy in 2018. While in Zurich (2020), Gen Z was found to account for about 24% in 2020 of the gig economy in Malaysia. Although the survey on Gen Z's participation in the gig economy in Malaysia is limited, from these two reports, we can still see a significant increase in the participation of Gen Z in the gig economy in Malaysia. The gig economy is becoming increasingly popular among Gen Z individuals in Malaysia, who are attracted by the flexibility and autonomy offered by freelance and short-term work (Azuar & Hanif, 2022). However, there is a lack of understanding of the factors that influence the participation of the Gen Z in the gig economy (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). There is therefore a need to investigate the factors that influence the participation of Gen Z in the Malaysian gig economy and how these factors affect the well-being, job satisfaction and economic prospects of this population. Furthermore, these insights can inform the development of policies and interventions that promote the protection of workers' rights and welfare and foster a more inclusive and resilient gig economy in Malaysia.

1.1.1 Learning and Development

Figure 1.3 Malaysian Gen Z's perspective on learning and development



Source: Norton (2022); MalaysiaNow (2023); Mardhiah (2022) & Dayana (2021)

Young Malaysians or Gen Z are known for their active learning and desire to acquire skills in specialized fields (The Star, 2018). According to Norton (2022), 76% of them believe that learning is the key to their progress. Gen Z also view continuous improvement and learning new skills as a part of life that allows them to find a suitable career (Norton, 2022). However, the traditional classroom environment in Malaysia does not provide sufficient hands-on learning opportunities for this generation, which may hinder their development and limit their career prospects. According to a news reported by MalaysiaNow (2023), in late 2022, there has been a decline in the number of school-leavers who choose to attend university, even if they have performed well in their SPM exams. Statistics from the Department of Statistics revealed that in 2019, approximately 72.1% or 390,000 SPM graduates were not interested in pursuing further education (MalaysiaNow, 2023). Some students interviewed by MalaysiaNow mentioned that they perceive university courses to be outdated and not keeping up with the advancements in the digital age (MalaysiaNow, 2023). A key problem faced by Generation Z in the traditional classroom environment is the lack of practical, real-

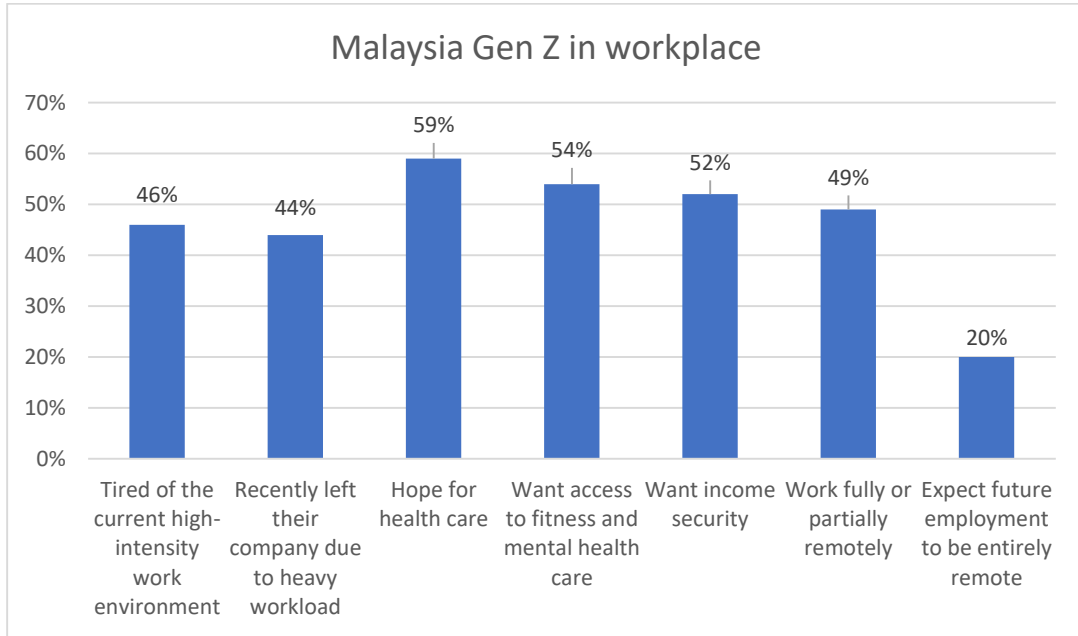
world experience that allows them to adapt to a high-pressure work environment once they enter the workforce.

After graduation, the gig economy has become an increasingly attractive option for Gen Z seeking work experience and career development opportunities over the traditional work environment (MalaysiaNow, 2023). Over the years, the gig economy in Malaysia has been expanding rapidly, with Gen Z actively participating to gain work experience and develop professional skills. According to Mardhiah (2022), the Malaysia 2022 Employer Branding Study found that 82% of the Gen Z consider personal and professional development to be very important. Especially young people entering the workplace for the first time need certain job skills, but the pandemic has made it harder for them to pursue their educational and career goals (Scivally, 2021). Furthermore, Scivally (2021) also stated that young employees consider continuous learning on the job as a means to achieve their goals. According to Dayana (2021), a survey conducted by Monster.com in 2017 mentioned that 62% of Malaysian graduates cited lack of industry knowledge as the most challenging factor in their first job, followed by lack of guidance in second place.

It is therefore important to determine whether the gig economy, as opposed to the traditional workplace, can provide real learning opportunities for Gen Z gig job workers seeking to develop skills, gain experience and identify potential career paths in future job opportunities. According to Rasyidah (2022) young people or Gen Z joining the gig economy can help them personally explore their true potential, talents and preferences. Not only can they earn extra income by participating in the gig economy, but they can also gain additional professional experience and additional learning opportunities. Rasyidah (2022) also pointed out that being a gig worker allows Gen Z to try out different careers so that in the future they can identify a career that is right for them, get real-world experience, and learn about different work environments from different companies. So, learning and development may be a positive relationship that affects Gen Z's participation in the Gig economy.

1.1.2 Work Life Balance

Figure 1.4 Malaysian Gen Z in workplace



Source: Parmelee (2022) & Mardhiah (2022)

Work-life balance has been a hotly discussed topic in recent years (Brown, 2022). The Deloitte Global 2022 Generation Z and Millennial Survey reported that over the past few years, not just millennials but a growing number of Generation Z respondents, having observed older employees experiencing burnout and financial deprivation in the grind, have begun to demand more from the workplace: higher pay, more time off, the flexibility to work remotely, and greater social and environmental responsibilities (Francis, 2022). A study on Gen Z globally conducted by Parmelee (2022) mentioned that there is 46% of Gen Z feel tired by the high intensity of the present work environment, and 44% of Gen Z have recently left their company as a result of the intense workload. Therefore, Gen Z is the generation most likely to quit their jobs if they are unable to achieve work-life balance in their career, and as such, they are stereotyped as entitled or anti-capitalist (TalentLMS, 2022).

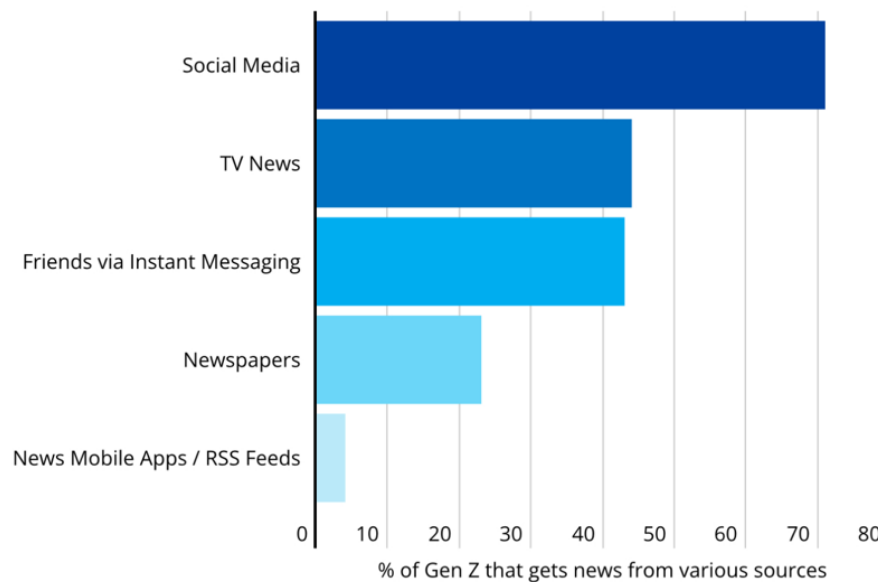
According to Talent Insights Report 2023 reported by Annuar (2023), 92% of Malaysian employees have engaged in “career cushioning” – where the employees work more than one jobs for financial security due to the employment instability which affecting countries globally. Among the 5 countries assessed, including Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Singapore, Malaysia topped the ranking of "career cushioning", as they are more willing to quit their current employment, and engage in multiple jobs in order to seek for what they desire in the long run (Annuar, 2023). Based on the study of RANDSTAD Malaysia's 2022 Employer Brand from Mardhiah (2022), 29% of Gen Z participants changed careers to have a better work-life balance. When it comes to work-life balance, 59% of Malaysian Gen Z desire for healthcare coverage, 54% for fitness and mental healthcare, and 52% for income protection (Mardhiah, 2022).

With Generation Z now promoting a balance between work and spare time and focusing more on doing what they love, is the rise of the gig economy causing young people to change their career mindset (Frazer, 2019)? In Malaysia, 49% of Gen Z workers work totally or partially remotely, while 20% of them expect employment to become fully remote in the future (Mardhiah, 2022). However, it is very challenging to achieve work-life balance in the nature of demanding and rapid development of gig economy. Moreover, the blurred boundaries between work and life due to the implementation of remote work might make it challenging for Gen Z employees to detach and recharge beyond the work hours, as they can work at anytime and anywhere. Azuar (2021) explained that in the latest report of Randstad Malaysia Recruitment Agency, the employees who are offered with flexible working arrangement by switching office-based to remote arrangement, are willing to accept the arrangement if there are new policies to support remote working arrangement, able to communicate seamlessly through hybrid workspace, and establish a secure and acceptable working environment for remote working arrangement. Therefore, it is crucial to identify how work-life balance influence Gen Z in engaging gig economy in Malaysia.

1.1.3 Social Media Use

In 2022, Malaysia has approximately 30.8 million active social media users per month, representing approximately 91.7% of the total population (OOSGA, 2023). On average, the users spend about 3.03 hours on social media and have accounts on an average of 8.2 platforms each (OOSGA, 2023). The Nielson (2022) claims that the internet penetration rate of the Malaysians aged between 18 to 24 is 98%, proving that they can digest and filter through vast volumes of information while effortlessly switching between the internet and real worlds.

Figure 1.5: Percentage of Gen Z that gets news from various sources



Source: Nielsen (2022)

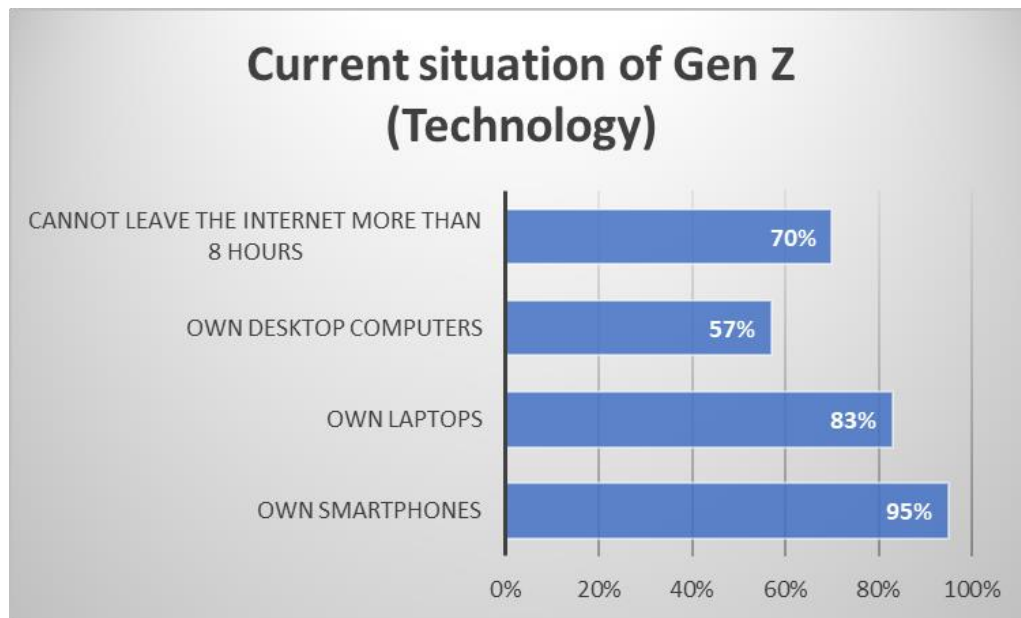
The research further mentioned that 71% of Malaysian Gen Z acquires news from social media, 44% from TV News, 43% from friends via instant messaging, and only 23% from newspaper (Nielsen, 2022). Through social media, Gen Z gathers the information from voices or 'opinion-based' news, mostly from social media influencers or social comments (Hasnan, 2019). Instead of typical celebrities, such as famous

sportsmen or pop stars, Gen Z is likely to idolize social media influencers such as bloggers, YouTubers, and social activists (Dhesi, 2018). These influencers provide updates on current concerns, but they may also repost misinformation obtained online or discussion based on their own societal prejudices and biases (Hasnan, 2019).

These statistics proved that Gen Z is highly dependent on social media. However, the news spread from social media are mostly unsubstantiated. It will cause misleading to Gen Z who saw only the good side of gig economy. A news from Malaysia Now (2023) reported that in a survey conducted by UCSI Poll Research Centre on 1,000 SPM leavers who were interviewed about their goals after finishing their SPM test, only 51% of them indicated they intended on continuing their education, 39% said they would search for jobs, and 10% said they had no ideas. When asking those who did not intend to continue their education, 34% of them stated they wanted to be social media influencers or affiliates, 26% mentioned the e-hailing industry, while 22% stated they might establish their own business through the industry of food and beverages. It can be analyzed as due to the influence of social media, Gen Z is more likely to engage in gig economy in an early age, compared to pursue on studies. After all, it is significant to determine whether social media has the ability to influence the willingness of Gen Z to engage in gig economy in Malaysia.

1.1.4 Technology and Digitalization

Figure 1.6 Current situation of Gen Z on technology perspective



Source: Dorsey (2022)

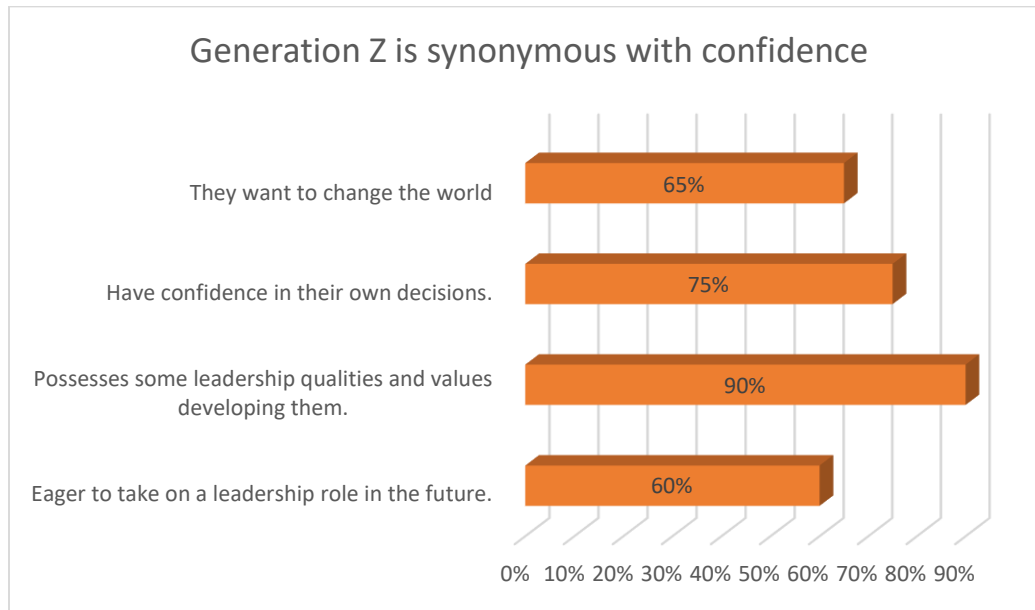
Furthermore, according to Nikoloski et al. (2023) due to the influence of various factors such as globalization, digitalization, and technological development, the world economy has undergone tremendous changes. Technology has become an inevitable part of our daily lives (Nikoloski et al., 2023). The impact of digitization and technological developments on the gig economy has opened up new avenues for job creation (Lata et al., 2023). The gig economy is also defined by Taylor et al. (2017) as “people using apps to sell their labor”. Besides that, according to Karim (2020), the gig economy in Malaysia has become more and more involved with the rise of digital platforms such as smartphones and the Internet. If other specific conditions and skills required to participate in the gig economy are excluded, the current basic condition for joining the gig economy can be said to have a smartphone and the Internet (Karim, 2020). Charlton (2022) pointed out that various websites in the gig economy today have

provided you with a platform to connect with potential customers based on your professional field, and you only need to complete the contact through your mobile phone (Charlton, 2022). Other than that, the Internet is also indispensable to the gig economy today. The gig economy in Malaysia operates almost entirely on the internet through job listing websites (Allo Technology Sdn. Bhd, 2021). Therefore, for people joining the gig economy today, having some technology and some tech knowledge is very important.

However, technology means differently to Gen Z than it does to other generations. Gen Z is the younger and more tech-savvy generation, which is one reason why they can easily join the gig economy. For Gen Z, technology is not just a tool, it is an important part of them as they are surrounded by the internet, interactive devices and technology from birth (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Research by Dorsey (2022) pointed out the current situation of Generation Z shows that about 95% of this population own smartphones, 83% own laptops, 57% own desktop computers, and it is found that nearly 70% of people cannot leave the Internet more than 8 hours, they will feel uncomfortable for it. Likewise, for Gen Z in Malaysia, they are the first generation to be exposed to digital technology from an early age, and they are tech-savvy and adaptable to rapid technological advancement (Tjiptono et al., 2020). They are also the generation with 98% internet penetration (The Star, 2019a). They don't know life without internet and digital technology (The Star, 2019b). Since Gen Z is afraid of missing out, staying connected is important for these young people (Ong, 2015). Based on the above, it is very important to understand and own technology (smartphones and Internet) to join in today's gig economy, but it is not difficult for the younger and more tech-savvy Gen Z. In short, technology and digitization may be important factors influencing Gen Z to engage in the gig economy.

1.1.5 Leadership Qualities

Figure 1.7 Gen Z is synonymous with confidence



Source: Deloitte (2020); Dayana (2021) & HR In Asia (2015)

In the global economy, strong leadership is critical to the success of businesses, organizations, and governments. Effective leaders drive innovation, build strong teams, make strategic decisions, and motivate employees to work towards common goals (Mansor & Kennedy, 2000). According to Morris (2016), there are some soft skills that every leader should possess, such as humility (15%), self-awareness (7%), the ability to listen (7%) and empathy (17%). And leadership qualities are particularly important in the gig economy, as this working environment presents unique challenges (Jacobsson, 2018). Leaders in the gig economy must be able to effectively manage remote teams and independent contractors, address legal and regulatory challenges, and build strong relationships with clients and customers. Based on Jacobsson (2018), they must also be adaptable, flexible, and able to manage changing priorities and project requirements. According to Law (2022), the gig economy is characterized by short-

term contracts or freelancers, which means that workers often work independently, without the structure and support provided by traditional organizations. Therefore, gig workers need to be self-sufficient, adaptable, and able to make decisions independently. These are the qualities that effective leaders possess, which makes leadership qualities invaluable in the temporary worker economy (Gilpin, 2019). That issue is, since we mentioned at the beginning that in our previous survey, we found in several data points that many Gen Zers are now gradually joining the gig economy. Do Gen Zers have leadership qualities that make them more comfortable in the gig economy?

Based on Deloitte (2020), the Deloitte's Global Millennial Survey 2021 found that 60% of Gen Z respondents aspire to leadership roles in the future. This statistic is higher than previous generations, indicating that the Gen Z is keen to take charge and make a difference. In addition, the survey highlights that the Gen Z values inclusiveness, authenticity, and transparency, which are essential qualities of effective leaders (Deloitte, 2020). Not only that, according to Dayana (2021), AIESEC Malaysia's youth advisory report, 9 out of 10 young people value personal development, meaning they may already have some leadership qualities or want to develop them. According to HR In Asia (2015), Malaysia's Gen Z are synonymous with confidence, with 75% of them confident in their decisions and 65% saying they want to change the world. Furthermore, Malaysian Gen Z possess the following unique skills and attributes: In the gig economy, workers are often responsible for managing their own schedules, finances, and workload. They need to be able to work independently and take control of their own work. The Gen Z has grown up in a culture that emphasizes self-sufficiency, and they are often happy to work alone (Tjiptono et al., 2020). They also have a strong entrepreneurial spirit, and many are interested in starting their own businesses or working part-time.

Again, the gig economy is highly unpredictable, and workers need to be able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. The Gen Z is known for its adaptability and flexibility (Lee, 2021). According to Lee (2021), they are open to change and are able to learn new skills and technologies quickly. They are also very creative and can think

outside the box to come up with innovative solutions to problems. Finally, in the gig economy, workers need to be able to make their own decisions and take responsibility for the outcome. They need to be able to work unsupervised and be responsible for their own results. The Gen Z in Malaysia are often independent thinkers who are not afraid to take risks and make their own decisions (Teo, 2021). They are also highly collaborative, with many happy to work in virtual teams and use technology to communicate and collaborate with others. Overall, these qualities will become even more important for workers who want to thrive in the gig economy as it continues to grow and evolve.

