



Leadership styles and resilience of Generation Z student leaders in Malaysian universities

Zarith Sofea Zakaria* & Ida Juliana Hutasuhut

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak,
94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia.

ABSTRACT

Despite growing research on student leadership, few studies examine how digital pressures affect leadership and resilience among Generation Z student leaders in Malaysian universities. Facing constant connectivity, digital fatigue, and the need to balance academic and leadership roles, these students rely on resilience. This study explored how digital environments shape their leadership styles and resilience. Ten university student leaders, selected through purposive and snowball sampling, participated in semi-structured interviews as part of a qualitative case study. To assist in framing the conversation, each participant completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 6S and the Brief Resilience Scale prior to the interview. Thematic analysis revealed that participants frequently employed a mixed leadership style, incorporating both transformational and transactional elements. Digital literacy, participative approaches, and situational adaptability influence leadership development. Personal passion, experience-based learning, early exposure to leadership roles, mentorship, and the use of digital technologies were all contributing factors. Participants faced challenges such as emotional strain, peer conflict, institutional limitations, and online criticism. Resilience appeared as an important trait, strengthened by strong support networks, a growth-oriented attitude, and spiritual beliefs. These findings emphasise the need for emotionally sensitive, value-aligned leadership development programs in higher education.

Keywords: Generation Z, leadership style, resilience, student leadership, digital environment

ARTICLE INFO

Email address: zarithsofea01@gmail.com (Zarith Sofea Zakaria)

*Corresponding author

<https://doi.org/10.33736/jcs hd.10415.2026>

e-ISSN: 2550-1623

Manuscript received: 1 August 2025; Accepted: 24 February 2026; Date of publication: 31 March 2026

Copyright: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the CC-BY-NC-SA (Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, for non-commercial purposes, provided the original work of the author(s) is properly cited.

1 INTRODUCTION

Generation Z (born 1997–2012) is the first generation fully immersed in digital technology, shaping their learning, interactions, and leadership preferences (Dimock, 2019; Turner, 2015; Twenge, 2017). They favour participative leadership, emphasising collaboration and shared decision-making, though constant connectivity can cause emotional fatigue and burnout (Lazar et al., 2023; Mahayosnand & Sabra, 2024; Fatima & Srivastava, 2024). By 2030, Generation Z will make up around 30% of the global workforce, and universities offer early leadership opportunities, especially in Malaysia's multicultural, digitally connected context (Jancourt, 2020; Safian et al., 2022; Sirat & Wan, 2024). It is argued that Generation Z leaders value inclusivity, psychological safety, flexibility, and non-hierarchical structures (Dhinakaran et al., 2020; Gentina, 2020; Laudert, 2018). They adopt participative and transformational styles, rely on digital communication, and demonstrate entrepreneurial and innovative tendencies (Nugroho et al., 2025; Tjiptono et al., 2020; Toh et al., 2022). However, most leadership programmes remain geared toward previous generations, creating a gap between institutional expectations and Generation Z principles.

Despite the increasing involvement of Generation Z in leadership roles, empirical research examining their leadership styles within higher education contexts remains limited, particularly in Malaysia. Existing studies on Generation Z leadership tend to focus on workplace demands, technological preferences, or individual characteristics, and pay insufficient attention to how Generation Z leadership styles operate in peer-led university environments (Ariffin & Lazim, 2024). Moreover, resilience is often examined as an isolated psychological outcome rather than as a dynamic capability that interacts with leadership behaviour. The lack of integrative research examining leadership style and resilience among Generation Z student leaders represents a significant conceptual and empirical gap (Shek & Wilkinson, 2022). Without such understanding, leadership development initiatives in universities risk being misaligned with the actual needs and coping realities of Generation Z student leaders. This gap is especially critical in digitally saturated university settings, where student leaders must navigate academic demands, emotional labour, peer relationships, and continuous digital engagement. Addressing this gap is essential to understanding how Generation Z leaders sustain leadership effectiveness and well-being in contemporary educational contexts.