1.2 Problem statement

According to the background we have discussed that the “gig economy” has become an increasingly important part of the Malaysian labor market over the past few years. More young people are now more likely than in the past to be freelancing rather than working full-time. According to Kassim et al. (2020), even the highly educated youth in Malaysia are increasingly inclined to join the gig economy. This shift may be good for the growth of the gig economy, but whether it is good for Gen Z itself is still a question. That's because people who participate in the gig economy often don't have steady jobs, minimum wages, health insurance, retirement benefits, etc. These benefits are usually only offered to full-time workers. But why do young people tend to join the gig economy? Did they encounter any obstacles or challenges? In theory, the main benefit offered by the gig economy is flexible and autonomous work. However, the main motivations and reasons for Gen Z's gradual shift towards the gig economy are still unclear. So, this study helps to understand why more and more Malaysian Gen Z are turning to join the gig economy rather than working full-time. Understanding the reasons for their shift can help employers and policymakers create better working conditions, offer more attractive incentives, and create training programs that meet the needs of Gen Z.

Besides that, the gig economy is posing problem to the labor participation. This is because the values of flexibility, freedom, independence, and having variety of jobs at the same time, which cannot be achieved by the full-time labor participation, are offered by the gig economy, and Gen Z seems to be more biased to it. In this case, the employers who prefer to hire full-time workers, might be facing an issue in hiring their preferable workers. Furthermore, according to the background, the emergence of the gig economy in Malaysia is attributed to the increasing involvement of the younger generation. So, investigating the factors influencing Gen Z participation in the gig economy can provide valuable insights for government agencies to develop more equitable policies. Although Gen Z will dominate the entire labor market in the near future, but there is not much research about Gen Z's work preferences. Therefore, an in-depth quantitative research is needed to gain a fuller understanding of why Gen Z engages in the gig economy.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine the Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia and identify the factors that affect the Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

To achieve our general objective, we have formulated the following specific objectives.

1. To examine the relationship between learning and development and Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia.

2. To examine the significant relationship between technology and digitalization and Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia.
3. To examine the significant relationship between work life balance and Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia.
4. To examine the relationship between social media use and Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia.
5. To examine the significant relationship between leadership qualities and Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia.
6. To examine the moderator effect of commitment on the relationship between readiness to engage in the gig economy and willingness to engage in the gig economy among Gen Z individuals.
7. To examine the mediator effect of the Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy on their willingness to engage in the gig economy.

1.4 Research Questions

To ensure a focused path for our study, we have formulated the following research questions.

Q1. Does learning and development influence Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia?

Q2. Does technology and digitalization influence Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia?

- Q3. Does work-life balance influence Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia?
- Q4. Does social media use influence Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia?
- Q5. Does leadership qualifications influence Gen Z willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia?
- Q6. Does commitment moderate the relationship between readiness to engage in the gig economy and willingness to engage in the gig economy among Gen Z individuals?
- Q7. Does the Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy mediate between and their willingness to engage in the gig economy?

1.5 Significant of study

Carrying out this study focusing on the factors of Gen Z participation in the gig economy in Malaysia and the key aspect of its impact is significant in filling the research gap and increasing knowledge and awareness on these issues. Previous research has mainly focused on developed countries (Lehdonvirta, 2018; Ashford et al., 2018; Karlsson & Wranne, 2019; Myhill et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022); hence the findings of this study will broaden the scope of gig economy research and increase understanding of the gig economy in Malaysia. This research will help the Malaysian government, Ministry of Labor, policy makers and employers to better understand the factors that lead Gen Z to join the gig economy. Therefore, designing appropriate and more effective policies for a gig economy and the new Gen Z workforce. Also, the gig economy is a relatively new phenomenon in Malaysia, and there is still much to learn.

Researching the factors influencing Gen Z participation in the gig economy can help businesses and entrepreneurs identify opportunities for innovation and growth.

Furthermore, as gig economy is growing rapidly and attracting many young people, it is crucial to understand their motivations and the challenges they face. Previous studies mainly explored the factors or motivations for people to join the gig economy are work-life balance, personal economic reasons, and learning and development (Gandhi et al., 2018; Nawaz et al., 2019). But in this research, in addition to using work-life balance and learning and development, we will also add social media use, technology and digitalization, and leadership qualities as our independent variables to explore the willingness of Malaysia's Generation Z to join the gig economy. Moreover, there is readiness as a mediator and commitment as a moderator to improve the reliability of this study.

On the other hand, this study brings benefits to future researchers as it can serve as a steppingstone and guide for future analyzes of the Malaysian gig economy. The study will also serve as a cross-reference to provide a background or overview on Gen Z and the gig economy in Malaysia. Overall, this research provides valuable insights into Malaysia's economic and social landscape, which can help in the development of policies and practices that support this emerging industry.

1.6 Chapter Layout

Chapter one contains the background, problem statement, research objective, research question, and the significance study of the research. It details the overview of this research, the reasons why the topic is chosen, and the importance of conducting this research.

Chapter two is about explaining the theories related to the research and reviewing the conducted researches on the factors influencing the willingness of Gen Z to engage in

gig economy in Malaysia. The variables and theoretical framework from past researches also well-reviewed to develop the hypothesis of the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables.

Chapter three delves into the methodology of the research, encompassing elements such as research design, sampling methodology, data collection techniques, and the proposed tools for data analysis. This chapter provides a detailed account of the procedures employed for data collection.

Chapter four is related to data analysis. The components of data analysis are descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. It is important for relating the results of the analysis with the research questions and hypothesis proposed.

Chapter five consists the discussion, conclusions, and implications of the research. Not only discussing about the major findings of the research and the practical implications to the policy makers, the limitation of the research and recommendations for further study will also be explained in this chapter.

1.7 Conclusion

All in all, the gig economy has grown rapidly in recent years, attracting many young people. It is important to understand key aspects of their motivations, the challenges they face, and their impact. In the remainder of this study, additional evidence, details, arguments, and information will be provided to fill research gaps and raise awareness of these issues.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is mainly about reviewing the literature of this research by explaining the theories based on previous studies about similar topics. Then, it proceeds with the review between the dependent variable and each independent variable. Theoretical framework will be proposed based on the research objective and research questions, to clarify the relationship between the variables. Lastly, the developed hypothesis, which should be backed by previous theories, is to measure the relationships among the important variables.

2.1 Underlying Theories

2.1.1 Theory of Self-Determination

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is the theory of motivation which refers to one's interpersonal, development, and social dynamics, that explores how different societal values and personality traits foster various forms of motivation, particularly intrinsic and extrinsic (Deci & Ryan, 2015). The fulfillment of the three core psychological needs in SDT: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, are required for efficient performance and wellness of human beings (Deci & Ryan, 2015). When these needs are satisfied, people are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation in completing tasks because they are interesting, enjoyable, and inherently rewarding (Deci & Ryan, 2015).

Cherry (2022) explained that autonomy refers to the need to be in control of one's own acts and interest; competence refers to the need to feel capable in completing tasks by acquiring talents and mastering new skills; relatedness pertains to the fundamental human need for interpersonal connection and a feeling of being an integral part of a community. Gen Z is offered with a sense of autonomy by gig economy, which enable them to decide their schedules and location to work; as well as the opportunity to grow and display their abilities, which contributes to the feeling of being competent; while the sense of relatedness is created by the relationships formed with customers and peers (Brown, 2022).

SDT is an important element in explaining how work-life balance and learning development may affect the readiness of Gen Z in engaging to gig economy. In the setting of gig economy, SDT implies that Gen Zers are attracted to gig work because the opportunities offered are related to autonomy and flexibility, which provide work-life balance (Wu & Zhou, 2022). Nero (2023) mentioned that flexibility is essential to Gen Z, they may be drawn to the freedom to make decisions on their preferred schedule and workplace. According to Jenkins (2021), there are 76% of Gen Zers perceive themselves as self-career owners, who determine their own career development, while 62% of Gen Zers would prefer to choose their own profession path rather than having the organization to plan it out for them. A survey done by Little (2022) shows that the employee welfare which Gen Z valued the most is work-life balance at 32%, followed by learning and career advancement at 29%, and high income at 24%. Based on the above statements, the benefit of work-life balance will boost the readiness of Gen Z to engage in gig economy.

Besides, the competence value in SDT fosters learning and development in gig economy by building a good learning atmosphere and offering them the opportunity to utilize and enhance their skills through ideally challenging projects (Deci & Ryan, 2014). The respondents from the research conducted by Forner et al. (2020) embraced competence by receiving opportunities to develop their skills, capacities, and self-confidence in a secure and encouraging atmosphere. Fratričová and Kirchmayer (2018)

cited that by providing opportunities of continuous learning and career advancement will increase the readiness of Gen Z in engaging to gig economy. Therefore, we can conclude that the work-life balance and learning development bring positive impacts on Gen Z's readiness to engage in gig economy based on the Self-Determination Theory.

However, the fact that not every gig employment will fulfill these needs fairly well is often neglected. Certain types of gig employment might be less intrinsically motivated as the job requirement is more isolating over others, or they may lack sufficient opportunity for skill improvement. Since gig employment is the latest trend in Malaysia with over a quarter of the overall workforce (Pang, 2022), the employers are still figuring ways to interact comfortably with gig workers. Those who are treated as one-time contractors might lose the satisfaction of relatedness; or as a subordinator, might lose the satisfaction of autonomy and competence, that could've been satisfied if working as a full-time employee in an organization (Houde, 2018). In this type of relationship, one must be more alert and sensitive when interacting with their partners, so that they are willing to commit in the organization, without having to suffer from the stress of being a full-time employee (Houde, 2018). Therefore, employers and policymakers ought to pay close attention to the fulfillment of psychological needs in gig employment for Gen Zers as well as other gig workers.

2.1.2 Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory posits that both individuals and societies can enhance their productivity and income-earning capabilities through investments in education, training, and various avenues of personal growth and development (Nafukho et al., 2004). According to Pelinescu (2015), it suggests that people are like assets that can be developed and that investing in them can lead to economic growth and development. The theory emphasizes the importance of equal access to education and training to reduce income inequality and promote social and economic progress.

In short, human capital theory is a framework for explaining how individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities affect their economic outcomes (Balan & Knack, 2011). According to Zulkifly et al. (2019), in the context of the gig economy, the theory suggests that individuals with a certain level of human capital are more likely to engage in gig work. According to Latifah et al. (2022), they find that social media networks moderate the effect of human capital on young. Based on the human capital theory, social media can expose people to new ideas and opportunities, which can influence individuals' attitudes towards work and motivate them to invest in the necessary skills and knowledge, increasing their personal potential to perform tasks and contribute to economic growth and development (Latifah et al., 2022). According to Izuagbe et al. (2019), social media use falls under a subjective norm. They suggest that if a person is aware through social networks that education must be valued and encouraged to pursue it, they may be more likely to invest in their education and training.

According to Sulaiman et al. (2015), human capital and technology show a significant positive impact on economic growth. This is because individuals with strong technological and digital skills may be more able to take advantage of the opportunities and tools available in the economy, increasing their success. Furthermore, as mentioned in Day (2000), in the context of leadership, human capital theory suggests that the skills and knowledge required for effective leadership can be acquired and developed through education, training, and experience to guide organisations towards success. According to Mustofa and Setiawan (2022), perceived behavioural control is when individuals believe they have the ability to engage in a particular behaviour or activity, which certainly includes leadership as well as technological skills. When an individual has the belief that they want to implement their goals, they will continue to increase their personal capacity through learning, training, etc., so that they are well prepared to join the gig economy.

Overall, subjective norms influence an individual's investment in education and training, thereby increasing their human capital. Perceived behavioural control affects

individuals' ability to use their human capital effectively in organisations. And their ability to do so has the potential to contribute to the success of the organisation, or rather the gig economy. Although there is little empirical research on human capital theory and subjective norms and perceived behavioural controls that prepare people to participate in the gig economy, we can nonetheless find correlations among them in the above report. We can therefore say that according to human capital theory, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control are positively related to people's readiness to participate in the gig economy.

2.1.3 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a systematic approach that unveils an individual's logical thought process concerning a specific intention. It comprises four fundamental elements: attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). TPB has been empirically validated for its capacity to discern and predict the factors influencing an individual's intentions (Ajzen, 1991). An individual's positive or negative assessment of a behavior in a given situation is referred to as their attitude (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norm signifies the perceived social pressure to either engage in or abstain from the behavior, whereas perceived behavioral control relates to the perceived ease or difficulty associated with performing the behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

TPB has been widely used in various studies. For instance, Morris and Venkatesh (2000) applied the theory to explore employees' technology use decisions and attitudes towards technology adoption. Fortin (2000) utilized the model to investigate the behavior of online coupon clipping. Additionally, Truong (2009) employed the theory to examine consumer acceptance of online video and TV services, while Hsu et al. (2006) utilized an extended version of the model to explore online shopping behavior. In an employment setting, Tegova (2010) also used the TPB to analyze people's career choices.

In terms of career choice, TPB is widely used to study people's intention and application behavior related to career choice from the aspects of people's attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Tegova, 2010). However, there has been limited research using TPB to explore Gen Z's willingness to participate in the gig economy. It is widely acknowledged that intention is a strong predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). As such, they are crucial to understanding the tendencies of Gen Z who choose gig careers.

According to Yasa et al. (2022), TPB is often used to indicate the behavior of people in making purchasing decisions. However, TPB theory allows for the study not only of one's buying behaviour, but also of how intentions manifest when making a decision, examining that career choices are of course influenced by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Yasa et al., 2022). Gen Z's willingness to become gig workers may depend on their attitudes toward participating in the gig economy. If Gen Z's attitude toward gig work is positive, it will incentivize them to join the gig economy. This aligns with research conducted by Soon et al. (2016), which emphasized the substantial influence of attitudes on behavioral intentions. Similar findings were observed in the investigations conducted by Devi (2015) and Hatane et al. (2021), both of which asserted that attitudes play a pivotal role in shaping behavioral choices. Conversely, there are studies, such as the one by Ridha et al. (2017), that contradict this notion, suggesting that attitudes do not exert an impact on behavioral intentions. The attitudes of the Gen Z can influence the behavioral willingness of this generation to participate in the gig economy, and their awareness of the gig economy's characteristics can also impact their behavioral willingness to join it, such as perceived work life balance and learning and development opportunities in gig economy.

Furthermore, the gig economy is gradually playing a very important role in the Malaysian economy. In addition to attitudes, the opinions of family members, loved ones, friends and others were also found to have a strong influence on behavioral intentions. Patre (2022) conducted research on the impact of subjective norms on

behavioral intentions, and the findings indicated that as subjective norms increased, so did behavioral intentions. On the other hand, Robledo et al. (2015) found the opposite result, indicating that subjective norms did not have any effect on behavioral intentions. Furthermore, the availability of support facilities for behavior also plays a crucial role in determining behavioral intentions and decision-making. In this regard, based on Ma and Yang (2018), developments in technology and digitization have influenced people's willingness to join the gig economy, which aligns with the findings of Tucker et al. (2020), who demonstrated that perceived behavioral control has a positive and significant impact on behavioral intentions.

In this report, we can relate all our independent variables to the TPB theoretical framework. For example, work-life balance and learning and development can be regarded as an attitude of Gen Z to join the gig economy. Besides, social media use can be included in the subjective norm, technology and digitalization and leadership qualities can be placed in the perceived behavioral control.

2.2 Review of Previous Empirical Studies

2.2.0 Readiness and Willingness to engage in gig economy

The phrase "gig economy" implies to a labour force that focuses on the accessibility of short-term employees for the completion of small projects who offer expertise services, or "gig" for a particular period of time by using various websites and mobile applications (Gandhi et al., 2018; Gandini, 2019; Alif et al., 2020). Moreover, the demand for gig employment might be worldwide or local, and the task carried out by the gig worker can be digitized or physically based (Gandini, 2019).

According to Matthysen and Harris (2018), the term "Readiness" refers to a person's ability to participate in a specific activity or endeavour. The 'readiness' of an individual means that they have the expertise and mindset required to participate in the gig

economy. Readiness for participation in the gig economy would indicate possessing the required skills, technology, and equipment to be employed as a gig worker. According to Green et al. (2018), innovation, a type of leadership quality, plays a very important role in the gig economy, and gig workers must keep up with innovation if they want to keep up with trends. This means that, with leadership qualities, you have the readiness to join the gig economy. Not only that, but according to Behera and Gaur (2022), gig workers need to keep learning to stay relevant, employees must also be familiar with the organization's goals, strategy, culture, and operations, as well as constantly improve and expand their skills in digital technology. In other words, when people want to learn and develop and have digital technology skills, there is a positive relationship with their readiness to engage in the gig economy.

"Willingness to engage" denotes an individual's or a group's level of interest or motivation in participating in a specific activity (Sjoberg, 2007). Willingness is linked to a decision maker's conscious and unconscious estimations of positive and negative aspects, to detect opportunities and then transform them into choices which are valued in a certain way (Sjoberg, 2007). In the setting of gig economy, the willingness to engage implies a desire or interest to be a gig worker, despite whether one owns the necessary skills or resources. To conclude, readiness to engage refers to possessing the requisite resources, whereas willingness to engage refers to having an intention or interest in participating in gig economy.

2.2.0.1 Commitment

Commitment, as described by Meyer et al. (2014), is "an important asset of an organization, characterised by the desire to stay in it; alignment with the organization's values and objectives; and a willingness to devote additional effort to accomplish". Commitment acts as a moderator between the readiness and willingness of the participation in gig economy (Lee & Jeong, 2017). If a person possesses the necessary skills and capacities to be a gig worker but lacks a strong dedication or motivation to

act, they might not take part in gig employment. However, if one is both ready to take part and committed to gig work, their willingness to take part in the gig economy increases. According to Extremera et al. (2018), the continuous commitment in job and job motivation is determined by personal values. In this context, the gig workers determine whether their personal interests and beliefs correspond with how the gig economy operates, and if they are a match, then the likelihood of their willingness to participate in the gig economy increases.

2.2.1 Attitude

The attitude of an individual determines their behavior and intention towards any task, including joining the gig economy (Nagarathanam & Buang, 2016). For the Gen Z population, their decision to participate in the gig economy is dependent on their attitude towards it. A positive attitude towards the gig economy increases the likelihood of their participation. For example, the attitude of many young people towards work today is that they want work-life balance, so more and more young people are joining the gig economy (Ma & Yang, 2018). Besides, according to Pogorevici and Serobe (2020), attitudes toward learning and development can also affect people's willingness to participate in the gig economy. Thus, the two attitudes, namely perceived flexibility and learning and development, are subdivided in this section. Further discussion on empirical research related to work-life balance and learning and development in the gig economy is presented below.

2.2.1.1 Work-life balance

The concept of work-life balance involves effectively managing both personal and professional aspects of one's life, and it doesn't necessarily mean dividing one's time equally between various daily activities and work responsibilities (Guest, 2002). The main goal is to handle different areas of life in a way that doesn't negatively affect one's

physical, mental, and emotional health, and this is an important consideration for people of all ages (Haar et al., 2014). Achieving work-life balance is essential to leading a fulfilling life and achieving personal and professional goals ("An Elusive Goal: Striving for Work-Life Balance (517)," 2009). The pursuit of work-life balance is an important concern for many in the modern workforce. Many struggle to find a balance between their personal and professional lives as they recognise the importance of having time to pursue hobbies, spend time with family and friends, and practice self-care (Gholipour et al., 2022). This is particularly true in today's fast-paced and demanding work environment, where expectations and demands are high and there is often pressure to work long hours, leading to burnout and reduced productivity (Qiu et al., 2022). Several factors and influences can affect work-life balance, including working hours, workload, work demands, work flexibility and personal circumstances (Dhingra & Dhingra, 2021). For example, flexible working arrangements, such as teleworking, job sharing and compressed work weeks, can significantly affect work-life balance (Roberto et al., 2023). Work-life balance can have a significant impact on work as it affects employee motivation, job satisfaction and overall well-being (Jensen et al., 2017). Employees who experience a healthy work-life balance tend to be more productive, engaged, and focused on their work (Jensen et al., 2017). In contrast, those who struggle to maintain a balance between their work and personal lives are more likely to feel burned out, stressed and have decreased job satisfaction (Jensen et al., 2017).

As mentioned in Chapter1's background, over the past few years, younger generations, including Generation Z, have increasingly expressed their concerns about work-life balance in the workplace (Deloitte, 2020). This concern stems from the observation that older workers experience burnout and economic deprivation in the demands of the workplace (Deloitte, 2020). Generation Z has realised that work-life balance is critical to their overall well-being and is demanding that the workplace be adapted to accommodate this demand (Maloni et al., 2019). One of the main concerns of Generation Z is the need for more time off (Baum, 2020). Unlike previous generations who see long hours as a sign of commitment and dedication, Gen Z value the

importance of rest and time away from work (Smola & Sutton, 2002). They understand that rest and relaxation are essential to maintaining physical and mental health and they are not willing to compromise on this (Smola & Sutton, 2002). They want the freedom to enjoy their lives outside of work and demand more time off and flexible working hours (Baum, 2020). Another concern of Gen Z is the impact of work on their physical, mental and emotional health (Gerritsen et al., 2022). They are not willing to sacrifice their well-being for work and they want their employers to take responsibility for creating a healthy work environment (Health, 2022). They believe that the workplace should not have a negative impact on their overall health and that it is the employer's responsibility to promote their well-being (Health, 2022). Finally, the Gen Z also values a relaxed work environment (Smola & Sutton, 2002). They do not want to work in a stressful and competitive environment. Instead, they prefer workplaces that foster a sense of community and teamwork (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

A number of studies have examined the relationship between work-life balance and the gig economy. A study conducted by Abdul Rahim et al. (2021) found that work-life balance was a key factor in motivating individuals to join the Malaysian gig economy. The study identifies flexibility, control and autonomy as important factors that enable individuals to achieve work-life balance in the gig economy (Rahim et al., 2021). The study also found that the gig economy gives individuals greater control over their working hours, which allows them to balance work and personal commitments more effectively (Lehdonvirta, 2018). It also shows that since the gig economy allows people to achieve a better work-life balance, and Gen Z has the attitude of wanting work-life balance, they are "ready" to join the gig economy. Similarly, according to Lehdonvirta (2018), flexibility and control over working hours were identified as important drivers for individuals choosing to work in the gig economy. However, there is also research that suggests that the gig economy does not always lead to a better work-life balance. For example, according to Warren (2021), gig workers often face long and unpredictable working hours, which can make it difficult to manage their personal and professional lives, in addition to the uncertainty of income and job security that gig workers may face, which can lead to stress and anxiety.

In short, previous research on the impact of work-life balance on Generation Z's participation in the gig economy is limited. However, studies have shown that work-life balance is a potential factor influencing people's willingness to participate in the gig economy.

2.2.1.2 Learning and development

Learning and development encompasses the pursuit of fresh behaviors, knowledge, competencies, and enhancements that enhance individuals' capacity to fulfill present and forthcoming demands, ultimately enabling them to attain elevated levels of accomplishment (Harrison, 2005). According to Nelson et al. (2015), the process of learning involves establishing a conducive environment that supports individual learning and facilitates changes in attitudes. Learning is a never-ending life-long process, from the birth of a human being to the end of life, from relatives, societies, colleges, religious institutions, workplaces, all can be the beginning of learning (Harrison, 2005). Learning and development are an essential part of human life and work (Nelson et al., 2015).

Constructivism posits that learning is a dynamic social process where individuals actively build their knowledge through personal experiences (Kraiger, 2008). It underscores that even when people are presented with similar learning opportunities, the outcomes can differ significantly among individuals (Kraiger, 2008). In today's developmental context, there is a strong emphasis on individuals taking an active role in steering their own learning and personal growth (Dachner et al., 2021). According to Dachner et al. (2021), people can use work to identify personal skill needs and seek development opportunities. This philosophy states that one's own development must be achieved through a willingness to learn (Hameed & Waheed, 2011). When individuals have a desire to acquire knowledge, they exhibit enthusiasm for growth-oriented endeavors (Hameed & Waheed, 2011). They will be more satisfied with their current jobs if they have the learning opportunities (Hameed & Waheed, 2011). When people

feel a desire for self-development, it leads to an increase in their performance at work (Hameed & Waheed, 2011). Besides, as their skills improve, they will be able to develop their own realistic career plans for a better future (Hameed & Waheed, 2011). However, in this study, we seek to understand whether learning and development are factors that may influence Gen Z participation in the gig economy.

According to Bridges (2015), Gen Z prefers work environments where they can learn and have opportunities for development because they feel that their education did not provide the skills needed to deal with real-life problems. A welcoming workplace atmosphere that fosters entrepreneurial abilities, promotes a friendly ambiance, and offers adaptable scheduling is what Gen Z seeks in their job search (Vaghela & Agarwal, 2018). According to Dachner et al. (2021), which states that young people are constantly changing their jobs in order to learn new knowledge or skills. Moreover, according to Schawbel (2012), people between the ages of 18 and 32 have previously held about nine different jobs (Schawbel, 2012). In fact, current career paths, especially for younger generations, are more likely to change not only jobs but also organizations and industries as people seek more competitive skills, development opportunities and better jobs and occupation (Dachner et al., 2021). For those who participate in the gig economy, because most of the gig jobs are temporary, they can change their careers more easily, so it is easier to satisfy their learning on different jobs (Tran & Sokas, 2017). Different companies and unrelated jobs represent different work environments, which in turn can be involved in different learning environments (Dachner et al., 2021). Myhill et al. (2021) indicate that gig economy jobs offer limited opportunities for career development. However, the perceived importance of these opportunities varies (Myhill et al., 2021). For instance, newcomers to the workforce or those seeking to gain experience in a new field may value gig work as a chance to learn on the job (Myhill et al., 2021).

Furthermore, several studies and surveys have shown that there are learning and development opportunities in the gig economy, so that is a factor for people to join the gig economy. According to Pogorevici and Serobe (2020) and Ashford et al., (2018)

research found that gig economy can bring more learning and development opportunities for participants. According to the research from Pogorevici and Serobe (2020) on the gig economy in South Africa, the desire to learn and develop has a significant relationship with willingness to join the gig economy. This is because in the gig economy, key concepts such as “skills” and “learning” are related to other concepts such as “experience”, “development” and “future” (Kaine & Josserand, 2019). According to Ashford et al. (2018) given that gig work can encompass a wide range of activities, the considerations of skills, experience, and learning opportunities vary widely. Therefore, in this regard, gig work is associated with new learning opportunities, and gig workers can develop new skills through gig work (Ashford et al., 2018). In this sense, each contract or each client can bring opportunities to learn new routines and skills (Ashford et al., 2018), or it can be said that crowdsourcing workers can accumulate rich experience by contacting different types of customers and projects (Arenas et al., 2018). Other than that, a survey conducted according to Karlsson and Wranne (2019) found that most gig workers enjoy learning new things and most emphasize that they want to take on projects that are challenging in some way, which can facilitate their learning.

In short, previous research on learning and development as factors influencing Gen Z participation in the gig economy is limited. However, according to other research on learning and development and people's participation in the gig economy, learning and development can be one of the factors that affects people's participation in the gig economy.

2.2.2 Subjective norm

Subjective norms pertain to how an individual perceives the social pressure or influence exerted by others when it comes to engaging in or refraining from a specific behavior (Ham et al., 2015). It is one of the factors in Theory of Planned Behavior. In other words, subjective norms are social pressures or influences that people feel from family,

friends, or other social groups that influence their behavior (Ham et al., 2015). If the influence is greater, people's intention to perform a particular behavior will be greater (Patre, 2022). In this study, we only focus on social media as a source of influence. As more and more people use social media, their behavior and perceptions will likely be influenced by social media. In our study we hypothesized that Gen Z's willingness to join the gig economy depends on their use of social media. The following examines the relationship between social media use and people's willingness or readiness to join the gig economy from previous studies.

2.2.2.1 Social Media Use

Social media is a term that describes a variety of internet-based software, internet sites, as well as other networks that allow users to produce, exchange, and share contents generated by users (Green et al., 2009). Based on the latest information compiled by Lua (2023), the top 5 most used social media sites in 2023 are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and WeChat. These platforms may be utilised to establish relationships with one another, exchange ideas, views, and perspectives, and work cooperatively on tasks and events.

Social media has altered how people interact and connect with each other, and it has grown to be an essential feature of people on a daily basis. On a personal basis, the users may contact with family and friends, discover latest information, and explore interests through social media (University of South Florida, 2023). Professionally, social media can be used in developing knowledge and experience within a particular industry and expanding the opportunities of networking by engaging with other experts in similar field (University of South Florida, 2023). Social media had a tremendous influence on advertising, business, and marketing, opening up new paths for enterprises to reach out to customers and advertise their goods and services. At the corporate level, it enables them to interact with the target audience, collect consumer feedback, and improve the company branding (University of South Florida, 2023).

Generation Z has acted differently compared to previous generations (Salamander, 2023) by the way they interact, obtain latest news, and connect with the wider society through social media. This generation is acknowledged for its capacity to perform multiple tasks and collect data from various sources, from virtual sites to the real world, at the same time (Cloud Communication Services, 2021). According to Thomas (2011), social media platforms have surpassed traditional media as the primary feature for Gen Z to be updated for the latest information, to engage with one another, and to express themselves. The freedom to produce and manage their own content is one of the major aspects of social media that attracts to Gen Z (Salamander, 2023). TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat are examples of social media sites that allow users to create and share their own videos, photographs, and stories (Lula, 2023), which grant Gen Z a powerful voice and allowed them to express their personalities and uniqueness in ways that were previously unrealistic (Duncil, 2022). The comments and likes are acting as an encouragement for Gen Z to disclose every detail of their lifestyles and every passing thought (Duncil, 2023). The characteristic of utilizing social media of Gen Z is significant to their readiness to engage in gig economy.

The gig economy and social media are two interrelated trends (Vallas & Schor, 2020) that have substantially altered the way people interact and work in this civilized era. Social media websites have facilitated the development of the gig economy by offering a platform for business marketing and advertising services, and easing contact between employers and gig workers. For instance, the platforms that may connect freelancers with clients are Task Rabbits, Experteer, and Fiver (Haider, 2022). Sites like Monster, Indeed, and ZipRecruiter aren't only for prospective full-time workers, they can also be used by gig workers to acquire short term contract jobs (Haider, 2022). In addition, potential employers are increasingly using these platforms to hire competent temporary workers. To illustrate, the platforms most used by content writers, video editors, and social media managers, are Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to promote their portfolios and interact with potential clients who are seeking for their particular

expertise (Johnson, 2023). The accessible gig work opportunities through social media may increase the willingness of Gen Z to engage in gig economy.

In conclusion, there are many previous studies emphasized the importance of social media on gig economy. So, we hypothesize that there is positive relationship between social media and Gen Z's readiness and willingness to engage in gig economy in Malaysia.

2.2.3 Perceived Behavioural Control

Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's beliefs and perceptions about their ability to perform a specific behavior (Ham et al., 2015). When a person feels capable or has sufficient resources to perform a particular behavior, they are more likely to do so (Tucker et al., 2020). Alif et al. (2020) and Kuhn (2016) argues that some people tend to choose to participate in the gig economy due to the convenience brought about by technology and digitization as well as their leadership qualities. Therefore, in this study, we hypothesize that perceived behavioral control is influenced by factors such as technology and digitization as well as leadership qualities. Further discussion on empirical research related to technology and digitalization and leadership qualities in the gig economy is presented below.

2.2.3.1 Technology and digitalization

Technology and digitization are a transformative approach that changes the way we live and work and opens up new opportunities for innovation and growth (Lobel, 2017). For example, the internet has revolutionized how we live, enabling people to instantly communicate with others from anywhere, access online learning and job-seeking platforms, and many other services. It has also transformed the nature of work and the types of jobs available (Caro et al., 2021). One significant change is the increase in options for both employers and employees in terms of whom to hire and work for,

expanding the pool of potential candidates from a limited number of local individuals to millions of people worldwide (Caro et al., 2021).

The availability of high-speed internet, advanced computers, and collaborative tools has made it possible for people in dispersed teams to work together (Mehta, 2020). The emergence of smartphones has also revolutionized communication between various stakeholders, such as businesses, employees, and customers. The Information and communication technology (ICT) industry, together with the new I4.0 technologies, is transforming the nature of work, with many companies opting to hire freelance workers on a flexible or short-term basis (Mehta, 2020). This arrangement benefits both employers and gig workers, with the former enjoying reduced costs and high-quality output, and the latter enjoying flexibility in selecting tasks and being able to work from any location (Mehta, 2020).

Due to technological advancements being a key factor in the growth of the gig economy, possessing and utilizing ICT tools has become essential for individuals to actively participate in it (Kuhn, 2016). According to research of Bessen (2014), emerging technologies are not only opening up job opportunities for highly educated and skilled workers but also offering potential avenues for less skilled or informal workers, including women and young adults. These individuals can leverage technology and digital platforms in their employment endeavors. The development of technology has made it easier for young people to join the gig economy. It is significantly correlated with gen z willingness to participate in the gig economy. The technology and digitization have changed the way Gen Z finds work, making it easier for them to access and join the gig economy. They can use their smartphones or laptops to find and apply for gig work, making it more convenient and accessible than traditional employment methods (Ma & Yang, 2018).

Furthermore, according to Roy & Shrivastava (2020), people with certain technical skills are more likely to join the gig economy. For example, both internet skills and computer skills can help them more easily find jobs on online platforms. Especially

those who have computer skills which will enable them to have better career advancement in this industry (Roy & Shrivastava, 2020). Thus, Roy & Shrivastava (2020) indirectly suggests that technology and digitization may be a factor driving people to join the gig economy. In this regard, Gen Z are often tech-savvy and have grown up with technology as an integral part of their lives (Gaidhani et al., 2019). Many gig economy platforms require specific technical skills, such as social media management or web design, as well as networking skills and computing skills mentioned in the Roy & Shrivastava (2020) research, which Gen Z can leverage to their advantage.

Moreover, according to Lehdonvirta (2018), the development of the gig economy created by technology and digitization has provided people with easier remote work and increased work flexibility. Working from home or working remotely relies on the foundations of consumer technology (Lehdonvirta, 2018). Consumer technology trends are encouraging more workers to take on gig jobs instead of 9-5 jobs (Lehdonvirta, 2018). This also indirectly suggests that technology is a factor influencing people to join the gig economy. Gen Z, a generation that has grown up with technology, can readily adapt to the gig economy. Gen Z workers are comfortable with utilizing cutting-edge technology for even the most basic tasks, such as using productivity tools, AI-based automation tools, and virtual connectivity to complete work more efficiently (Nambiar, 2021). Thus, they are supporting and raising the gig economy.

In short, the importance of technology and digitalization for people to join the gig economy cannot be ignored, because previous studies have shown that many people are attracted to join the gig economy due to the development of technology and the convenience it brings. So, in our study, we hypothesize that technology and digitization are positively related to Gen Z's readiness and willingness to join the gig economy.

2.2.3.2 Leadership Qualities

When we talk about leadership qualities, we are referring to a set of skills that enable individuals to effectively lead, manage, and motivate themselves and others. Leadership qualities are the essential characteristics that enable individuals to guide and motivate others towards a common goal or objective. Based on Dickow (2021), Apak and Gümüş (2015), Yukl and Mahsud (2010), Mihăilă-Lică (2020), To et al. (2015), these qualities include, but are not limited to, vision, communication, flexibility, adaptability, and creativity. Having these qualities in the workplace can bring many benefits, such as increased productivity, better communication, improved morale, innovation, and increased job satisfaction (Apak & Gümüş, 2015). Effective leaders who are able to inspire and support their team can create a positive work environment and drive success within their organisation (Dickow, 2021). They are also able to promote innovation and change within their organisation, driving progress and growth (To et al., 2015). They are also adaptable and able to pivot in response to changing circumstances, making decisions quickly and confidently (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). Ultimately, leadership qualities are crucial for anyone who wants to lead a team and promote positive change in their workplace (Mihăilă-Lică, 2020). In the context of the gig economy, these qualities may be particularly valuable for a number of reasons.

Firstly, leadership qualities can help individuals stand out in a crowded marketplace. As more and more people turn to the gig economy, competition for clients and projects is likely to be fierce. Individuals with leadership qualities such as strong communication skills, a commitment to quality work, and a willingness to go above and beyond for their clients can differentiate themselves and build a strong reputation in their field. According to Behera and Gaur (2022), gig workers must have a vision and be familiar with the organisation's goals, strategy, culture, and operations. In addition to this, gig workers also need to possess leadership qualities such as a strong sense of responsibility (Behera & Gaur, 2022). This also indicates that their leadership qualities make them ready to engage in the gig economy.

Again, the gig economy often requires individuals to work independently and is very challenging. Having leadership qualities such as self-motivation, discipline, and strong time management skills is crucial to succeeding in such work environments. According to Alif et al. (2020), a report examining the determinants of what drives people to become gig workers, we find that personal competencies, including self-motivation and self-discipline are key factors in people's willingness to choose to join the gig economy. Not only that, but according to Gandhi et al. (2018), we found that independence is another quality that is closely related to leadership and that it is the main motivator for those who want to become gig workers, showing a positive relationship. By having leadership qualities such as the ability to manage and motivate others, individuals can successfully undertake more complex projects in the gig economy.

In short, people with leadership qualities are sufficiently ready to join the gig economy. This is because previous research has shown that many people are attracted to the gig economy because their own leadership qualities are well suited to their role in it. Therefore, in our study, we hypothesised that leadership qualities are positively related to people's willingness to join the gig economy.

2.3 Theoretical Framework/ Research Framework (Integrate hypotheses development with the study framework)

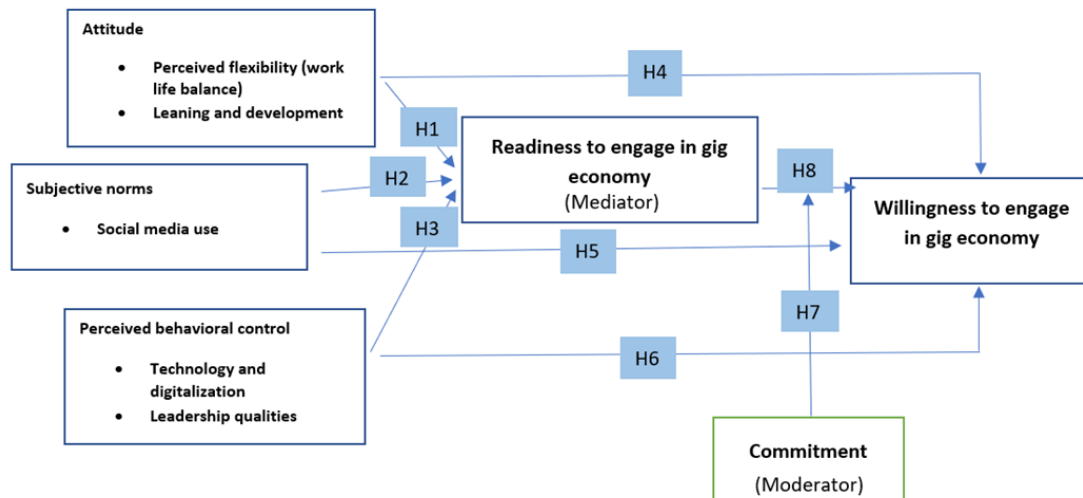


Figure 2.0: Theoretical framework

This study conceptualizes the research framework by employing TPB theory in the context of the gig economy. According to Tegova (2010), the TPB is a popular method for examining how individuals form intentions and behave when making career-related decisions. Although the complete TPB framework is explained to people's actual usage. But there are also many scholars or researchers who use the TPB framework to only explain people's behavioral intentions and ignore people's actual usage, such as the research of Ha et al. (2019) on people's online shopping intentions and the research of Patre (2022) on people who intend to join gig jobs. Because people's actual actions are difficult to measure. Therefore, the TPB framework is a theory that can well explain Gen Z's willingness to join the gig economy in this study. This approach considers attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control as key factors that influence one's intention. In short, in this study, we try to explain the factors that affect Gen Z's participation in the gig economy through Figure 2.0.

In this study, Attitude will be encompassing Work-Life Balance and Learning and Development (Ma & Yang, 2018; Pogorevici & Serobe, 2020). According to the Theory of Self-Determination in the study of Wu and Zhou (2022) and the empirical study of Behera and Gaur (2022), they stated that work-life balance is a significant factor of the readiness to engage in gig economy. Besides, empirical studies of Lehdonvirta (2018) stated that since the gig economy allows people to achieve a better work-life balance, and based on Deloitte (2020), Maloni et al. (2019), Baum (2020) and Smola and Sutton (2002), they concluded that Gen Z has the attitude of wanting work-life balance, so they are "ready" to join the gig economy. On the other hand, Learning and Development is also considered as an attitude toward gig economy in this study. According to the Theory of Self-Determination in the study of Deci and Ryan (2014), and the empirical study of Behera and Gaur (2022), they stated that learning and development has a positive relationship in the readiness to engage in gig economy. Based on Bridges (2015) and Dachner et al. (2021) two studies, they found that one of the characteristics of Gen Z is to like to learn and develop. And gig economy just has a very good learning and development environment, this is due to the gig economy has a low barrier to entry, gig workers can easily switch different jobs and learn or develop different skills in different gig jobs (Tran & Sokas, 2017; Myhill et al., 2021; Arenas et al., 2018). In a result, we can conclude that Gen Z has the attitude of wanting learning and development, they are "ready" to join the gig economy. Finally, we assume the hypotheses of this study as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between attitude toward gig economy and Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy.

Subject norms are often seen as influenced by perceptions of family, friends, etc. In this study, we considered social media as subjective norms. Based on the theory of human capital Latifah et al. (2022), and the empirical study of Vallas and Schor (2020), the social media use and readiness to engage in gig economy has a positive relationship. This is because Gen Z was born in the age of online information and is good at using

social media and because they spend a lot of time on average every day using social media, they are easily influenced by things or information on social media (Duncil, 2023; Thomas, 2011). Finally, we assume the hypotheses of this study as follows:

H2: There is a significant relationship between subjective norm and Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy.

Perceived behavioral control is an individual's belief and perception of their ability to perform a specific behavior, and having the resources to do so increases the likelihood of performing that behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In this study, perceived behavioral control will be encompassing technology and digitization as well as the leadership qualities. First, based on the theory of human capital studied by Sulaiman et al. (2015), technology and digitization as well as leadership are important factors in preparing to participate in the gig economy. This is because according to Nambiar (2021) and Gaidhani et al. (2019), Gen Z is tech-savvy and possesses good technical skills. This along with the technology and digitalization have changed the working environment, now we need technology to work in the gig economy, so, having basic technical and digital skills, they are considered ready to participate in the gig economy (Mehta, 2020; Kuhn, 2016). Second, according to Behera and Gaur (2022), in addition to being visionary and familiar with the goals, strategy, culture and operations of the organization, gig workers also need certain leadership qualities such as a strong sense of responsibility. Besides, based on the empirical study of Behera and Gaur (2022), they concluded that with good leadership qualities, you are ready to join the gig economy. Finally, we assume the hypotheses of this study as follows:

H3: There is a significant relationship between perceived behavioral control and Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy.