Resilience has been recognised as an essential trait in effective leadership, especially in digitally saturated settings characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), presenting unique challenges for Generation Z leaders in university settings (Zhang, 2024). For Generation Z student leaders, resilience is more than just being strong; it also includes adjusting to digital exhaustion, emotional strain, academic expectations, and peer dynamics while remaining successful and engaged (He et al., 2022). According to He et al. (2022), resilient leaders are better prepared to meet the fast-paced demands of multitasking and emotional demands in leadership. Prior studies found that experience learning, mentorship, and emotional intelligence are the most effective ways to build resilience among Generation Z leaders (Sudorgin & Agafonov, 2024). These variables are especially important in Malaysian academic contexts, given the variety and institutional constraints that student leaders encounter (Ahmad Fuad et al., 2024).

This study utilises the Full Range Leadership Theory (FRLT) (Bass & Avolio, 1994) to examine transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership among Generation Z student leaders. Transformational leaders inspire followers with vision, emotional connection, and promotion of creativity. Transactional leaders prioritise goals, structure, and performance-based incentives. Laissez-faire leaders, on the other hand, take a passive approach, avoiding direct engagement whenever possible. FRLT is still commonly used to analyse leadership behaviour, although its origins in the pre-digital age limit its relevance to the Generation Z context. This theoretical gap suggests that while FRLT is useful for categorising leadership styles, it requires complementary perspectives to adequately capture the contextual and psychological demands of digital-era leadership, all of which are important for Generation Z leadership in educational settings (Kwartawaty et al., 2024). To address this limitation, the present study integrates FRLT with Richardson's Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency (2002) to better understand how leadership behaviours interact with resilience in digitally demanding and emotionally complex leadership contexts. This process is influenced by both internal factors (self-efficacy, optimism, and emotional intelligence) and external support (social networks, institutional resources, and mentorship). Together, these theories provide a broader perspective on leadership behaviours and the resilience mechanisms that support them.

For Generation Z, digital leadership involves engaging, inspiring, and collaborating with others through online platforms and tools such as Google Workspace, TikTok, and Instagram (Hidayat et al., 2023; Wan Yakob & Don, 2024). While it improves creativity, flexibility, and team cohesiveness (Sari & Setyadi, 2024; Zuhrufillah & Putri, 2024), it requires emotional maturity and resilience to navigate leadership roles and challenges successfully. Educational institutions have struggled to properly integrate digital leadership training with resilience-building initiatives, particularly in Malaysia. This gap underscores the need to examine how Generation Z leaders develop their leadership style and resilience in digitally demanding, emotionally complex situations.

To address this gap, this study explores the intersection of leadership style and resilience among Generation Z student leaders in Malaysian universities. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. To explore the leadership style of Generation Z leaders using the leadership inventory.
2. To investigate the factors that contribute to the development of leadership skills among Generation Z university leaders in the digital age.
3. To examine the challenges faced by Generation Z leaders in leading their followers (Generation Z) in the digital age.
4. To investigate the coping strategies employed by Generation Z leaders in dealing with challenges faced.
5. To examine the resilience of Generation Z leaders using established resilience inventory scales.
6. To explore factors that contribute to resilience among Generation Z leaders.

By addressing these aims, the study offers a more nuanced perspective on how leadership and resilience interact in the lived experiences of Generation Z student leaders at Malaysian universities.

2 METHODS

2.1 Design

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to investigate how Generation Z student leaders in Malaysian universities develop their leadership styles and resilience. The case study approach, as articulated by Warren & Bell (2022), enables the researcher to thoroughly evaluate nuanced, context-rich experiences of student leaders as they balance responsibilities, emotions, and adaptability in technologically shaped leadership roles.

2.2 Participants

A total of ten participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The inclusion criteria were: (1) born between 1997 and 2012 (Generation Z), (2) actively holding leadership positions in student organisations, (3) regular use of digital tools in their leadership responsibilities, and (4) current enrolment in a Malaysian public university. The selected participants represented a range of public universities across different Malaysian regions (Central, Northern, Southern, East Coast, and East Malaysia), ensuring diversity in leadership contexts. Table 1 presents an overview of their demographic background.

2.3 Instruments

The present study employed the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) (Smith et al., 2008) to assess participants' resilience levels. The BRS consists of six items specifically designed to measure an individual's ability to bounce back from stress and adversity, rather than protective factors or coping mechanisms. Participants reflected on their own resilience as guided by the scale.

Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Higher mean scores indicate greater resilience after reversing the scoring of negatively phrased items. Previous research has reported good internal consistency for the BRS, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.80 to 0.93 across diverse populations, including student samples (Amat et al., 2014; Soliman, 2017).

Sample items from the BRS include:

1. *"I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times."*
2. *"I have a hard time making it through stressful events."* (reverse-coded)

In the present study, the BRS served as a reflective baseline measure to support qualitative exploration of resilience experiences among Generation Z student leaders, rather than as a standalone diagnostic assessment. These instruments were not used for statistical analysis but rather to facilitate deeper, reflective discussions during the interviews. The interview method used open-ended questions about leadership style, developmental influences, leadership challenges, coping strategies, and resilience in digital contexts.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants.

Participant	Age	Gender	Leadership Role	University Region	Years of Leadership Experiences	Leadership Style (MLQ)	Resilience Level (BRS)
P1	26	Male	Student Representative Council	Northern Malaysia	8 years	Transformational	Neutral
P2	24	Male	Student Representative Council & Director	Central Malaysia	8 years	Transformational & Transactional	High
P3	24	Male	Student Representative Council	Northern Malaysia	7 years	Transformational & Transactional	Neutral
P4	26	Male	Student Representative Council	Central Malaysia	>10 years	ALL	High
P5	26	Male	Deputy President of the National Student Consultative Council	East Coast Malaysia	>10 years	Transformational & Laissez Faire	Neutral
P6	22	Male	Head of Department	Central Malaysia	3 years	Transformational & Transactional	Neutral
P7	23	Female	Club President	Southern Malaysia	2	Transformational	Neutral
P8	22	Male	Student Representative Council	Central Malaysia	>10 years	Transformational & Transactional	Neutral
P9	24	Male	Student Representative Council	East Malaysia	9 years	Transformational & Transactional	Neutral
P10	23	Male	Deputy President	East Malaysia	>10 years	Transformational	High

2.4 Procedure and Data Analysis

Participants were recruited through university networks, university social media sites and mutual contacts, suggesting purposive and snowball sampling methods. Interested parties were subsequently approached and given crucial information about the research. They were informed about the goals, anticipated length, and ethical issues of the study. A pilot study with one Generation Z student leader was conducted to assess the clarity and flow of the instruments and interview questions. Prior to the interview, two validated tools, the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 6S, were administered online. Applying tools before qualitative interviews enhanced the quality and reliability of the research findings while also helping the researcher elicit depth and scope in their study (Chatpibal et al., 2023). Semi-structured interviews were conducted in five sections (A-E) that addressed the study's central focus: participant background, leadership growth, leadership problems, coping techniques, and resilience. This style allows for a conversational tone while maintaining congruence with the study objectives (Adams, 2015). Interviews lasted 45 to 90 minutes and were performed online via Microsoft Teams. All interviews were audio-recorded (with consent), transcribed verbatim, and kept anonymous.

Thematic analysis was used to examine the data, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach: (1) data familiarisation, (2) generating initial codes, (3) identifying themes, (4) evaluating themes, (5) defining and labelling themes, and (6) producing the final report. Taguette, an open-source qualitative analysis tool, assisted manual coding by providing a clear topic structure while maintaining interpretative depth. To ensure the validity and reliability of this qualitative study, the researcher employed the Lincoln and Guba (1985) framework, addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3 RESULTS

3.1 The Leadership Style Demonstrated by Generation Z Leaders in Student Organizations

According to data gathered through the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 6S, transformational leadership emerged as the most prevalent style among Malaysian Generation Z university student leaders. Four of the ten individuals had significant transformational leadership inclinations, while five exhibited a hybrid style combining transformational and transactional features. Only one person displayed a combination of transformational and laissez-faire approaches, while another report included all three leadership styles depending on the situation.

From the interview data, transformational leadership was regularly distinguished by characteristics such as inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and personalised concern. These qualities represent Generation Z leaders' shared values of empathy, purpose-driven leadership, and inclusion, as evidenced by participants' support for creativity within their teams, maintenance of emotional connections with peers, and encouragement of open communication.