The readiness to participate is related to being adequately equipped, whereas the willingness to participate is related to having the motivation or enthusiasm to partake in an undertaking. In addition to readiness, we also studied the relationship between

attitude, subject norms and perceived behavioral control and willingness to engage in the gig economy. According to the empirical studies of Abdul Rahim et al. (2021) and Lehdonvirta (2018), work-life balance is identified as an important motivation for individuals choosing to work in the gig economy. But there is another study that demonstrates the opposite, Warren (2021) highlights that gig employees frequently confront extended and erratic work hours, resulting in challenges in balancing their personal and professional lives. On the other hand, according to the empirical studies of Myhill et al. (2021), Pogorevici and Serobe (2020), Ashford et al., (2018) and Karlsson and Wranne (2019), the learning and development is significant with the willingness to engage in gig economy. This is because most of these studies pointed out that Gen Zers are likely to see the gig economy as an opportunity for continuous learning, skill building and personal development. However, the research of Duggan et al. (2021) pointed out that because the jobs in the gig economy are short-lived and informal, many companies will not provide professional training and career development opportunities for gig workers, thus limiting the learning and development of gig workers. Finally, according to the theory of planned behavior studied by Tegova (2010), Yasa et al. (2022), Soon et al. (2016), Devi (2015) and Hatane et al. (2021), we assume the hypotheses of this study as follows:

H4: There is a significant relationship between attitude toward gig economy and Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy.

Besides, the empirical studies of Haider (2022) and Johnson (2023) have illustrated that there is a positive relationship between social media use and willingness to engage in the gig economy. Moreover, based on the theory of the planned behavior studied by Tegova (2010), Yasa et al. (2022), and Patre (2022), the subjective norm is a significant factor of the willingness to engage in gig economy. Because, today, social media platforms serve as powerful mediums through which users can communicate and internalize trends, opportunities, and norms. As such, it may influence the minds of social media users. Finally, we assume the hypotheses of this study as follows:

H5: There is a significant relationship between subjective norms and Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy.

Furthermore, according to the empirical studies of Ma and Yang (2018), Roy and Shrivastava (2020) and Lehdonvirta (2018), technology and digitalization is one of factors on the willingness to engage in the gig economy. This is because using a technology (smartphone or laptop) to find and perform gig work is more convenient and accessible than traditional forms of employment. On the other hand, based on the studies of Alif et al. (2020) and Gandhi et al. (2018), we found that leadership qualities, and personal competencies, including self-motivation and self-discipline, are key drivers of willingness to engage into the gig economy. They also pointed out that individuals who possess leadership skills are more likely to embrace gig work due to their capacity to manage tasks and uncertainties in the gig jobs. Finally, according to the theory of planned behavior studied by Tucker et al. (2020), Tegova (2010) and Yasa et al. (2022), we assume the hypotheses of this study as follows:

H6: There is a significant relationship between perceived behavioral control and Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy.

As the Figure 1 stated, commitment in this study is a moderator. According to Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019), Hadden et al. (2018) and Lee and Jeong (2017), it can play a role as a moderator between readiness to engage and willingness to engage in the gig economy. According to Extremera et al. (2018), this is due to commitment influences the level of effort and dedication an individual puts into gig work if one has the necessary resources and skills to participate in the gig economy. Finally, we assume the hypotheses of this study as follows:

H7: The relationship between readiness to engage in the gig economy and willingness to engage in the gig economy is significantly moderated by commitment.

Lastly, we wish to examine the relationship between the readiness and willingness for one to engage in gig economy, provided the person has the necessary skills and abilities to be a gig worker, as the readiness is a mediator in our study. As mentioned in Errida and Lotfi (2021), readiness for change represents the willingness to adapt to change. Besides, according to Chen and Silverthorne (2005), there is a positive relationship between employees' ability and their willingness. In other words, if a person has the ability to participate in the gig economy, then he is more likely to have the will to participate in the gig economy. Finally, we assume the hypotheses of this study as follows:

H8: There is a significant relationship between Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy and Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy.

H9: The relationship between attitude toward gig economy and Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy will be mediated by Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy.

H10: The relationship between subjective norm and Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy will be mediated by Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy.

H11: The relationship between perceived behavioral control and Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy will be mediated by Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy.

2.4 Research Gap

Research gap is about the differences between the past studies and our study. Based on earlier literature, there is more to discover about Gen Z's readiness and willingness to engage in the gig economy.

The past literatures are mostly about the gig workers value flexibility (Roberto et al., 2023; Baum, 2020; Lehdonvirta, 2018), continuous learning (Bridges, 2015; Dachner et al., 2021), social interacting (Thomas, 2011; Salamander, 2023; Duncil, 2022), tech savvy (Ma & Yang, 2018; Gaidhani et al., 2019) and leadership qualities (Behera & Gaur, 2022; Alif et al. , 2020) as their work preferences; but not specifically on Gen Z's readiness and willingness to engage in the gig economy.

The majority of the study was based on outside of Malaysia, which are based on developed countries like the United States (Lehdonvirta, 2018; Ashford et al., 2018; Karlsson & Wranne, 2019), the United Kingdom (Myhill et al., 2021), and China (Wu et al., 2022). Since there is a huge difference regarding economy, employment opportunities and work preference between Malaysia and other developed countries, the obtained research outcomes may be invalid and over-generalised to adapt to the Malaysian context.

In short, the purpose of this study is to investigate the factors of work-life balance, learning and development, social media use, technology and digitalization, and leadership qualities on Gen Z's readiness and willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia.

2.5 Conclusion

In brief, this chapter focuses on previous research on readiness and willingness to engage in the gig economy. The findings of the literature review suggest that there is a degree of correlation between readiness and willingness to engage in the gig economy and the independent variables: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral norms. The research framework and hypotheses are also developed to give the reader a clearer understanding of the study. In the next sections, the methodology of this study is examined.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The main objective of this research is to explore the willingness of Generation Z in Malaysia to join the gig economy and the factors that influence their willingness. The achievement of the research goal is heavily reliant on the methodology employed. Thus, this chapter will begin by delving into the research design, and then a comprehensive discussion of the data collection methods employed. The sampling design, research instruments, and measurement of constructs will then be elaborated upon. Lastly, the data processing and analysis methods used in this study will be explained in detail.

3.1 Research Design

Research design refers to the comprehensive planning and organization of a study's elements in a clear, systematic, and logical manner to effectively address the research question. Qualitative and quantitative research are two types of research designs, and in this study, the quantitative research approach will be utilized. This is because of the large number of respondents in this study and the use of questionnaires to collect data, quantitative research methods are preferred over qualitative research. Another reason is because the data for this study were obtained by distributing questionnaires rather than interviews or observations.

3.1.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is characterized by numerical measurement and analysis, which requires the use of statistical analysis to examine the data obtained. Therefore, the methods of quantitative research may be accounted as scientific in nature (Daniel, 2016). In the case of quantitative research, using statistical methods in data analysis can also reduce the time and effort required for researchers to report their findings and ensure the objectivity of research (Daniel, 2016).

3.1.2 Correlational Research

Correlation research is a research design to examine the relationship between two or more variables (Seeram, 2019). This research method involves measuring variables of interest and analyzing the degree to which they are related to each other (Seeram, 2019). Correlation research can be used to explore the strength and direction of relationships between variables, but not to establish causality (Seeram, 2019). This is because correlation studies do not involve manipulating variables, but simply measuring them as they occur naturally (Seeram, 2019). Therefore, in this study, we will use correlational research as our research design. Since the researchers cannot manipulate the variables in this study, and the major goal of this study is to explore the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables.

3.2 Data Collection Method

Data collection refers to the process of gathering information from every applicable resource, such as observation, interviews, or questionnaire distribution, to allow for further exploration into potential solutions regarding the research problem, hypothesis testing, and result assessment. The two types of data collection method are primary

data and secondary data. In this research, primary data is collected and used to examine the research objective.

3.2.1 Primary Data

Primary data, which refers to original data, is the information obtained directly by researchers via approaches such as interviews, questionnaires for surveys, or observation. Since this study is primarily a study involving individual behavior, human participation is necessary. Therefore, the data from this study are essential to obtain accurate, specific and relevant information directly from the individuals concerned. Primary data can provide a deeper understanding of their motivations, experiences, and behaviors, ultimately helping to enrich the body of knowledge on the topic. The collected data are associated with the variables implemented in this study and will be used to conduct further research. It is then converted to statistics using statistical tools to generate an overview of the results.

3.3 Sampling Design

3.3.1 Target Population

The target population refers to a group of individuals who meet specific criteria, particularly in the context of research studies (Asiamah et al., 2017). It is the responsibility of the researchers to ensure that the respondents are selected from the target population to collect and analyze accurate data. Therefore, it is crucial to verify that the respondents are eligible to participate in the survey.

This study aimed to examine the relationship between the Generation Z in Malaysia and their willingness to engage in the gig economy. Therefore, this study focuses on

the Gen Z population in Malaysia between the ages of 17 and 26, including both students and workers. This is due to the fact that gig work does not require one to be of legal age (Mulcahy, 2021).

As reported by Knoema (2020), Malaysia's population aged between 15 and 24 (as their age now is 18 to 27) was 5.5328 million in 2020. Therefore, this study aims to target the country's 5.53 million Gen Z population.

3.3.2 Sampling Frame and Sampling Location

To obtain a sampling frame, it is necessary to identify all individuals who are likely to be included in the target population. For this study, we will select sampling locations where Gen Z is frequently present, such as universities and various workplaces.

3.3.3 Sampling Elements

A sampling element is a unit of measure used to measure a single unit or case from a target population. For this study, a group of young Malaysians aged between 17 to 26 from a variety of schools, work fields and backgrounds will be investigated. Besides that, the selected respondents are varied by the categories of genders, ethnicities and education level. The target population of the respondents is Gen Z in Malaysia, and the subject of this study is the willingness of Gen Z in Malaysia to join the gig economy. Therefore, information that is more accurate and relevant may be retrieved through this survey.

3.3.4 Sampling Technique

In this study, we implemented 'convenience sampling' and 'snowball sampling' as our techniques of sampling. Convenience sampling, which is also known as accidental or opportunity sampling, refers to the situation when the respondent is easily accessible or near to the researcher (Alvi, 2016). Snowball sampling, also called chain sampling, refers to the situation when our respondents approach their friends or people nearby and recommend them to be our respondent (Alvi, 2016). In this study, we aim to collect 384 of respondents with the requirement of Malaysian Gen Z aged 17 to 26. Since we are Gen Z as well, we apply the convenience sampling by sharing the questionnaires to people around us through linkedIn, facebook, instagram story, and group chats of coursemates. To ensure all gathered respondents are useful to our study, we will ask whether they are interested in joining the gig economy, or they are already engaged in the gig economy, or they are not interested in joining the gig economy at all, before answering the questionnaire. The questionnaire will automatically end if they tick at "not interested in gig economy at all". Then, we apply snowball sampling by asking our respondents to share out the questionnaire to people around them.

3.3.5 Sample Size

The sample size represents the number of participants selected from the target population to participate in a research study. In the present study, which focuses on the 5.53 million Generation Z individuals in Malaysia, the minimum required sample size is 384 respondents. This figure is based on the use of Krejcie and Morgan's table (as below), which provides a method for determining the appropriate sample size for a known population. The calculation was performed with a significance level of $p = 0.1$, which ensures that the probability of making a type I error is less than 10 percent.

Table 3.1: Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population.

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384

3.4 Research Instrument

We opted to utilize a questionnaire survey as our research instrument. Questionnaires are cost-effective and affordable, making them a practical choice for gathering quantitative data. Additionally, online and mobile surveys allow for easy access to a large number of participants, making data collection more efficient and widespread.

3.4.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire for this study has a cover layout that helps respondents identify the study title and survey purpose. The questionnaire consists of 43 questions, which are divided into Section A to Section I.

Section A of the questionnaire was designed to obtain information about each respondent's demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, and education level. Sections B, C, D, E, and F consist of questions related to the independent variables that are targeted to survey the response of respondents in regard to how each factor affects their willingness to join the gig economy. Five independent variables were prepared for the respondents, namely learning and development, work-life balance, social media use, technology and digitalization, and leadership qualities. Each independent variable is designed to find whether these factors are significantly related to the willingness of Gen Zers in Malaysia to join the gig economy.

Next, sections G, H, and I focus on the mediator, moderator, and dependent variables, with each section containing five questions. Section G assesses Gen Z Malaysians' readiness to join the gig economy, Section H examines their commitment to gig work, and Section I measures their willingness to join the gig economy.

3.4.2 Pilot Test

As stated by Johanson and Brooks (2010), it is essential to ensure that the scales used in a study are written in clear and appropriate language without any obvious errors or omissions. As a result, running a pilot test to determine the rate of response and viability of the research is advocated. A pilot test is an in-depth evaluation carried out prior to full-scale data collecting, employing a small sample of target respondents to detect any potential issues and assess the study's feasibility (Zikmund, 2003). Thus, in this study, a pilot test was carried out for five days from 19 June, 2023, to 24 June, 2023, involving 30 undergraduate students from UTAR Kampar Campus. This is because Johanson and Brooks (2010) suggested a sample size of 30 respondents for the pilot test is the best. The library and cafeteria in UTAR were chosen for data collection of undergraduate students. The collected data were processed using SMART PLS 4 software to assess the reliability of the questionnaire.

Table 3.2: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of pilot test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Sum of Items
Work Life Balance	0.823	5
Learning and Development	0.759	5
Social Media Use	0.820	5
Leadership qualities	0.822	5
Technology and Digitalization	0.866	5
Commitment	0.918	5
Readiness to engage in the Gig Economy	0.899	5
Willingness to engage in the Gig Economy	0.921	5

Table 3.3: Rule about Cronbach's Alpha

Coefficient Alpha (α)	Reliability
0.81 to 0.95	Very Good
0.71 to 0.80	Good
0.61 to 0.70	Fair
< 0.60	Poor

Source: Sekaran and Bougie (2013)

According to Table 3.2, the range of Cronbach's Alpha falls between 0.759 and 0.921 values generated by Smart PLS version 4. Most variables (Work-Life Balance, Social Media Use, Leadership qualities, Technology and Digitalization, Commitment, Readiness to engage in the Gig Economy, and Willingness to engage in the Gig Economy) are classified as Very Good reliability because Cronbach's Alpha has a value between 0.81 and 0.95. However, only Learning and Development's Cronbach's Alpha, with values ranging from 0.71 to 0.80, is classified as Good reliability.

3.5 Constructs Measurement

Construct measurement is one aspect that researchers need to pay close attention to, as it is the cornerstone of any field of research (Boyd et al., 2013). In this study, construct measurement is critical to maintain the validity of the research findings and results.

3.5.1 Scale Measurement

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) stated that data can be categorized into four scales of measurement. The commonly used levels of measurement in research studies include ordinal scale, nominal scale, interval scale, and ratio scale (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

In this study, the questionnaire was constructed using ordinal scale, nominal scale, and Likert scale.

3.5.1.1 Nominal Scale

A nominal scale is a form of measurement scale that has a finite number of possible outcomes and does not imply any inherent order or hierarchy among the measurements (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). It is commonly used by researchers to categorize the values of objects or variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Section A of the questionnaire in this study includes one questions, namely gender, which is measured using the nominal scale.

Example of nominal scale:

Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female

3.5.1.2 Ordinal Scale

According to Arvidsson (2019), an ordinal scale is a type of measurement scale used in statistics and research that ranks data based on their relative position or order. On an ordinal scale, the data can be ranked in a specific order, but the differences between them may not be uniform or measurable. In this study, section A of the questionnaire includes two questions, namely age and education level, which are measured using the ordinal scale.

Example of ordinal scale:

Education level:

Secondary education	Vocational training or some college education	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctorate or professional degree
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3.5.1.3 Likert Scale

A Likert scale is a type of rating scale that measures attitudes or opinions on a specific topic or subject (Joshi et al., 2015). It consists of a series of statements or questions that are followed by a set of response options. In this study, in sections B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I of the questionnaire, a five-point Likert scale has been used, ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 shows strongly disagree while 5 shows strongly agree. The respondent selects the response option that best reflects their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement or question. Likert scales can have varying numbers of response options, and they provide valuable quantitative data for researchers to measure the strength and direction of attitudes or opinions (Grace, 2020).

Example of the likert scale:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I often use technology in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5

3.5.2 Origins of Constructs (Questionnaire)

Table 3.4 The Origins of Constructs of measurement in the research

Questions	Sources	No. of Item
Demographic Characteristic	Developed by the researcher.	3
Work life balance	Adopted and adjusted from Motivating Factors for Workers and Platforms in the South African Gig Economy. (Pogorevici & Serobe, 2020) Adopted and adjusted from Relationships between work–life balance and job-related factors among child welfare workers. (Wu et al., 2013)	5
Learning and Development	Adopted and adjusted from The Learning and Development Survey: Further evaluation of its psychometric properties. (Tones & Pillay, 2008) Adopted and adjusted from Gig workers in sharing economy: Conceptualizing Freelancer Value Proposition (FVP) in e-lancing platforms. (Nawaz et al., 2019)	5
Social Media Use	Adopt and adjust from Factors influencing the use of social media by SMEs and its performance outcomes. (Sulaiman et al., 2015) Adopted and adjusted from Gig workers in sharing economy: Conceptualizing Freelancer Value Proposition (FVP) in e-lancing platforms.	5

	(Nawaz et al., 2019) Adopt and adjust from Why people participate in the sharing economy: an empirical investigation of Uber. (Lee et al., 2018)	
Technology and digitalization	Adopted and adjusted from Technology Use and Work-Life Balance. (Aloqaili et al., 2019) Adopted and adjusted from Technology in the Workplace. (Nam, 2014)	5
Leadership qualities	Adopted and adjusted from Introduction to Leadership - Vantage Digital Option. (Northouse, 2020)	5
Commitment	Adopted and adjusted from Commitment in the workplace: toward a general model. (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) Adopt and adjust from Workplace Commitment: A Conceptual Model Developed from Integrative Review of the Research. (Fornes et al., 2008)	5
Readiness to engage in gig economy	Adopted and adjusted from The Work Readiness Scale (WRS): Developing a measure to assess work readiness in college graduates. (Caballero et al., 2011)	5
Willingness to engage in gig economy	Adopted and adjusted from The Sharing Economy: Why People Participate in Collaborative Consumption. (Hamari et al., 2016)	5

	Adopt and adjust from Why people participate in the sharing economy: an empirical investigation of Uber. (Lee et al., 2018)	
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3.6 Data Processing

After collecting questionnaires from the respondents, we proceed to the data processing for this study. Data processing is a way of converting primary data into usable information, which involves four steps: data checking, editing and fixing, data coding, and data transcribing. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data that will be utilized in data analysis, noteworthy attention and carefulness are required throughout data processing to avoid inaccuracies. Data processing may be accomplished using computer software like SMART PLS4, which is used in the study.

3.6.1 Data Checking

Data checking is the very first step in data processing. It is among the key operations that must be carried out in order to determine whether the acquired data is correct and exact. The questionnaires given out to respondents shall be collected once they have completed all of the chosen questions. Then, when respondents submit the questionnaire, the collected data is extensively reviewed for errors. In this case, the blanked answer and the partial response acquired from the surveys may render the data obtained from questionnaires to be invalid for application of data analysis. As a result, data checking is an essential step that must be completed so that we can discover and address any issues before proceeding with the following steps.

3.6.2 Editing and Fixing

The next step is data editing and fixing. It is time-consuming, as it is a form of manual procedure. One has to double check for the data collected and correct it if necessary, throughout this process. Besides, data editing is particularly beneficial for ensuring the consistency, completeness, and legibility of data. If the questionnaire is incomplete, and inconsistencies occur, thus the obtained data may become inaccurate and too generalized to be used in our study.

3.6.3 Data Coding

The third step of data processing is performing the process of data coding. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), data coding is the process of classifying any data that has been modified into numerical numbers or other types of symbols. It involves assigning numerical codes to the responses received through the questionnaire. The numerical codes are subsequently inputted into SMART PLS4. Furthermore, using Likert scale, the section B to I has been categorized by the value of 1 to indicate as strongly disagree and gradually increasing to the value of 5 for strongly agree (Simon & Goes, 2013). The replies are coded from 1 to 5, with 99 being credited to the missing value.

For section A, the data coding for demographic profile as below:

Question no.	Label	Coding
Q1	Gender	“Male” = 1 “Female” = 2
Q2	Age	“17-19” = 1 “20-23” = 2 “24-26” = 3

Q3	Race	<p>“Malay” = 1</p> <p>“Chinese” = 2</p> <p>“India” = 3</p> <p>“Others” = 4</p>
Q4	Highest Education Level	<p>“High school or below” = 1</p> <p>“Certificate or Diploma” = 2</p> <p>“Bachelor’s degree” = 3</p> <p>“Postgraduate education” = 4</p> <p>“Professional certificate” = 5</p>
Q5	Current Employment Status	<p>“Student” = 1</p> <p>“Full-time” = 2</p> <p>“Part-time” = 3</p> <p>“Seeking opportunities currently” = 4</p>

For section B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I, the coding for the answer of each question is based on 5-point Likert scale as below:

“Strongly Disagree” = 1

“Disagree” = 2

“Neutral” = 3

“Agree” = 4

“Strongly Agree” = 5

3.6.4 Data Transcribing

The final stage of the process is data transcribing, which involves downloading the gathered data and converting it to a version of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Following the selections have been identified by distinct values in Microsoft Excel, the data is entered into the SMART PLS4 to be analysed.

3.7 Data Analysis

After data processing, the process of converting raw data into meaningful insights is called data analysis (Islam, 2020). The data is used to study the factors that affect Gen Z's participation in the gig economy in Malaysia. In this study, the data is analyzed by utilizing statistical software called SMART PLS4. This software is used to conduct most of the data analyses, including descriptive analysis and scale measurement.

3.7.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is a statistical analysis method used to describe and summarize the main characteristics of a data set (Sarmiento & Costa, 2017). Descriptive analysis techniques include central tendency of mean, median, and mode, which help to determine the actual value or average value of a variable (Thompson, 2009). According to Thompson (2009), range, standard deviation, and variance, which measure the variability help determine how spread out the data is. Besides, data obtained from Section A will be used to generate pie graphs.

3.7.2 Scale Measurement

3.7.2.1 Reliability Test

Reliability testing is an essential aspect of scale measurement in research (Segal & Coolidge, 2018). It refers to the consistency and stability of the measurement over time and across different samples. According to Segal and Coolidge (2018), the reliability test is conducted to ensure that the measurements obtained from a particular scale are consistent and reproducible.

There are various types of reliability tests, in this study we use internal consistency. According to Sideridis et al. (2018), internal consistency reliability measures the consistency of a scale within itself. This type of reliability test examines how well different items in the scale are related to one another. According to Johnson (2013), the most common measurement of internal consistency reliability is Cronbach's alpha, with the range between zero and one. Higher number indicates higher level of reliability.

Table 3.5 Cronbach's Alpha Rule of Thumb

Level of Reliability	Alpha Range
Poor reliability	0.60 and less
Fair reliability	0.61 to 0.70
Good reliability	0.71 to 0.80
Very good reliability	0.81 to 0.95

Source: Sekaran and Bougie (2013)

3.8 Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Analysis

The utilization of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) has become a widely accepted method for analyzing complex associations between observable and latent variables. PLS-SEM is favored by researchers for its many advantages, including the ability to estimate complex models and its flexibility in terms of data requirements and measurement specifications (Hair et al., 2021). Therefore, in this study, PLS-SEM was chosen as the main method due to the complexity of the relationships among the variables studied, such as mediator and moderator.

3.8.1 Structural and Measurement modeling

PLS-SEM analysis involves two main stages: the structural model and the measurement model. In the structural model, the relationships between the latent variables are examined. This involves assessing the significance and direction of the relationships between the latent variables, and determining the effect size, which measures the strength of the relationship between the latent variables (Fauzi, 2022). In this study, the relationship between attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control and Generation Z's readiness and willingness to participate in the gig economy are examined.

In the measurement model, the relationships between independent variables and their indicators are examined (Fauzi, 2022). This involves assessing the reliability and validity of the indicators, and determining the factor loadings, which measure the strength of the relationship between the latent variable and its indicators (Fauzi, 2022). In this study, the latent variables are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control, and their indicators are work-life balance, learning and development, social media, technology and digitalization, and leadership qualities.

3.8.1.1 Measurement Model Evaluation

According to Hair et al. (2013), it is crucial to thoroughly evaluate the validity and reliability of reflective measurement models. To measure the reliability of the constructs, composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's coefficient alpha were used in this study, with a recommended benchmark of 0.60 for CR as suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). Also, as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), Cronbach's alpha coefficients range from 0 to 1, and an acceptable alpha threshold of more than 0.70 is ideal. The ideal case would have a higher Cronbach's alpha coefficient, as shown in Table 3.3.

3.8.1.2 Structural Model Evaluation

PLS-SEM is often preferable in cases where the model used is more complex while the sample size is smaller. The coefficients of determination, R^2 , as well as the amount and significance of the path coefficient, were examined in the structural model since the primary objective of a prediction-based PLS-SEM is to explain the variability of target exogenous factors. The allowable amount of R^2 is determined by the study situation. In accordance with Sarstedt et al. (2017), the rule of thumb for the value of the R^2 is 0.75 for significant, 0.50 for moderate, and 0.25 for weak. The standardized beta coefficient was calculated through the measurement of the relative path coefficients associated with each indicator. To determine the significance of the developed hypothesis, the measurement used are from the path coefficients, t-statistics and p-value. In our study, the significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.1$.

3.8.2 High Order Construct (HOC) Approach

Higher-order constructs, often recognized as "hierarchical component models" in the PLS-SEM model, provide researchers with a structured framework to model a concept based on a more abstract dimension, called as higher-order component, as well as its more concrete subdimensions, called as lower-order components (Sarstedt et al., 2019). Rather than laying out the relationships between numerous independent and dependent variables in a framework, researchers can summarize the independent variables into higher-order constructs, and diminish the relationships between the lower-order components to the dependent variable in the model (Sarstedt et al., 2019). In this research, we applied HOC Approach by categorizing the variables of *work life balance (LOC)*, and *learning and development (LOC)* into 'Attitude' (HOC), and the variables of *technology and digitalization (LOC)*, and *leadership qualities (LOC)* into 'Perceived Behavioural Control' (HOC), and link it to the mediator of the readiness of Gen Z to

engage in gig economy, and finally the dependent variable of the willingness of Gen Z to engage in gig economy in Malaysia. As the arrows are pointing from the independent variables (LOC) to the factors (HOC), linking them to the mediator, then to the dependent variable, so it is a reflective-formative type of higher order construct.

3.8.3 Construct Factor Loading Analysis (CFL)

Loadings in factor analysis define the connections between each factor and the observable variables (Frost, 2023). The strength of the connection between the variables and the underlying factor, and even the observed variables that correlate to a certain factor, may be assessed by examining the factor loadings (Frost, 2023). Loadings may be interpreted similarly to correlation coefficients, with the range of -1 to +1 (Frost, 2023). The positive or negative sign denotes the direction of the relationship, whereas the absolute value denotes its strength. Factor loadings closer to -1 and +1 indicate stronger connections, while the factor loadings closer to 0 indicate weak partnerships. Greater relationships in the context of factor analysis suggest that the factors indicate the significance of the variability in the variables that were analyzed.

3.8.4 Convergent Validity Analysis (CVA)

CVA is used to evaluate the degree of convergent validity among the indicators of a latent variable (Cheah et al., 2018). In this research, the variables of attitude, work-life balance, and learning and development will be evaluated to ensure that they measure the same underlying construct. According to Kock (2015) and Afthanorhan et al. (2020), CVA is performed by examining the factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR) of the indicators. The factor loading measures the strength of the relationship between the latent variable and its indicator. The AVE measures the number of variances that is occupied by the latent variable relative to the amount of error variance in the indicators. The CR measures the internal consistency

and reliability of the indicators. If the factor loadings are high, the AVE is greater than 0.5, and the CR is greater than 0.7, the indicators are considered to have good convergent validity.

3.8.5 Discriminant Validity Analysis (DVA)

DVA is used to evaluate the degree of discriminant validity among the indicators of different latent variables (Rönkkö & Cho, 2020). In this research, the indicators of the latent variables of subjective norms and perceived behavior control will be evaluated to ensure that they are not measuring other unrelated constructs. According to Cheah et al. (2018), DVA is performed by examining the cross-loadings, AVE, and square root of AVE of the indicators. The cross-loading measures the degree to which an indicator loads on its own latent variable compared to other latent variables. If the cross-loading is greater on its own latent variable than on other latent variables, and the square root of AVE value is greater than the correlation between the latent variables, the indicators are accounted to have good discriminant validity.

3.9 Conclusion

To conclude, methods used to conduct the research methodology had been discussed in this chapter, which includes the research design, data collection methods, sampling design, measurement scale and data analysis method. SMART PL 4 software will be used for data running.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the evaluation of the data that was gathered in the preceding chapter. The data, which was sourced from 405 Generation Z participants in Malaysia, was examined using SMARTPLS 4 software. For data analysis, this programme uses the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) route modelling technique.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The questionnaire was created in the previous chapter was designed specifically for Generation Z individuals with an interest in the gig economy. As such, we initiated the questionnaire by inquiring about their attitudes towards the gig economy. The responses are organized and presented in the following table.

Table 4.1: Attitudes towards the gig economy of respondent

Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
I am already engaged in the gig economy	49	10.23%
I am interested in joining the gig economy	356	74.63%
I have no interest in joining the gig economy at all.	72	15.09%

In the forthcoming demographic inquiries, we will exclude the 72 respondents who expressed no interest in the gig economy, retaining only the 405 respondents who

showed interest. Additionally, all respondents fall within the age range of 17 to 26 years. Other demographic information solicited in the survey included gender, age, and highest educational attainment. The data derived from these responses are collated in the tables presented below.

Table 4.2: Demographic Information of Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	140	34.57%
	Female	265	65.43%
Age	17-19	76	18.77%
	20-23	301	74.32%
	24-27	28	6.91%
Highest Education Level	Bachelor's degree	301	74.32%
	Certificate or Diploma	42	10.37%
	High school or below	56	13.83%
	Postgraduate education	4	0.99%
	Professional certificate	2	0.49%

Out of the 405 Gen Z respondents who participated in this study, 265 or 65.43% identified as female and 140 or 34.57% as male. When it comes to age demographics, the majority of participants, comprising 301 respondents or 74.32%, fell within the 20 to 23 years age bracket. The next largest age group was those aged between 17 and 19 years, representing 76 participants or 18.77%. The smallest age group included 28 respondents between 24 and 27 years, accounting for 6.91% of the total.

Regarding the level of education among participants, the majority, or 301 Gen Z respondents (74.32%), held at least a Bachelor's Degree. Next, there were 56 participants (13.83%) who had received education up to or below high school level. Only 42 respondents (10.37%) held a Diploma or equivalent educational certificates. The smallest education groups comprised 4 participants (0.99%) with Postgraduate education and a mere 2 participants (0.49%) possessing Professional Certificate qualifications.

4.2 Analyse

4.2.1 Data Reliability

The factor loading of the finalized PLS measurement models was seen in Table 4.3. The factor loadings must exceed 0.50 in order to be accepted as significant in practice (Hair et al., 2013). According to Table 4.3, all of the elements in this study are greater than 0.50 and past the 0.50 borderline values.

4.2.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

The results of the appropriate reliability test and Cronbach's Alpha of the measurement model that may be used to gauge a scale's internal consistency were given in Table 4.3. The alpha coefficients of all the variables are larger than 0.7 based on the result produced. The range of the alpha coefficients for the independent variables is from 0.805 to 0.872, indicating they are good reliability. The result of Cronbach's Alpha is valid, because it is between 0 and 1 (Johnson, 2013).

According to Hair et al. (2013), composite reliability offers a different way to quantify internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha is not as accurate at estimating

variation compared to composite reliability. It is a consequence of the constraint of Cronbach's alpha's population as well as the acceptance of the Composite reliability indicators. The result of composite reliability shown in Table 4.3 has satisfied the criteria for explanatory-based research (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994), because all values are greater than 0.6. To conclude, the composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha are adequate, as all variables have an indicator of 0.7 and above.

4.2.3 Convergent Validity Analysis

Hulland (1999) proposed that in order to enhance the AVE (Average Variance Extracted), the variables with loadings less than 0.5 should be eliminated. Based on the generated result, one item from the Social Media variable has been removed, as it did not meet the borderline of 0.5. Table 4.3 shows the final result of reliability rest where all variables have met the borderline of 0.5 from the AVE.

Table 4.3: Reliability for Constructs

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
ATT	0.909	0.912	0.925	0.552
C	0.876	0.879	0.910	0.668
LQ	0.854	0.854	0.895	0.631
LND	0.854	0.855	0.896	0.632
PBC	0.887	0.889	0.908	0.500
R	0.874	0.874	0.909	0.666
SM	0.858	0.861	0.904	0.702

TND	0.805	0.810	0.866	0.566
W	0.855	0.856	0.896	0.633
WLB	0.872	0.878	0.907	0.663

Source: Data generated by Smart PLS4 Software

4.2.4 Discriminant Validity Analysis

Discriminant validity shows the concept is separate and reflects the degree of each construct in line with empirical norms (Hair et al., 2013). Cross loadings, Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT), and the Fornell-Lacker criterion are the three approaches used in this study.

The Fornell-Lacker criterion that validates this investigation is displayed in Table 4.4. The model's suitable discriminant validity was demonstrated by the fact that each latent variable's AVE value is higher than its squared correlation, among other things.

Table 4.4: Fornell-Lacker criterion validity

	C	LQ	LND	R	SM	TND	W	WLB
C	0.817							
LQ	0.748	0.794						
LND	0.637	0.574	0.795					
R	0.791	0.741	0.611	0.816				
SM	0.701	0.664	0.587	0.655	0.838			
TND	0.678	0.660	0.684	0.705	0.580	0.752		
W	0.798	0.663	0.636	0.759	0.716	0.645	0.800	
WLB	0.619	0.505	0.706	0.582	0.523	0.621	0.596	0.814

Note: The other entries reflect the squared correlation, while the diagonals (in bold) denote the value of average variance extracted (AVE).

The actual correlation between two elements, if they were perfectly assessed, was estimated using the HTMT technique (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). All HTMT coefficients must be smaller than 0.85 for conceptually different constructs and 0.9 for conceptually more comparable constructs, based on the rule of thumb. All the calculated HTMT values in Table 4.5 have values lower than 0.85, except for the correlation between readiness (R) and commitment (C), willingness (W) and commitment (C), as well as readiness (R) and perceived behavioral control (PBC), which have the HTMT value of 0.9. The HTMT value of LND-A, WLB-A, PBC-LQ, and TND-PBC were removed, to avoid confusion as the Learning and Development (LND) and Work Life Balance (WLB) were under Attitude (A), while Technology and Digitalization (TND) and Leadership Qualities (LQ) were under Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC).

Table 4.5: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Values

	ATT	C	LQ	LND	PBC	R	SM	TND	W	WLB	CxR
ATT											
C	0.761										
LQ	0.659	0.865									
LND	X	0.735	0.669								
PBC	0.783	0.889	X	0.789							
R	0.723	0.900	0.857	0.706	0.900						
SM	0.677	0.805	0.774	0.683	0.783	0.754					
TND	0.824	0.809	0.798	0.823	X	0.840	0.699				
W	0.754	0.900	0.776	0.742	0.825	0.877	0.835	0.778			
WLB	X	0.707	0.581	0.814	0.696	0.665	0.600	0.739	0.687		
CxR	0.043	0.027	0.064	0.045	0.065	0.057	0.067	0.058	0.058	0.038	

Source: Data generated by Smart PLS4 Software

The cross-loading outcomes of this research are shown in Table 4.6. This indicates that each indicator's outer loading value is somewhat higher than the total of all of its loadings on other constructions. In Table 4.6, the factor loadings for all variables has a

strong positive relationship with the factor, because the values are closer to 1. In summary, the components in the constructs performed well in the three approaches to prove for discriminant validity.

Table 4.6: Cross Loadings for Construct

	C	LQ	LND	R	SM	TND	W	WLB
C1	0.801	0.605	0.633	0.648	0.596	0.621	0.664	0.599
C2	0.843	0.657	0.513	0.685	0.610	0.565	0.714	0.495
C3	0.822	0.570	0.466	0.627	0.607	0.524	0.691	0.434
C4	0.794	0.600	0.513	0.639	0.525	0.544	0.569	0.528
C5	0.826	0.624	0.480	0.634	0.519	0.518	0.646	0.482
LQ1	0.595	0.815	0.466	0.608	0.535	0.511	0.528	0.375
LQ2	0.606	0.765	0.478	0.581	0.527	0.552	0.564	0.454
LQ3	0.572	0.799	0.426	0.594	0.498	0.507	0.506	0.395
LQ4	0.613	0.772	0.522	0.556	0.535	0.560	0.543	0.450
LQ5	0.583	0.820	0.385	0.602	0.544	0.489	0.493	0.330
LND1	0.433	0.358	0.760	0.403	0.363	0.519	0.453	0.524
LND2	0.531	0.501	0.819	0.482	0.486	0.547	0.523	0.552
LND3	0.527	0.513	0.826	0.519	0.499	0.595	0.501	0.583
LND4	0.572	0.484	0.798	0.533	0.525	0.562	0.582	0.596
LND5	0.459	0.416	0.769	0.486	0.449	0.491	0.465	0.547
R1	0.625	0.592	0.497	0.813	0.519	0.568	0.613	0.461
R2	0.664	0.604	0.528	0.794	0.541	0.588	0.646	0.502
R3	0.659	0.630	0.451	0.849	0.553	0.564	0.632	0.423
R4	0.637	0.637	0.496	0.846	0.566	0.586	0.599	0.452
R5	0.641	0.557	0.520	0.776	0.492	0.569	0.605	0.539
SM1	0.575	0.531	0.485	0.554	0.850	0.490	0.608	0.423
SM2	0.602	0.572	0.468	0.532	0.855	0.482	0.589	0.418
SM3	0.541	0.511	0.513	0.510	0.801	0.430	0.552	0.439
SM4	0.629	0.608	0.500	0.594	0.844	0.535	0.646	0.471

TND1	0.521	0.496	0.546	0.580	0.431	0.818	0.498	0.472
TND2	0.467	0.490	0.404	0.460	0.465	0.616	0.432	0.346
TND3	0.482	0.461	0.520	0.482	0.422	0.759	0.471	0.487
TND4	0.559	0.543	0.493	0.601	0.479	0.765	0.527	0.449
TND5	0.516	0.490	0.599	0.517	0.389	0.788	0.492	0.570
W1	0.596	0.495	0.431	0.544	0.579	0.466	0.761	0.410
W2	0.639	0.590	0.463	0.636	0.588	0.498	0.802	0.441
W3	0.638	0.510	0.583	0.590	0.527	0.542	0.782	0.564
W4	0.671	0.500	0.565	0.641	0.553	0.539	0.813	0.523
W5	0.665	0.544	0.484	0.605	0.606	0.518	0.819	0.431
WLB1	0.423	0.329	0.457	0.404	0.342	0.438	0.410	0.722
WLB2	0.422	0.336	0.549	0.396	0.339	0.473	0.446	0.788
WLB3	0.546	0.441	0.590	0.500	0.495	0.527	0.516	0.857
WLB4	0.552	0.463	0.633	0.520	0.493	0.535	0.534	0.845
WLB5	0.561	0.468	0.626	0.538	0.443	0.545	0.510	0.849

Source: Data generated by Smart PLS4 Software

4.2.5 Higher Order Construct (HOC) Analysis

In this research, the HOC Approach was applied by categorizing the variables of work life balance (LOC), and learning and development (LOC) into 'Attitude' (HOC) shown in figure 4.1 (Appendix 4.1), and the variables of technology and digitalization (LOC), and leadership qualities (LOC) into 'Perceived Behavioral Control' (HOC) shown in figure 4.2 (Appendix 4.2), and link it to the mediator, the readiness of Gen Z to engage in gig economy, and finally the dependent variable, the willingness of Gen Z to engage in gig economy in Malaysia, with the moderator, the commitment, between readiness and willingness.

Figure 4.1: HOC – Attitude

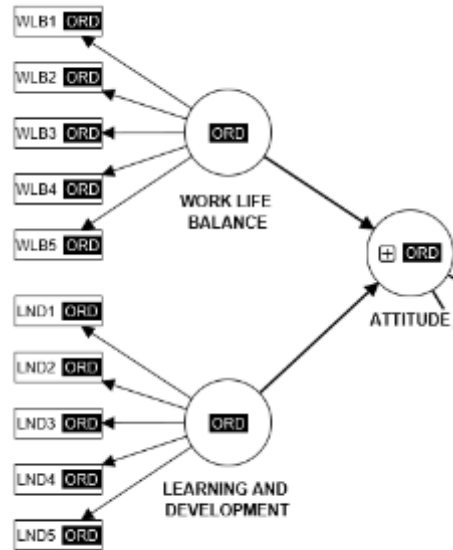
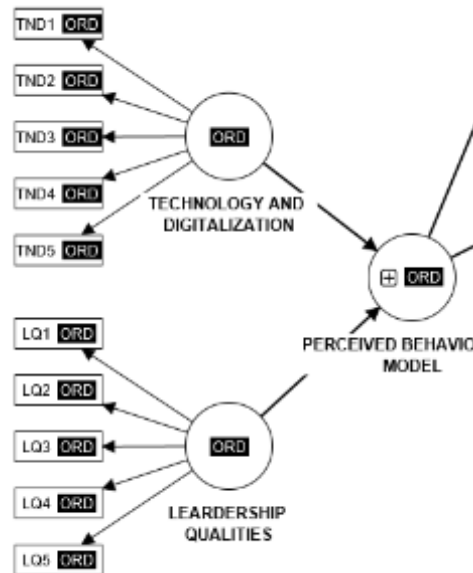


Figure 4.2: HOC – Perceived Behavioral Control



When referring back to the reliability test in Table 4.3, the AVE value of the variable of Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) is 0.5, and the AVE value of Attitude (A) is 0.552. The AVE value of the HOC variables are both exceeding the borderline of 0.5, indicating that both have good reliability. According to the result of path coefficients in Table 4.7, the P-value results shows that the relationship between the work-life

balance (LOC) to attitude (HOC) and learning and development (LOC) to attitude (HOC) are significant because the P-value is 0.000, the relationship between the technology and digitalization (LOC) to perceived behavioral control (HOC) and leadership qualities (LOC) to perceived behavioral control (HOC) are significant because the P-value is 0.000 as well.