3.2 Factors Contributing to the Development of Leadership Skills among Generation Z

This study identified two primary factors that contribute to Generation Z leadership development in Malaysian universities: internal and external drives that shape Generation Z's leadership identity in an increasingly digital world. Figure 1 depicts the framework behind these impacting elements. Internal drive, defined by passion, a knowledge-seeking mindset, and critical learning from previous experiences, is a major catalyst in Generation Z's leadership path. These student leaders frequently pursue leadership not for external approval, but for self-development and personal fulfilment to outperform those who came before them. Informant 1 and 3 shared that their passion for leadership was self-cultivated and evolved. P1 believed:

"...This passion does not come by itself; it has to be built. My leadership is built through involvement, and because of my interest, I continued at the university to get involved in the Student Representative Council as president in the context of the University..." (P1)

Beyond passion, Generation Z student leaders have a strong drive to seek knowledge. Four informants actively participate in books, events, and conversations in order to improve themselves. P6 added more of an emphasis on role rotation and experiential learning:

"Whenever there is a new event, I try to take on a new role. In my organisation, they encourage or allow us to hold different positions, like treasurer or secretary. I am also not afraid to ask for advice on what I should do. I want to try everything and learn new things..." (P6)

Informants 3, 5, 6 and 7 emphasised the importance of learning from poor leadership experiences or personal failures. For example, P5 stated:

"...I myself have failed a subject because of attendance, because of my own failure, I want to join leadership so that the mistake that I have made is not something that other people have to go through..." (P5)

Informant 7 commented on bad relationships between teams under past leaders and how they attempted to transform the culture:

"...Before this, under the previous leader, our organisation did not really bond together, talk badly about each other. When I became president, I did not want this to happen, I wanted to change the perspective that our organisation needs to be fun and interactive with friendship bonds..." (P7)

External factors, including early exposure, role models, experiential learning, and technology, shaped and reinforced Generation Z student leaders' leadership capability. Eight out of ten informants reported being motivated by their early exposure to leadership responsibilities in high

school or even in primary school, which provided them with their first opportunities to take on responsibility, manage people, and make choices. As P10 shared:

"...I started my leadership journey as early as Standard Three, as a class monitor, and continued as a prefect until Form Five, where I became the head student..." (P10)

Half of the participants highlighted the presence of role models, especially family members and notable persons. These individuals laid the foundation for what good leadership looks like, inspiring attendees to replicate or improve what they saw. P4 explained:

"...I would say maybe, my dad. He is also a leader in his field, and I think I learned whatever leadership skills I have from him. I used to follow him around since I was a kid to programs and events he had to attend..." (P4)

Seven participants stated how experiential learning, particularly through large-scale university events and volunteering, was a significant motivator. For instance, working on committees, managing initiatives, and planning events helped them expand their skill sets and gain a practical understanding of leadership.

"...When I was in MPP, I became the director for a big event. That was the experience that really matured me. When I joined, I learned a lot. The responsibility was very big, and I could not take it lightly. A lot happened during that time, and I could not delay any progress..." (P9)

"...Outside of campus, I joined the Youth Parliament and Yayasan Sukarelawan Siswa (Student Volunteer Foundation) because deep inside, I always believe that the best leadership practice comes from volunteering..." (P1)

Informants 6, 7, and 9 credited digital tools, including YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter (X), and WhatsApp, with enhancing knowledge, collaboration, and communication for leadership development. As P6 shared:

"...POV trends from Instagram or TikTok by leaders or bosses, actually, social media can give you ideas, experiences, and advice. In terms of education, Indonesian influencers are very good at sharing their leadership journeys. I am very grateful for them because not many Malaysians do this kind of thing. It really opened my eyes. Indonesian people really go out of the box..." (P6)

Figure 1 presents the factors contributing to the development of leadership skills among Generation Z student leaders