Table 4.7: Result of Path Coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Work Life Balance → Attitude	0.548	0.548	0.012	45.664	0.000
Learning and Development → Attitude	0.535	0.535	0.012	43.958	0.000
Technology and Digitalization → Perceived Behavioural Control	0.509	0.509	0.014	37.612	0.000
Leadership Qualities → Perceived Behavioural Control	0.588	0.588	0.015	40.333	0.000

Source: Data generated by Smart PLS4 Software

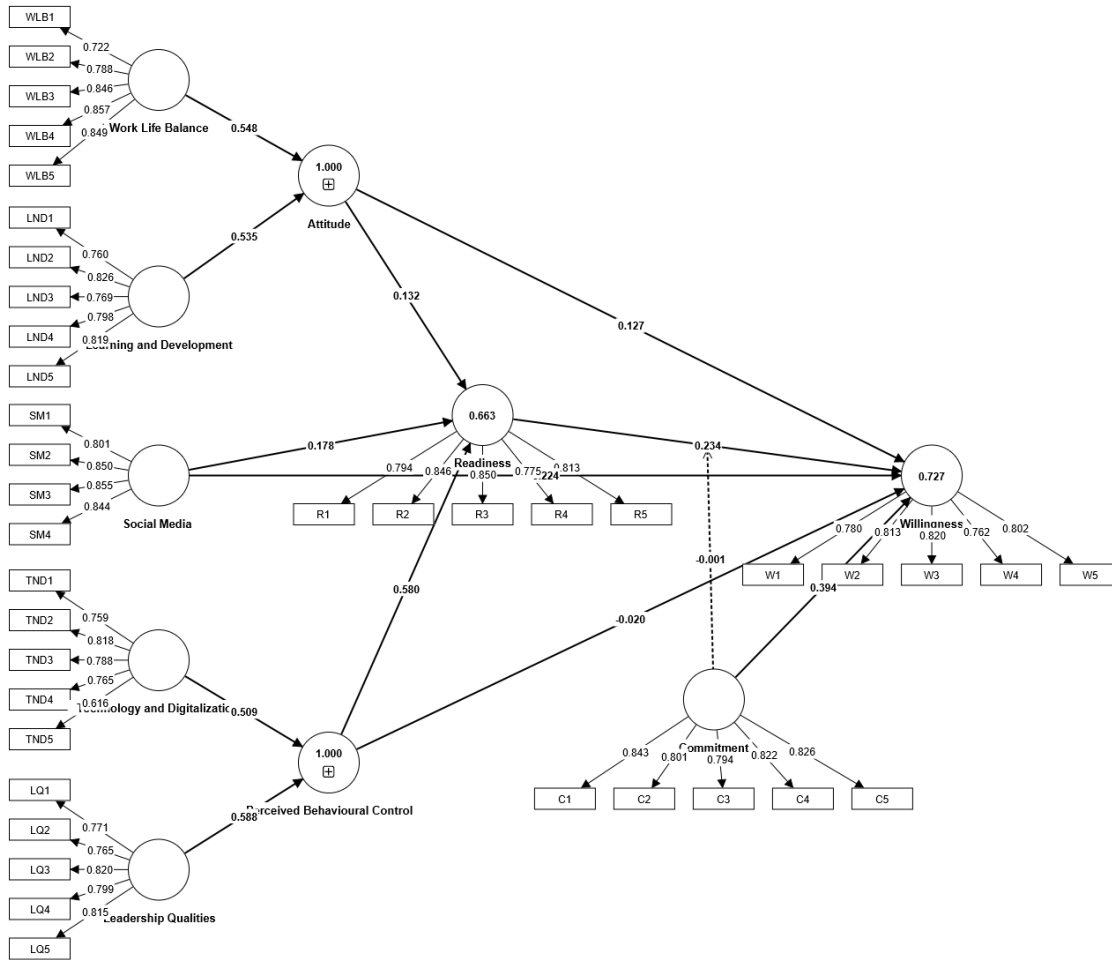
R-squared is used in our research to express the extent to which the regression model matches the observed data. It goes from 0 to 1, with 0 denoting that the model describes no variability and 1 denoting that it fully accounts for all variability. In the structural model (Appendix 4.3), the R-squared value of Attitude (ATT) is 1, and it has passed the reliability test (Table 4.3), indicating that it fully accounts for the variables of work life balance (WLB) and learning and development (LND). While the R-squared value of Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) is 1, and it has passed the reliability test (Table 4.3) with the AVE value of 0.5, indicating that it fully accounts for the variables of technology and digitalization (TND) and leadership qualities (LQ). To conclude, the

variable of Work-life Balance (LOC) and Learning and Development (LOC) can be fitted under Attitude (HOC), while the variable of the Technology and Digitalization (LOC) and Leadership Qualities (LOC) can be fitted under Perceived Behavioral Control (HOC) as well.

4.2.6 Assessment of Structural Model

The relationship between all the constructs in the structural model of this research is examined using hypothesis testing, which includes evaluating both the strength and direction of the Path Coefficient as well as significant values, since the reliability and validity of the construct measures have been established. This relationship is illustrated in figure 4.3 (Appendix 4.3), the structural model of this study. The SMARTPLS 4 software was used for calculations in this study, and 5,000 subsamples in the replacement value were applied in the bootstrapping methods to evaluate the statistical significance of the estimation of parameters for path coefficient assessment.

Figure 4.3: Result of Structural Model



Source: Data generated by Smart PLS4 Software

Three values—1.96 (significance level = 0.05), 1.65 (significance level = 0.10), and 2.57 (significance level = 0.01)—are crucial for two-tailed tests. The significance level is determined by that specific study's objective and its academic framework. This study used the significance level of 10% (t-value = 1.65) as the statistical decision criterion due to the lack of researchers worldwide who have studied Gen Z’s willingness to engage in gig economy and the variables that contribute to it, not to mention the lack of previously published Malaysian studies in this area. In figure 4.3 (Appendix 4.3) which shows the outcomes of the structural model, the R2 value of the dependent

variable, willingness of Gen Z is equal to 0.727. It comprises 72.7% variance in Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy.

Table 4.8: Inner VIF Value

	Gen Z's willingness to engage in gig economy
Attitude	2.222
Commitment	3.676
Perceived Behavioural Control	3.794
Readiness	3.472
Social Media	2.253

Source: Data generated by Smart PLS4 Software

To examine the lateral multicollinearity for dependent variable, Gen Z's willingness to engage in gig economy, the value for all Inner VIF of the independent variables (ATT, PBC, SM), mediator (R), and moderator (C), must be lower than 5. According to Table 4.8, all the Inner VIF value has achieved the requirement, suggesting that there is no multicollinearity problem.

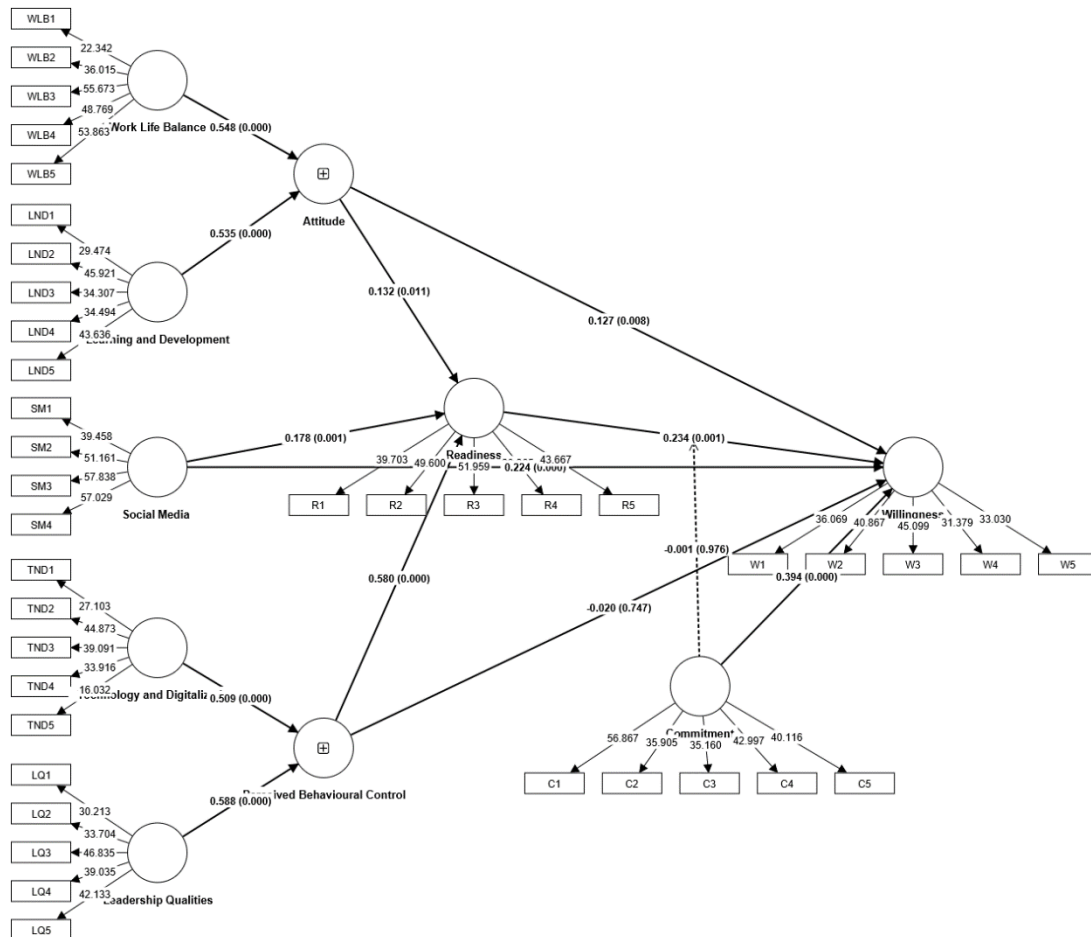
Table 4.9: Results of Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values	Decision
Attitude → Readiness (H1)	0.132	0.132	0.052	2.542	0.011	Support
Social Media → Readiness (H2)	0.178	0.180	0.054	3.308	0.001	Support
Perceived Behavioural Control → Readiness (H3)	0.580	0.579	0.057	10.136	0.000	Support

Attitude → Willingness (H4)	0.127	0.127	0.048	2.637	0.008	Support
Social Media → Willingness (H5)	0.224	0.224	0.045	4.964	0.000	Support
Perceived Behavioural Control → Willingness (H6)	-0.020	-0.017	0.062	0.322	0.747	Reject
Commitment x Readiness → Willingness (H7)	-0.001	-0.002	0.028	0.030	0.976	Reject
Readiness → Willingness (H8)	0.234	0.231	0.070	3.352	0.001	Support

Source: Data generated by Smart PLS4 Software

Figure 4.4: Result of Bootstrapping and Path Coefficients



Source: Data generated by Smart PLS4 Software

In Appendix 4.4, Figure 4.4 displays the outcomes of hypothesis testing along with the path coefficients following the bootstrapping assessment. H1 demonstrates a statistically significant connection between attitude and preparedness, with a t-value of 2.542, surpassing the threshold of 1.65. Likewise, H2 reveals a notable correlation between social media and readiness, as indicated by a t-value of 3.308, exceeding the 1.65 threshold. H3 highlights the substantial association between perceived behavioral control and readiness, reflected in a t-value of 10.136, well above the 1.65 limit. Moving on to H4, it suggests a significant relationship between attitude and willingness, supported by a t-value of 2.637, exceeding the 1.65 threshold. H5 exhibits a substantial link between social media and willingness, with a t-value of 4.964, surpassing the 1.65 criterion. Contrarily, H6 implies a lack of statistical significance between perceived behavioral control and willingness, with a t-value of 0.322, falling below the 1.65 threshold. Similarly, H7 points to the absence of a significant relationship between the moderator and the transition from readiness to willingness, indicated by a t-value of 0.030, below the 1.65 threshold. Lastly, H8 underscores a significant connection between readiness and willingness, with a t-value of 3.352, surpassing the 1.65 threshold. To conclude, only H6 and H7 were tested and not significant, while others have significant relationships.

Table 4.10: Variance Accounted For (VAF)

	$VAF = \frac{\text{Specific Indirect Effect}}{\text{Total Effect}}$	Decision
Attitude	$\frac{0.0319}{0.158} = 20\%$	Partial Mediation
Subjective norms	$\frac{0.042}{0.266} = 15.79\%$	No Mediation
Perceived Behavioural Control	$\frac{0.136}{0.116} = 100\%$	Full Mediation

Source: Data generated by Smart PLS4 Software

The outcomes of Variance Accounted For (VAF) are displayed in Table 4.10 (Appendix 4.6). By calculating the ratio of indirect to total effects, VAF assesses how well mediating mechanisms account for the variation of the dependent variable (Ramayah et al., 2017). It can be seen from Table 4.10 that the VAF of attitude toward gig economy is 20%, so readiness is defined as a partial mediation effect in this process (Ramayah et al., 2017). Besides that, because the VAF of the subjective norm is less than 20% (15.79%), readiness is defined as no mediation effect in this process (Ramayah et al., 2017). Then, since the VAF of the perceived behavioral control is as high as 100%, it means that readiness is defined as a full mediation effect in this process (Ramayah et al., 2017).

4.3 Discussion of Results

4.3.1 Attitude toward gig economy (WLB&LD) and Readiness to engage in the gig economy

The analysis of the data in Table 4.9 (Appendix 4.5) demonstrated a significant relationship between the constructs of Attitude toward gig economy and Gen Z's Readiness to Engage in the Gig Economy. Given the p-value of 0.011, which is significantly lower than the chosen significance level of $\alpha = 0.10$, there is compelling evidence to affirm that a significant relationship exists between the attitude toward the gig economy and Gen Z's preparedness to participate in it, at the $\alpha = 0.10$ significance level.

This result is consistent with The Theory of Self-Determination in the study of Wu and Zhou (2022) which states that the attitude an individual holds is likely to influence their readiness to engage in the gig economy. Specifically, a positive attitude seems to

increase the likelihood of an individual being prepared to participate in gig economy-related activities (Wu & Zhou, 2022).

Additionally, the outcome backs up the initial hypothesis (H1) formulated in chapter 2, which claimed that attitude has a significant relationship on readiness to engage in the gig economy. Moreover, the result is correspond with the empirical study of Behera and Gaur (2022), Tran and Sokas (2017) and Arenas et al. (2018). The significant relationship between Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy and their attitudes toward learning and development and work-life balance can be understood through their inherent values and preparedness. Since the entry barriers to the gig economy are low and gig workers can easily switch between different jobs and learn or develop different skills in different gig jobs (Tran & Sokas, 2017; Myhill et al., 2021; Arenas et al., 2018). Besides that, Gen Z desire for learning and development (Bridges, 2015; Dachner et al., 2021). Therefore, this kind of perception equips them with the confidence that they are ready to join the gig economy. Moreover, the flexibility of gig work echoes Gen Z's emphasis on work-life balance, making them feel ready to participate in the gig economy (Lehdonvirta, 2018; Deloitte, 2020; Maloni et al., 2019; Baum, 2020; Smola & Sutton, 2002). In short, based on the results, it reflects the same attitudes of Gen Z Malaysia towards their desire to learn on the job as well as their personal lifestyle preferences as in previous studies, explaining why these attitudes significantly influence Gen Z Malaysia's readiness to engage in the gig economy.

4.3.2 Subjective Norm (SM) and Readiness to engage in the gig economy

In analyzing the data found in Table 4.9 (Appendix 4.5), another vital insight emerged regarding the impact of subjective norms, particularly social media use, on Gen Z's readiness towards the gig economy. The obtained p-value for this relationship was 0.001, which is substantially below the set significance level of $\alpha = 0.10$. Therefore, there is enough data to claim that, at the = 0.10 significance level, there is a significant

association between Gen Z's willingness to participate in the gig economy and the usage of social media as subjective norms.

This result is consistent with the concept of the theory of human capital studied by Latifah et al. (2022). The theory states by understanding how Gen Z's investment in skills and education, influenced by social media and subjective norms, contributes to their readiness to engage in the gig economy (Latifah et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the outcomes are also consistent with the second hypothesis (H2) put forward in Chapter 2, that is, the subjective norm has a significant relationship with Gen Z's readiness to participate in the gig economy (Vallas & Schor, 2020). According to Latifah et al. (2022), the social media has had a profound impact on shaping the views and tendencies of Gen Z. Social media platforms serve as powerful mediums through which trends, opportunities, and norms are broadcasted and internalized by their users. At the same time, since Gen Z spend a lot of time on average every day using social media, they are easily influenced by things or information on social media. Hence, the more Gen Z witness their peers or influencers thriving in the gig economy through social media narratives, the more inclined they might feel ready to participate (Duncil, 2023; Thomas, 2011). Therefore, the influence of social media as subjective norms provides a holistic understanding of Gen Z Malaysia's readiness to engage in the gig economy.

4.3.3 Perceived Behavioural Control (LQ&TD) and Readiness to engage in the gig economy

The analysis of the data in Table 4.9 (Appendix 4.5) showed that the construction of Perceived Behavioral Control is significantly related to Gen Z's readiness to participate in the gig economy. With a p-value of 0.000, which is substantially lower than the chosen significance level of $\alpha = 0.10$, there is strong evidence to support the assertion

that there exists a significant relationship between Perceived Behavioral Control and Gen Z's readiness to participate in the gig economy, at the $\alpha = 0.10$ significance level.

This finding is consistent with the concept of the theory of human capital studied by Sulaiman et al. (2015). The theory states that perceived behavioral control may affect a person's readiness to engage in some specific job (Sulaiman et al., 2015). Specifically, when an individual finds himself/herself capable of performing that gig economy job, this may affect the likelihood that the individual is prepared to engage in gig economy-related activities.

Furthermore, these findings align with the third hypothesis (H3) outlined in Chapter 2, that is, perceived behavioral control has a significant relationship with Gen Z's readiness to participate in the gig economy. Most importantly, these findings align with the previous empirical studies mentioned in Chapter 2. Gen Z, known for their tech-savvy nature and robust technical skills, stands out as particularly well-equipped to engage with modern technology compared to previous generations (Nambiar, 2021; Gaidhani et al., 2019). Along with their technological prowess, many in this generation demonstrate strong leadership qualities, such as a sense of responsibility, and have a self-aware understanding of their abilities (Behera & Gaur, 2022). Based on the result, this unique combination of technology skills and leadership aptitude makes Malaysia's Gen Z "ready" to join the gig economy, a flexible and often tech-driven working environment (Mehta, 2020; Kuhn, 2016; Behera & Gaur, 2022). Thus, Gen Z Malaysia's perceptions of their ability to work in gig economy can greatly affect their readiness to participate in the gig economy.

4.3.4 Attitude toward gig economy (WLB&LD) and Willingness to engage in the gig economy

The analysis of the data in Table 4.9 (Appendix 4.5) reveals a significant relationship between the construction of Attitude towards the gig economy and Gen Z's willingness

to participate in it. This conclusion is supported by a p-value of 0.008, which is below the chosen significance level of $\alpha = 0.10$. Consequently, there is substantial evidence to affirm that there exists a significant relationship between Attitude toward the gig economy and Gen Z's Willingness to engage in the gig economy at the $\alpha = 0.10$ significance level.

The finding is the same as mentioned in the TPB theory that a person's attitude can affect their willingness to do certain things (Yasa et al., 2022; Hatane et al., 2021). In other words, attitudes towards the gig economy can significantly influence whether individuals choose to engage in this form of work. A positive attitude, shaped by perceptions of opportunity, flexibility, and alignment with personal values, can foster participation.

These findings align with the previous studies and Hypothesis 4 (H4) outline in Chapter 2. The result shows significant is because most studies have found that Gen Z are likely to see the gig economy as an opportunity for continuous learning, skill building and personal development (Pogorevici & Serobe, 2020; Ashford et al., 2018). Besides that, for work-life balance, the flexibility of gig work appeals to Gen Z, who tend to value a more balanced lifestyle (Abdul Rahim et al., 2021; Lehdonvirta, 2018). Therefore, positive attitudes towards these aspects can lead to an increased willingness of Gen Z Malaysia to participate in the gig economy. But on the contrary, our results are different from those of Warren (2021) and Duggan et al. (2021). They pointed out that work life balance and learning and development are not significant with willingness to engage in the gig economy. Because Warren (2021) said that gig employees frequently confront extended and erratic work hours, resulting in challenges in balancing their personal and professional lives. On the other hand, Duggan et al. (2021) pointed out that because the jobs in the gig economy are short-lived and informal, many companies will not provide professional training and career development opportunities for gig workers, thus limiting the learning and development of gig workers. However, since our research focuses on the younger generation and the respondents are in a country with a slower pace of life, it is possible to conclude that Gen Z's willingness to participate in the gig

economy is related to their interest in learning and development, and work-life balance. Because the younger generation values continuous self-improvement and trying to experience different work experiences instead of focusing on the development of a single career, and in an environment with a slower pace of life, people can achieve work-life balance through the gig economy, so they are more willing to join the gig economy.

4.3.5 Subjective Norm (SM) and Willingness to engage in gig economy

The examination of the data presented in Table 4.9 (refer to Appendix 4.5) indicates a substantial correlation between the utilization of social media and Generation Z's inclination to participate in the gig economy. This assertion is supported by the remarkably low p-value of 0.000, which falls below the predetermined significance threshold of $\alpha = 0.10$. Consequently, there is sufficient evidence to affirm the existence of a significant association between the use of social media and the willingness of Generation Z to engage in the gig economy at the $\alpha = 0.10$ significance level. Notably, in this study, social media usage is considered synonymous with the concept of subjective norms, as discussed in Chapter 2. Therefore, based on the data analysis of social media usage, a substantial relationship can also be established between subjective norms and Generation Z's eagerness to participate in the gig economy.

This finding complements the subjective norms in TPB theory. It reflects how the opinions and actions of peers, family, influencers, and others in a person's social circle influence their decision to engage or not engage in a particular behavior intention (Yasa et al., 2022; Patre, 2022). In this case, social media use is considered a subjective norm, and the behavior intention is participation in the gig economy.

Moreover, the results also support the fifth hypothesis(H5) put forward in Chapter 2, that is, there is a significant relationship between subjective norms and Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy. Other than that, the results are consistent

with previous studies by Haider (2022) and Johnson (2023). Due to Gen Z's extensive use of social media, it gives them access to the views, trends and insights of their peers and influencers (Haider, 2022). A popular narrative that positively portrays gig work on social platforms today may create a social norm that favors participation in the gig economy, thereby influencing Gen Z's willingness to join the gig economy (Johnson, 2023). This situation is especially in the current trend of rapid development of the gig economy in Malaysia, where information and benefits related to the gig economy are disseminated and exposed on social media. Besides, as more friends and family members participate, and with the extensive promotion of gig jobs online, more and more young people are influenced by information about the gig economy on social media and because of this they are more willing to join the gig economy. This is why our results show that social media use is significant with Gen Z Malaysia's willingness to engage in the gig economy.

4.3.6 Perceived Behavioral Control (LQ&TD) and Willingness to engage in gig economy

The analysis of the data in Table 4.9 (Appendix 4.5) shows that the construction of Perceived Behavioral Control towards the gig economy has a not significant relationship with Gen Z's Willingness to engage in the gig economy. Since the p-value (0.747), which is higher than the significance level $\alpha = 0.10$. Therefore, since our model is higher order construct, which is the perceived behavioral control encompassing the leadership qualities and technology and digitalization, so in order to understand whether leadership qualities or technology and digitalization are significant or insignificant results for the willingness to engage in the gig economy, we analyzed its data in Table 4.11 (Appendix 4.7).

Table 4.11: Results of Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing of PBC (LQ and T&D)

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values	Decision
Leadership → Willingness	0.008	0.009	0.063	0.124	0.902	Reject
Technology and Digitalization → Willingness	0.091	0.093	0.051	1.788	0.074	Support

Source: Data generated by Smart PLS4 Software

According to Table 4.9, with a p-value of 0.902, which is higher than the significance level $\alpha = 0.10$, leadership qualities were not found to significantly influence Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy. This result differs from previous research, most of which showed that leadership qualities are significant with the willingness to engage in the gig economy (Alif et al., 2020; Gandhi et al., 2018). This is because individuals who possess leadership skills are more likely to embrace gig work due to their capacity to manage tasks and uncertainties in gig jobs (Alif et al., 2020; Gandhi et al., 2018). However, our results are contrary to these studies, leadership qualities do not have a significant relationship with Malaysia Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy. This may be because Gen Z in Malaysia may have a different cultural perspective on leadership than the Western model and may place more emphasis on other characteristics of leadership such as adaptability and responsibility. Furthermore, our results appear to be more consistent with Alif et al. (2020) research, which showed that the huge diversity of gig roles means that leadership may be critical for some jobs, but it can be ignored for other jobs. For example, designers, accountants, and software developers, these high-skilled gig workers may be more important for leadership qualities. On the other hand, for low-skilled gig workers, such as a food delivery person or an online hailing driver, leadership qualities are relatively less important.

In contrast, according to Table 4.9, technology and digitalization showed a significant relationship with a p-value of 0.074, which is lower than the significance level $\alpha = 0.10$. This result is also consistent with previous studies outline in Chapter 2. The research

of Ma and Yang (2018), Roy and Shrivastava (2020), and Lehdonvirta (2018) suggested that a person's competence in technical skills and digital literacy may increase that person's willingness to join the gig economy. This is because using technology to find and engage in gig work is more convenient and accessible than traditional forms of employment (Roy & Shrivastava, 2020). Our results are remarkably similar to these studies. The significant relationship between technology and digitization and Gen Z Malaysia's willingness to engage in the gig economy can be attributed to their familiarity with online platforms that offer convenient and flexible work opportunities that align with their desire for autonomy and work-life balance. Besides, their proficiency in digital skills enhances their suitability for the technology-driven gig economy and thus may be more willing to engage in the gig economy. Moreover, Given the current economic challenges in Malaysia, these technology-driven gig economies are attractive as supplementary income sources, collectively establishing the pivotal role of technology in shaping Gen Z's propensity for gig work.

These results align with the TPB framework, where Perceived Behavioral Control is a key predictor of behavior (Tucker et al., 2020; Yasa et al., 2022). The significant influence of technology and digitalization, as opposed to leadership qualities, reflects the evolving nature of control perceptions in the gig economy. The analysis of Perceived Behavioral Control and its components reveals complex relationships with Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy. The findings highlight the central role of technology and digitalization, while leadership qualities may be less relevant in the Gen Z Malaysia context.

4.3.7 Commitment (moderator)

Considering that the p-value (0.976) exceeds the significance criterion of 0.10 (Appendix 4.5). Therefore, there is sufficient data to draw the conclusion that commitment does not substantially affect the link between preparedness to participate

in the gig economy and desire to participate in the gig economy at the $\alpha = 0.10$ significant level.

This result is different from previous studies, most previous studies have shown that commitment plays an important moderating role between readiness and willingness to take on a particular job, especially in the context of the gig economy. Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019) and Hadden et al. (2018) pointed out that the willingness to join the gig economy not only depends on readiness but also needs to be consistent with commitment. Specifically, those with appropriate skills and opportunities, coupled with a certain degree of commitment, increase their willingness to participate in the gig economy. However, from our result, we found that commitment is insignificant in the model. This may be due to the fact that members of Gen Z may be more interested in acquiring a broad range of experiences and skills rather than committing to one specific job or employer (Tidhar, 2022). In other words, their readiness and willingness for gig work may not be a matter of commitment but of opportunity and a desire for different experiences. Furthermore, another study on Gen Z workforces stated that commitment may not be an important factor due to broader cultural and generational shifts. Gen Z has grown up in a digital, connected world where change is constant and predictable. This may lead to different perceptions of job commitment compared to older generations (Dreyer & Stojanová, 2023).

4.3.8 Gen Z readiness to engage in gig economy and Gen Z willingness to engage in gig economy

We reject H_0 because the p-value (0.001) is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.10$ (Table 4.8). Therefore, there is enough evidence to conclude that there is a significant relationship between Gen Z readiness to engage in gig economy and Gen Z willingness to engage in gig economy at $\alpha = 0.10$ significant level.

The outcome is in line with Hypothesis 8 (H8) and empirical research presented in Chapter 2. In this study, readiness is used as a mediator, and the results show that Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy has a significant relationship with Gen Z's willingness to participate in the gig economy, which means that some relationships between independent variables and dependent variable may be mediated by readiness. The outcome is in line with the research of Errida and Lotfi (2021), which pointed out that there is a positive correlation between a person's readiness and willingness to perform a behavior. In our context, which means that if a person is ready to participate in the gig economy, then he is more likely to be willing to participate in the gig economy.

4.3.9 Mediation effect

4.3.9.1 Readiness will mediate the relationship between Attitude (WLB and LD) and Willingness.

According to Table 4.10 (Appendix 4.6), the analysis reveals that Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy partially mediates the relationship between attitude, encompassing work-life balance and learning and development and their willingness to engage in gig work. The 20% VAF indicates that 20% of the relationship between the attitude encompassing work-life balance and learning and development and willingness to engage in gig work is explained through the mediator of readiness to engage in the gig economy.

The result told us that Gen Z may value the flexibility and autonomy offered by gig work, leading to increased willingness to engage in the gig economy. Gig work often provides various opportunities to learn new skills, which may align with Gen Z's attitude towards continuous learning and personal development. The fact that 20% of the variance is accounted for by the mediator, suggesting that 20% of the relationship between attitude toward gig economy (WLB&LD) and Gen Z's willingness to engage

in gig economy in this model is influenced by readiness. In this context, there may be a multidimensional relationship between Gen Z's attitudes toward gig work and their willingness to participate in the gig economy. Attitudes towards gig economy not only directly affect the willingness to participate in the gig economy, but also indirectly through readiness. Other factors and perceptions might play a role. For example, according to Dey et al. (2022), people join the gig economy not only because of attitudes that provide flexibility and autonomy in the gig economy, but also because of concerns about income, social influence, and abilities. A lack of basic competencies related to participating in the gig economy may reduce Gen Z's willingness to join the gig economy. But according to our results, it is partial mediation, which also means that attitude toward gig economy can directly affect Gen Z's willingness to engage in gig economy.

4.3.9.2 Readiness will mediate the relationship between Subjective Norm (SM) and Willingness.

According to Table 4.10 (Appendix 4.6), the analysis reveals that Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy does not mediate the relationship between subjective norms, which we mention as social media use, and their willingness to engage in gig work. This mediation effect accounts for 15.8 percent of the variance (VAF=15.8%), however, VAF less than 20 percent suggests that there is nearly zero mediation effect. Which indicating that no effects of the subjective norms on the willingness to engage in gig economy are explained through the mediator of readiness to engage in the gig economy (Domenek et al., 2022). So, we reject H10 which we mentioned in Chapter 2.

This result may be due to the fact that the immediate exposure to opportunities and the influence of peer behaviour and opinions. This is due to social media platforms often host advertisements and posts about gig work opportunities. Users are exposed to these opportunities directly without needing to be "ready" for the gig economy. Besides that, seeing friends or influencers participating in gig work can create a direct influence,

fostering a willingness to engage without necessarily cultivating a readiness or preparation (Peled, 2021). In essence, social media's direct, visual, and social nature can bypass the need for an individual to be ready for gig work (Latifah et al., 2022; Vallas & Schor, 2020). But according to our results, it directly influences willingness through immediate exposure or peer influence. These factors can provide a direct pathway from social media use to willingness to engage in gig work, making the role of readiness as a mediator less relevant.

4.3.9.3 Readiness will mediate the relationship between Perceived Behavioral Control (LQ and TD) and Willingness.

According to Table 4.10 (Appendix 4.6), the analysis reveals that Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy fully mediates the relationship between perceived behavioral control, encompassing leadership qualities and technology and digitalization, and their willingness to engage in gig work. This mediation effect accounts for 100 percent of the variance (VAF=100%), indicating that all effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable are explained by the mediator variable (Ramayah et al., 2017). It was mentioned in part 4.3.6 that the relationship between perceived behavioral control and Gen Z's willingness to participate was not significant. However, the mediation results account for the entire relationship, and the path from perceived behavioral control to willingness must be entirely through readiness to engage.

This result may be due to the fact that perceived behavioral control (LQ&TD) will first directly affect the readiness of Gen Z to join the gig economy, making them mentally and technically prepared and possessing not only abilities but also the attitude and subjective norm to join the gig economy. With these conditions in place, they may be more willing to join the gig economy. In addition, another reason may also be due to Gen Z's perceptions of the nature of the gig economy. According to Mehta (2020) and Behera and Gaur (2022) researches on the gig economy found that the nature of the gig

economy relies on leadership, adaptability, technology, and digital proficiency, which may make readiness an important prerequisite for participation. If not prepared, the skills and abilities involved in perceived behavioral control may not be applicable or sufficient to drive willingness to engage.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Summary of research

This study explores the determinants of Gen Z's engagement in Malaysia's emerging gig economy, a topic often examined in developed countries. By focusing on Malaysia, we not only expand the research landscape but also provide crucial insights for local entities, including the Ministry of Labor and policymakers.

Whereas prior research underscored work-life balance and learning and development as the main drivers, our study introduces contemporary variables such as the impact of social media, technology and digitalization, and leadership qualities. To enhance the study's credibility, we considered readiness as a mediating variable and commitment as a moderating one. By employing the HOC Approach, we categorized 'work-life balance' and 'learning and development' under 'attitude', while 'technology and digitalization' and 'leadership qualities' were grouped under 'perceived behavioral control'. Additionally, the influence of social media was viewed in the context of "subjective norms". This analysis contributes to existing knowledge by offering a holistic view of Gen Z's inclination towards the Malaysian gig economy, setting a reference point for future academic explorations.

The methodology adopted was quantitative, utilizing cross-sectional analysis and primary data. Data was gathered from 405 Gen Z participants in Malaysia and was subsequently analyzed using the SMART PLS 4 software. This software employs the PLS-SEM path modeling technique.

Key outcomes from the SMART PLS 4 analysis revealed:

- (i) Attitudes toward the gig economy, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are significant to Gen Z's readiness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia.
- (ii) There is only Attitudes toward the gig economy and subjective norms are significant to Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia.
- (iii) Perceived behavioral controls are not significant to Gen Z's Willingness to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia.
- (iv) There is a significant relationship between Gen Z's readiness to engage in gig economy and Gen Z's willingness to engage in gig economy.
- (v) The relationship between readiness to engage in the gig economy and willingness to engage in the gig economy is not significantly moderated by commitment.
- (vi) The relationship between attitude toward gig economy as well as Perceived Behavioral Control and Gen Z's willingness to engage in gig economy are mediated by Gen Z's readiness to engage in gig economy.
- (vii) The relationship between subjective norms and Gen Z's willingness to engage in gig economy are not mediated by Gen Z's readiness to engage in gig economy.

In conclusion, factors like work-life balance, learning and development, social media, and technology and digitalization significantly influence Gen Z's willingness to participate in the gig economy. However, it's worth noting that, contrary to expectations, leadership qualities and commitment didn't show a significant influence in the Malaysian context.

5.2 Implication of the Study

5.2.1 Gen Z

In Malaysia, the combination of Generation Z with the gig economy creates a captivating environment filled with opportunities and challenges. Helpful insights as well as implications to develop effective strategies that cater to Gen Z's preferences could be obtained by looking into particular factors that affect Gen Z's engagement in the gig economy.

The immense desire of Gen Z's working attitude for work-life balance influences their work preferences. Flexible working hours along with authority over scheduling may be essential in motivating individuals into the gig economy. According to the research and survey of Mardhiah (2022), about 30% of the 2524 Gen Z in Malaysia want to change their current jobs in order to improve their work life balance. Implementing laws which enable gig workers to decide on their work hours may make gig jobs more attractive to Generation Z.

Furthermore, Gen Z's demand for skill improvement and personal development highlights the importance of policies that encourage continual learning. Providing possibilities for skill development might be a great motivator for people to participate in gig labour. According to Mardhiah (2022), the Malaysia 2022 Employer Branding Study found that 82% of the Z generation consider personal and career development to be very important. Implementing regulations that encourage upskilling and provide opportunities for career growth may increase Gen Z's interest to join the gig economy.

The generalization of social media use in the life of Gen Z presents an innovative approach to participation. Using social media platforms for networking and employment opportunities might increase Gen Z's participation in the gig economy.

The Nelson Research mentioned that 71% of Malaysian Gen Z acquire news from social media (Nielsen, 2022). Policies that incorporate social media into gig platforms for recruitment and involvement have the potential for successful tapping into Gen Z's digital society.

Last but not least, the role that technology plays in Gen Z's career choices cannot be highlighted enough. An emphasis on innovative technology and providing advanced technology platforms might be tempting for people to join the gig economy. Charlton (2022) pointed out that a platform to connect with potential customers based on their professional field through various websites in the gig economy has been provided nowadays. Policies that support tech-savvy gig platforms with cutting-edge digital tools could be relevant to Gen Z's preferences.

Policies that have been designed to include the combination of flexibility, skill development opportunities, social media integration, and technical innovation may motivate Generation Z to actively pursue gig labour. Malaysia can develop a gig economy that aligns with Gen Z's preferences by utilizing their enthusiasm for continual learning, providing platforms that align with their digital knowledge, and leveraging the use of social media for involvement.

5.2.2 Policy makers

The developing employment setting, driven by technological innovations and modifying social norms, has boosted the development of the gig economy, a trend that is particularly noteworthy to Generation Z. The Malaysian gig economy is expected to be worth RM1.61 billion, with profits for platforms offering services bound to rise from RM 371.4 million in 2021 to RM 650 million in 2025 (Mahavera, 2023). Since the Malaysian government attempts to capitalize on the potential of the gig economy, it has to establish policies that are tailored to the interests and proclivities of the current workforce. The government may lay the foundations for a dynamic gig economy that

meets the needs and desires of the current largest generation, Gen Z by determining the key factors and its implications.

One key finding about Gen Z's working attitude from this study is their unwavering desire for work-life balance. Considering this, it is critical to establish policies which provide for flexibility while ensuring equitable compensation and opportunity for advancement. For instance, V Sivakumar, Malaysia's Human Resources Minister, has admitted that gig economy employees are not protected under the Work Act 1995 along with other labour legislation that guarantee them minimum wage entitlements. To address this, his Ministry plans on implementing the Self-Employed Social Security Scheme (SKSPS), which would offer insurance coverage for all industries while mitigating the obstacles experienced by gig workers (BusinessToday, 2023). SKSPS protection is now available to 374,906 freelancers in Malaysia, comprising 315,107 committed p-hailing riders as well as 59,799 e-hailing workers. Not only does this accord with Generation Z's demand for work-life balance, but it also presents Malaysia as an innovator for progressive and versatile gig work practices.

Another key component of Generation Z's attitude to work is its emphasis on learning and development. Malaysia can build a highly trained gig workforce that is adaptive to dynamic industry demands by encouraging continuing learning. To begin, educational partnership with institutions may incorporate gig economy knowledge and competency training into curriculum, preparing students for a shifting employment setting. Another feasible approach would be to negotiate agreements with e-learning platforms or local universities to provide gig workers with access to subsidized courses that improve their expertise. To illustrate, the Malaysian government has allocated RM50 million in the budget for 2022 in order to aid the gig economy (Pang, 2023). This fund will be used to provide educational and upskilling courses for gig workers, and to build an extensive regulatory structure for the gig economy. By stimulating gig platforms to offer a likelihood for ongoing learning, the government may deliberately support skill upgrading. As a result, the current low-skilled standard of gig works in Malaysia may be improved to high-skilled requirement.

The ubiquitous effect of social media on Generation Z's career choices cannot be overlooked. Subjective norms of social media may be an effective instrument in both promoting and controlling the gig economy. The Malaysian government should encourage partnering with influential social media sites to highlight cases of successful gig workers that might motivate others to join. Furthermore, innovative software apps which connect gig opportunities via social media sites could shorten the exploration and engagement process, which matches the digital preferences of Generation Z. For example, I Synergy Group Ltd (Synergy) is a technology firm dedicated to functioning as the top provider in the gig economy and delivering solutions to secure their continuing revenue (Kamaruddin, 2023). Synergy would link gig workers with the opportunity to make consistent income while offering access to important resources and services via Wyde, which is an online aggregator platform established by the firm to assist gig workers, customers, and merchants in securing job opportunities and expanding their use of technology.

The importance of technology in the development of the gig economy is critical in the digital era. The inclusion of technological advances into gig platforms has significant effects on policy. So, the government should emphasize on technology integration to make sure that platforms are user-friendly and secure. Alternatively, adopting a government-approved platform that uses AI to match the skill sets of gig workers with job demands can assure optimal employment matches, improving job satisfaction as well as overall productivity. Under the PENJANA Economic Recovery Plan, the Malaysian government has allocated RM75 million to offer social security benefits for gig workers and to promote the development of the gig economy. The government would pay an additional grant of up to RM50 million to gig economy platforms that contribute to the Social Security Organisation's (Socso) employment injury plan and the Employees Provident Fund's (EPF) i-Saraan contribution (Jaafar, 2022).

5.3 Limitations

One limitation acknowledged in this research is the omission of certain variables. While our study identified social media use as a subjective norm influencing Generation Z's entry into the workforce, other studies have pointed to broader influencing factors. For instance, findings from Craig et al. (2021) and Yokying and Floro (2020) suggest that the choice of a first job among adolescents is shaped not just by digital influencers on social platforms, but also significantly by the experiences and recommendations of parents and peers. However, it's essential to contextualize this within the broader behavioral framework of Generation Z. The empirical studies we mentioned earlier from Salamander (2023), Thomas (2011), and Duncil (2022) provide insights, suggesting that Generation Z individuals are profoundly immersed in technology, often spending a significant portion of their day on their mobile devices, engaging with social media. This constant connectivity has evolved their social paradigms. For many, interactions and friendships are primarily digital, making them more susceptible to the influence of digital advertisements and online influencers. Considering this tech-centric behavior, it remains appropriate to position social media use as a subjective norm for this demographic within our research's framework.

The second limitation was the methodological choice of using cross-sectional data. Such an approach offers a valuable, yet singular, snapshot of data at a given point in time. However, this design inherently misses the temporal depth that can be accessed through longitudinal studies. One key challenge this presents is the potential inability to trace the progression or evolution of attitudes, behaviors, or broader trends over an extended period. Specifically, using only cross-sectional data, it becomes complex to delineate whether the observed inclinations and preferences of Generation Z are stable, rising, or waning over time. Moreover, every generation, including Generation Z, undergoes shifts in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors as they mature and as societal landscapes evolve. Relying on a single temporal snapshot impedes our understanding of these intricate intra-generational changes that might emerge as they journey through different life stages or navigate changing societal contexts.

The third limitation relates to the subjectivity inherent in our measurement of Gen Zs' readiness and willingness to join the gig economy. While we employed a five-point Likert scale in our survey to gauge this, the interpretation of readiness and willingness inherently varies across respondents. To illustrate, what constitutes level 5 readiness for Individual A might equate to only level 3 readiness for Individual B. Nonetheless, this perceived discrepancy doesn't detract from the validity of our findings. This is due to the inherent nature of Likert scales and the empirical studies we mentioned earlier from Caballero et al. (2011), Hamari et al. (2016) and Lee et al. (2018), which aim to capture relative rather than absolute values. Our research was more focused on discerning patterns, trends, and correlations among the larger population of Generation Z, rather than making exact comparisons between individual participants. Moreover, across large sample sizes, individual variations often balance out, resulting in a mean value that accurately reflects the broader sentiment of the population. As such, while there might be disparities in individual perceptions, the collective data still provides a reliable indication of Generation Z's overall attitude towards the gig economy.

5.4 Recommendation

Therefore, there is room for improvement in certain aspects of the research pertaining to "the role of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in shaping Gen Z's behavioral intentions towards gig economy participation." These recommendations are provided in this section to enhance the comprehensive understanding of this subject.

Recognizing the acknowledged limitations stemming from the omission of certain pivotal variables in the study of Generation Z's job selection behaviors, there's a pressing need for subsequent research to embrace a more encompassing perspective. A salient dimension to consider is the temporal evolution of influence. As Generation Z progresses through various life stages, the potency of influencing factors might undergo

dynamic shifts. Thus, a longitudinal study could serve as an invaluable tool, shedding light on the potential ebb and flow between the impacts of digital and traditional influencers as this cohort matures. This would not only refine our understanding of their decision-making processes but also provide a more nuanced roadmap for organizations aiming to attract and retain talent from this generation.

Besides that, recognizing the constraints that arise from relying solely on cross-sectional data, it becomes crucial for subsequent research endeavors to embrace more fluid and encompassing methodologies. This is vital to deepen our comprehension of the multifaceted behaviors, attitudes, and emergent trends of Generation Z, especially in the context of the gig economy. A promising approach is to shift towards longitudinal designs. Unlike cross-sectional studies which offer only a singular temporal viewpoint, longitudinal methods provide the unique advantage of observing the same cohort at various intervals. This continuous observation grants researchers the ability to trace the nuanced progression of attitudes, behaviors, and preferences, shedding light on the dynamic intra-generational shifts within Generation Z.

The inherent variability in how individuals perceive and respond to their personal levels of readiness and willingness on a Likert scale poses certain challenges for data accuracy and interpretation. To circumvent these discrepancies and to achieve a more homogenized understanding, future research should contemplate a more integrative approach. By melding quantitative measures with qualitative methods, a more robust framework can be established. Specifically, incorporating tools such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions in conjunction with traditional surveys can unearth the subtleties and nuances in participants' sentiments. These qualitative avenues can delve deeper into participants' internalized perceptions of readiness and willingness, providing a richer and more holistic insight beyond the confines of the Likert scale.

5.5 Conclusion

This research was conducted to study how shaping the Gen Z's behavioral intention towards gig economy participation would be affected by the variables of work-life balance, learning and development, social media use, technology and digitalization, and leadership qualities. After analyzing the data obtained from 405 respondents in Malaysia, the findings revealed a substantial correlation between Gen Z's willingness to engage in gig economy and work-life balance, learning and development, social media use, and technology and digitalization. Meanwhile, there is no significant relationship between Gen Z's willingness to engage in the gig economy and leadership qualities. All in all, this research will hopefully be useful for future research on the Gen Z and the gig economy in Malaysia, as well as to create a better future for Malaysia.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.1: ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH PROJECT



UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN DU012(A)
Wholly owned by UTAR Education Foundation Co. No. 578227-M

Re: U/SERC/132/2023

18 May 2023

Ms Thavamalar a/p Ganapathy
Head, Department of Economics
Faculty of Business and Finance
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Jalan Universiti, Bandar Baru Barat
31900 Kampar, Perak.

Dear Ms Thavamalar,

Ethical Approval For Research Project/Protocol

We refer to your application for ethical approval for your students' research project from Bachelor of Economics (Honours) Financial Economics programme enrolled in course UBEZ3026. We are pleased to inform you that the application has been approved under Expedited Review.

The details of the research projects are as follows:

No.	Research Title	Student's Name	Supervisor's Name	Approval Validity
1.	The Role of Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control in Shaping Gen Z's Behavioral Intentions Towards Gig Economy Participation	1. Ang Jing Huang 2. Cheaw Mei Teng 3. Ng Wan Ping	Dr Abdelhak Senadjki	18 May 2023 – 17 May 2024
2.	Consumer Intention on Solo Dining: A Study on Generation Z in Malaysia	1. Nicole Lee Chia Chi	Dr Lee Chee Loong	
3.	An Investigation on Factors Influencing Stress Among Generation Z in Malaysia	1. Loh Wei Zhen 2. Ooi Hui Jing 3. Chong Shu Hua	Mr Kuar Lok Sin	
4.	Analysis of the Factors Influencing the Budget Practices Among College Students in Malaysia	1. Choong Chiau Yee 2. Lim Yong Cheng 3. Ng Sin Ring		
5.	Investigation of Malaysian Youth's Intention to Participate in the Gig Economy	1. Hon Jin Kang 2. Loh Yi Xuan 3. Wong Yun Tinn	Dr Au Yong Hui Nee	
6.	Factors Affecting Retirement Planning Behaviour: The Case of UTAR Academic Staff	1. Chong Heng Xu 2. Chow Whye Shing 3. Divya Sri a/p K. Vasu	Ms Kalai Vani a/p Kalimuthu	

The conduct of this research is subject to the following:

- (1) The participants' informed consent be obtained prior to the commencement of the research;
- (2) Confidentiality of participants' personal data must be maintained; and
- (3) Compliance with procedures set out in related policies of UTAR such as the UTAR Research Ethics and Code of Conduct, Code of Practice for Research Involving Humans and other related policies/guidelines.

Kampar Campus : Jalan Universiti, Bandar Barat, 31900 Kampar, Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia
Tel: (605) 468 8888 Fax: (605) 466 1313
Sungai Long Campus : Jalan Sungai Long, Bandar Sungai Long, Cheras, 43000 Kajang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel: (603) 9086 0288 Fax: (603) 9019 8868
Website: www.utar.edu.my



- (4) Written consent be obtained from the institution(s)/company(ies) in which the physical or/and online survey will be carried out, prior to the commencement of the research.

Should the students collect personal data of participants in their studies, please have the participants sign the attached Personal Data Protection Statement for records.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Ts Dr Faiz bin Abd Rahman
Chairman
UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee

c.c Dean, Faculty of Business and Finance
 Director, Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research

Kampar Campus : Jalan Universiti, Bandar Barat, 31900 Kampar, Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia
Tel: (605) 468 8888 Fax: (605) 466 1313
Sungai Long Campus : Jalan Sungai Long, Bandar Sungai Long, Cheras, 43000 Kajang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel: (603) 9086 0288 Fax: (603) 9019 8868
Website: www.utar.edu.my



APPENDIX 1.2: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN



FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND FINANCE

BACHELOR OF ECONOMICS (HONS) FINANCIAL ECONOMICS

UNDERGRADUATE PROJECT

THE ROLE OF ATTITUDE, SUBJECTIVE NORMS, PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL IN SHAPING GEN Z'S BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS TOWARDS GIG ECONOMY PARTICIPATION

Dear Respondent,

Warmest greetings from University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)

We are final year undergraduate students of Bachelor of Economics (Honours) Financial Economics, University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). The purpose of this survey is to conduct research to investigate the factors affecting Gen Z to engage in the gig economy in Malaysia. A gig economy is a labor market that relies heavily on temporary and part-time positions filled by independent contractors and freelancers rather than full-time permanent employees. Generation Z, also called Gen Z, is the generational cohort after millennials, born from 1997 to 2012. Please answer all questions to the best of your knowledge. There are no wrong responses to any of these statements. All responses are collected for academic research purposes and will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your participation.

Instructions:

- 1) There are SIX (9) sections in this questionnaire. Please answer ALL questions in ALL sections.
- 2) This form will take you around 15 minutes to complete.
- 3) The contents of this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential.

Personal Data Protection Notice:

Please be informed that in accordance with Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (“PDPA”) which came into force on 15 November 2013, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (“UTAR”) is hereby bound to make notice and require consent in relation to collection, recording, storage, usage and retention of personal information.

1. The purposes for which your personal data may be used are inclusive but not limited to:
 - a) For assessment of any application to UTAR
 - b) For processing any benefits and services
 - c) For communication purposes
 - d) For advertorial and news
 - e) For general administration and record purposes
 - f) For enhancing the value of education
 - g) For educational and related purposes consequential to UTAR
 - h) For replying any responds to complaints and enquiries
 - i) For the purpose of our corporate governance

j) For the purposes of conducting research/ collaboration

2. Your personal data may be transferred and/or disclosed to third party and/or UTAR collaborative partners including but not limited to the respective and appointed outsourcing agents for purpose of fulfilling our obligations to you in respect of the purposes and all such other purposes that are related to the purposes and also in providing integrated services, maintaining and storing records. Your data may be shared when required by laws and when disclosure is necessary to comply with applicable laws.

3. Any personal information retained by UTAR shall be destroyed and/or deleted in accordance with our retention policy applicable for us in the event such information is no longer required.

4. UTAR is committed in ensuring the confidentiality, protection, security and accuracy of your personal information made available to us and it has been our ongoing strict policy to ensure that your personal information is accurate, complete, not misleading and updated. UTAR would also ensure that your personal data shall not be used for political and commercial purposes.

5. By submitting or providing your personal data to UTAR, you had consented and agreed for your personal data to be used in accordance to the terms and conditions in the Notice and our relevant policy.

6. If you do not consent or subsequently withdraw your consent to the processing and disclosure of your personal data, UTAR will not be able to fulfill our obligations or to contact you or to assist you in respect of the purposes and/or for any other purposes related to the purpose.

8. You may access and update your personal data by writing to us at:

Ang Jing Huang 010-8337996
Cheaw Mei Teng 016-8556078
Ng Wan Ping 010-8270816

Acknowledgment of Notice:

() I have been notified and that I hereby understood, consented and agreed per UTAR above notice.

() I disagree, my personal data will not be processed.

Your attitude towards the gig economy:

() I am interested in joining the gig economy.

() I am already engaged in the gig economy.

() I have no interest in joining the gig economy at all.

(If ticked "no interest in joining the gig economy at all," the questionnaire would automatically end.)

Section A: Demographic information

We would like to obtain some personal details about you so that we can better understand your willingness to join the gig economy. Please tick (√). Each question must be answered and only one answer can be ticked.

1. Your Gender:

() Male

() Female

2. Your Age:

() 17-19

() 20-23

() 24-26

3. Your Highest Education Level:

- () High school or below
- () Certificate or Diploma
- () Bachelor's degree
- () Postgraduate education
- () Professional certificate

In the following sections, you must indicate how much you agree with each statement. Answers to each question were coded based on a 5-point Likert scale, with "Strongly Disagree" = 1, "Disagree" = 2, "Neutral" = 3, "Agree" = 4, and "Strongly Agree" = 5.

Section B: Work life balance

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I prefer having flexible working hours					
2. I prefer independence and the freedom to choose when and where I work					
3. Working in the gig economy can provide a good fit between my job and my personal health.					

4. Working in the gig economy can provide a good fit between my family life and work life.					
5. Working in the gig economy can provide a good fit between personal life and work life.					

Section C: Learning and Development

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Having continuous learning opportunities is very important to me.					
2. I obtain challenging jobs in order to develop my skills					
3. Trying different jobs will help improve my knowledge and skill					

4. Participation in the gig economy can contribute to my personal development					
5. Having learning opportunities is an important factor when considering to engage in gig economy					

Section D: Social Media Use

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Social media is my main source of news.					
2. The experiences shared by those successful gig workers in social media are definitely legitimate.					
3. I am inspired to join the gig economy after seeing many successful examples through social media. (e.g. influencers, online sellers, e-hailing workers)					

4. I look for the opportunities of gig work through the advertisements from social media.					
5. Under the influence of social media, I prefer to engage in the gig economy than to commit to a full-time job.					

Section E: Technology and Digitalization

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I often use technology in the workplace					
2. I am confident in my ability to use technology (e.g. smartphones, laptops, software applications) for work-related purposes					
3. Using technology at work will improve my job performance					
4. My current technological and digital skills are					

sufficient to participate in the gig economy to a certain extent.					
5. I have looked for job opportunities on digital platforms (e.g. Uber, Airbnb, Job Street, Mau Kerja, Upwork and etc)					

Section F: Leadership qualities

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. It is easy for me to see the big picture in work, which helps to plan things ahead.					
2. I am flexible with changes in our organization.					
3. Managing people and resources is one of my strengths.					

4. I am willing to take risks and make decision, even in uncertain situations.					
5. I actively seek out opportunities to develop my leadership skills.					

Section G: Commitment

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am willing to invest time and energy in pursuing gig economy opportunities.					
2. I am motivated to join the gig economy if I am equipped with the qualities to be a gig worker.					
3. I feel a sense of responsibility when engaging in my job as a gig worker.					

4. I consider gig work to be an important part of my career plan.					
5. I found that I became very fulfilled, which makes me more determined to my choice of participating in the gig economy.					

Section H: Readiness to engage in gig economy

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel confident in my ability to manage my own workload and set my own schedule as part of the gig economy					
2. I possess the necessary skills and knowledge to readily participate in the gig economy.					
3. I possess the necessary resources or tools to readily participate in the gig economy.					

4. I value the various work arrangements (flexibility and freedom) that gig economy work offers.					
5. I am able to work independently in the gig economy.					

Section I: Willingness to engage in gig economy.

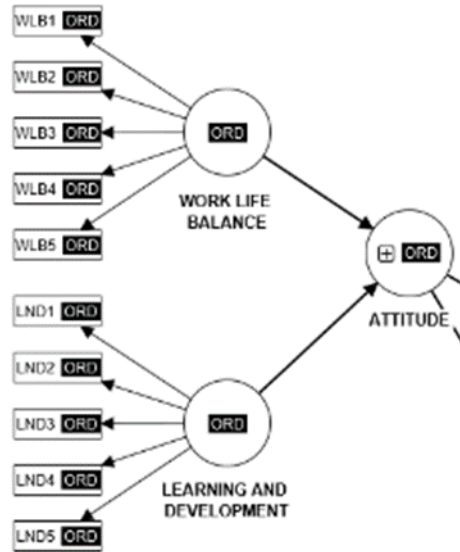
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I think participating in the gig economy is a positive thing.					
2. I think participating in the gig economy is a wise choice.					
3. The probability that I will join the gig economy is very high.					
4. Compared to a full-time job, I am more willing to work as a freelancer.					

5. I am willing to do whatever is required to be successful in the gig economy.					
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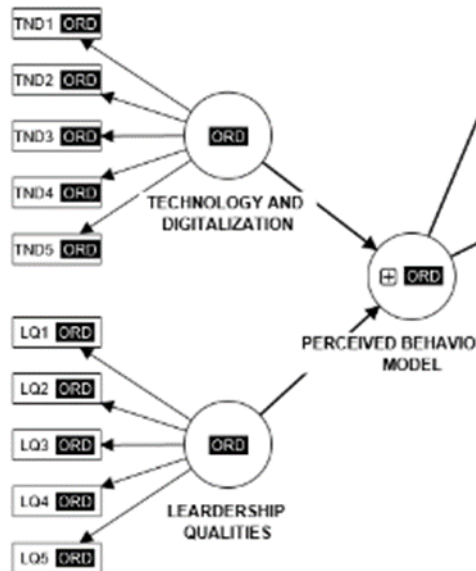
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APPENDICES: CHAPTER 4

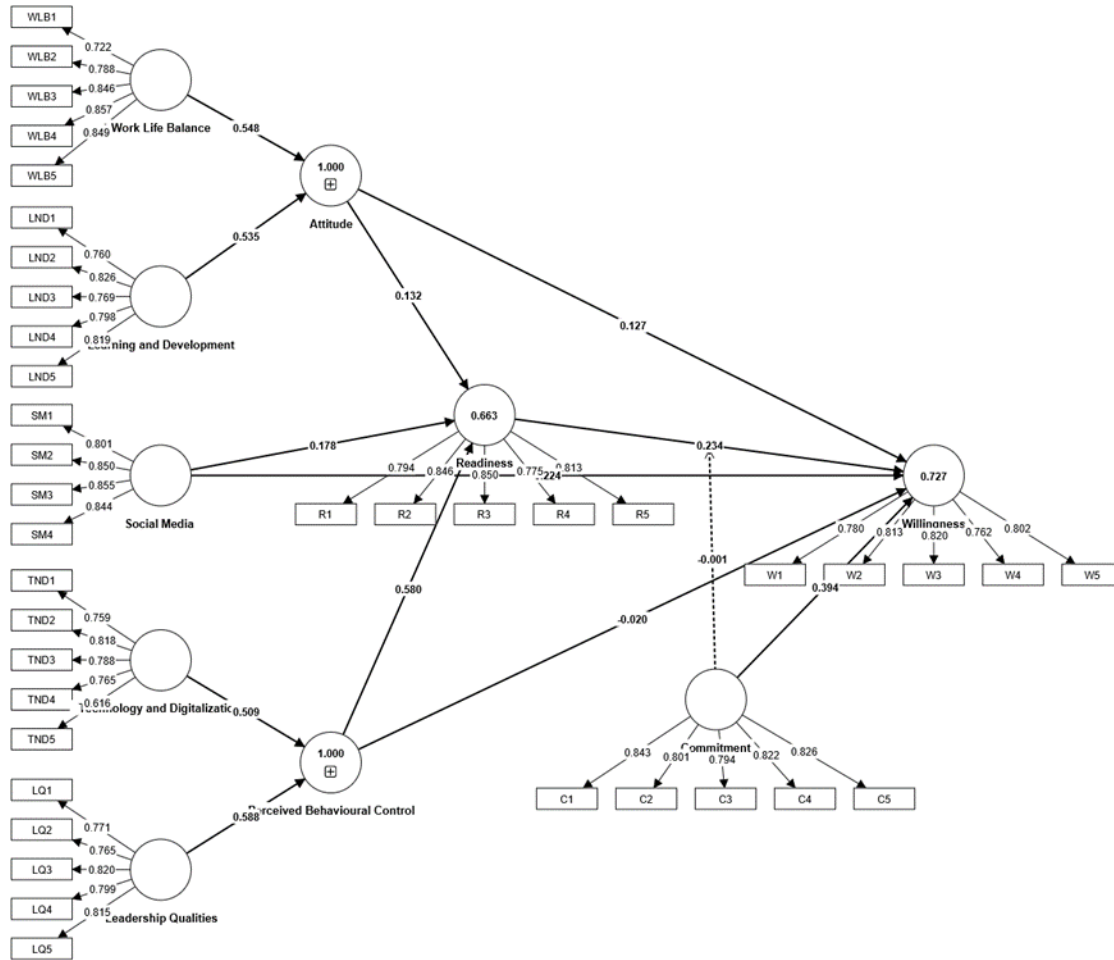
Appendix 4.1: Figure 4.1: HOC – Attitude



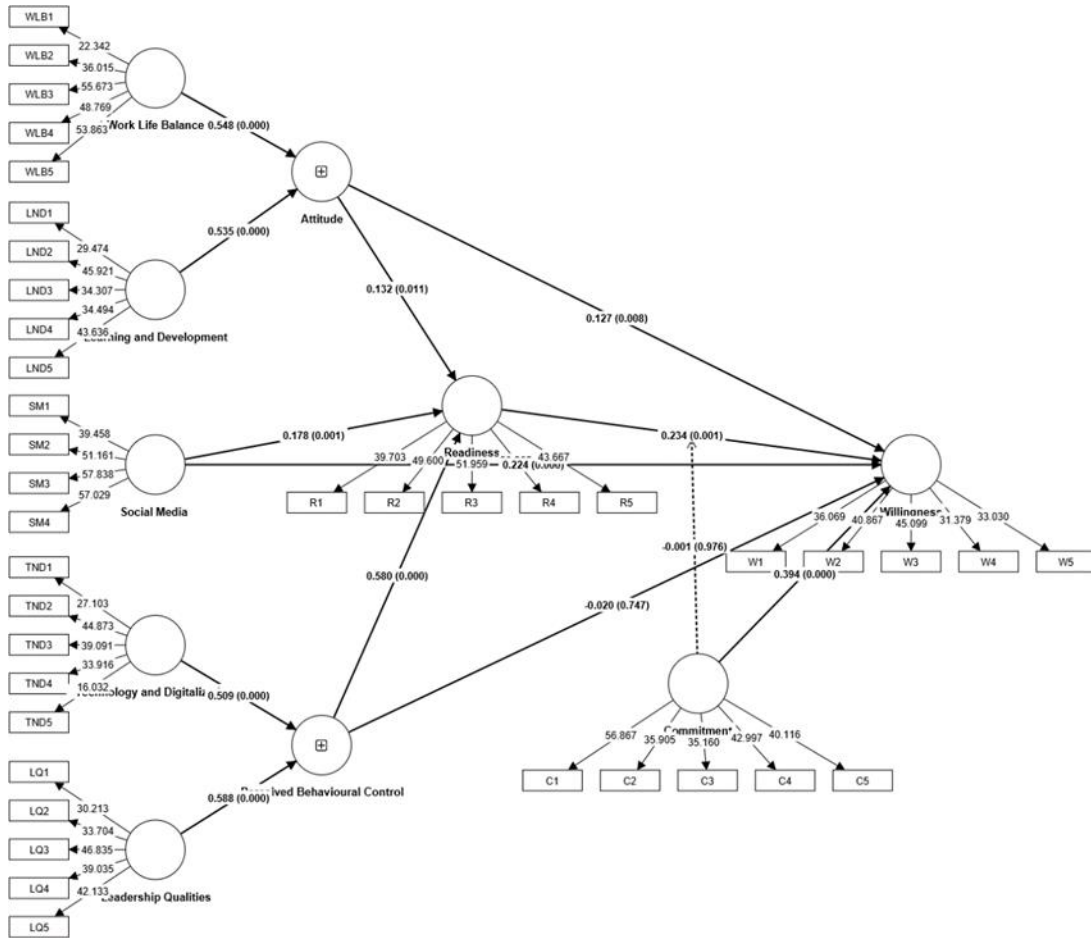
Appendix 4.2: Figure 4.2: HOC – Perceived Behavioral Control



Appendix 4.3: Figure 4.3: Result of Structural Model



Appendix 4.4: Figure 4.4: Result of Bootstrapping and Path Coefficients



Appendix 4.5

Table 4.9: Results of Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Decision
Attitude → Readiness (H1)	0.132	0.132	0.052	2.542	0.011	Support
Social Media → Readiness (H2)	0.178	0.180	0.054	3.308	0.001	Support
Perceived Behavioural Control → Readiness (H3)	0.580	0.579	0.057	10.136	0.000	Support
Attitude → Willingness (H4)	0.127	0.127	0.048	2.637	0.008	Support
Social Media → Willingness (H5)	0.224	0.224	0.045	4.964	0.000	Support
Perceived Behavioural Control → Willingness (H6)	-0.020	-0.017	0.062	0.322	0.747	Reject
Commitment x Readiness → Willingness (H7)	-0.001	-0.002	0.028	0.030	0.976	Reject
Readiness → Willingness (H8)	0.234	0.231	0.070	3.352	0.001	Support

Appendix 4.6

Table 4.10: Variance Accounted For (VAF)

	$VAF = \frac{\text{Specific Indirect Effect}}{\text{Total Effect}}$	Decision
Attitude	$\frac{0.0319}{0.158} = 20\%$	Partial Mediation
Subjective norms	$\frac{0.042}{0.266} = 15.79\%$	No Mediation
Perceived Behavioural Control	$\frac{0.136}{0.116} = 100\%$	Full Mediation

Appendix 4.7

Table 4.11: Results of Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing of PBC (LQ and TND)

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values	Decision
Leadership → Willingness	0.008	0.009	0.063	0.124	0.902	Reject
Technology and Digitalization → Willingness	0.091	0.093	0.051	1.788	0.074	Support