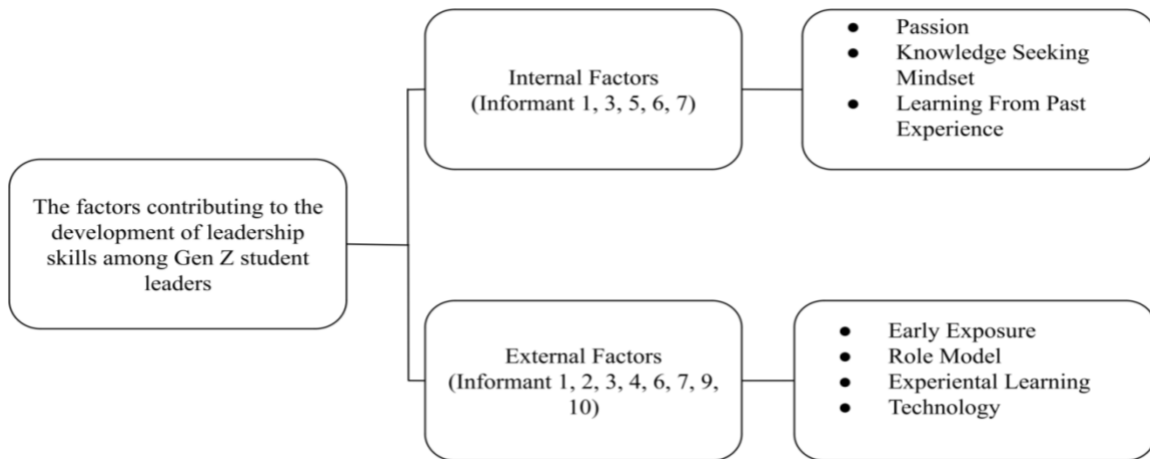


Figure 1. Factors contributing to the development of leadership skills among Generation Z student leaders.

3.3 Challenges Faced by Generation Z Student Leaders in Peer Leadership in the Digital Age

This study identified seven key themes that represent the challenges faced by Generation Z student leaders at Malaysian universities, as illustrated in Figure 2. These issues affect not only how they carry out their leadership responsibilities but also their psychological well-being, social dynamics, and decision-making abilities. The first obstacle identified in this study is internal and institutional conflict. Both types are closely related and reflect the burden that Generation Z leaders face as they strive to step into leadership roles while navigating restrictive, unsupportive settings. Internal conflict arises from tensions within the organisations or group networks of Generation Z student leaders. Informants 3, 6 and 10 stated that common issues include communication breakdowns, personality clashes and underlying negative feelings.

"... There is a lot of drama in organisations, people talking behind your back..." (P6)

Meanwhile, institutional conflicts are the organisational obstacles that Generation Z student leaders encounter when dealing with higher education authorities and organisational regulations. Frustration when encountering staff, faculty, or university administration was directly reported by informants 2, 3, and 10.

The traits of Generation Z peers, such as their emotional sensitivity and lack of professionalism, also caused challenges in leadership settings. Having to continuously modify their tone or endure the emotional burden of their teams was mentioned by informants 2, 5, 6, 8 and 10

"...Generation Z is a generation that tends to rebel when their opinions are not accepted or when you do not align with their alter ego..." (P2)

Informants 2, 4, 7, 8, and 9 pointed out frustration with Generation Z's preferred work style, which includes flexible work preferences and poor time management. While flexibility is frequently cited as a characteristic of Generation Z's adaptability and quest for balance, participants observed that it may also lead to inconsistency, low commitment, or procrastination in teams. Generation Z's tendency to postpone projects until the last minute, to evade strict deadlines, and to enjoy working at odd hours presents a challenge for collaborative leadership.

"...Generation Z has a different mindset. They are more about working smart. They are more relaxed and fun. However, they still need a push—while they have lots of ideas, they tend to hustle less. Still, they can solve things quickly..." (P7)

Informant 3, 4, 7, 9, and 10 noted that their judgments and leadership styles were frequently criticised through social media, such as anonymous attacks and false judgments. This made leadership challenging because leaders had to strike a balance between transparency and cautiousness, engagement and self-protection.

"...These days, if someone is unhappy with you, they will attack you online. For example, in my university, there is a confession page on Telegram..." (P3)

Informants 1, 2, 3, 8 and 10 described how they frequently feel the need to consistently perform, maintain calm, and satisfy expectations across multiple areas. This load was commonly linked to the dual role of student and leader, as well as the underlying assumption that they must always be "strong" and available.

"...Aside from that, people tend to place high expectations on us, which creates a lot of pressure, especially when it comes to the programs I am in charge of..." (P3)

"...There were times when I felt overwhelmed, juggling between studies and responsibilities..." (P8)

One female participant (P7) struggled with gender-based scepticism as her leadership credibility was regularly questioned due to their gender rather than her skills.

"...When I introduce myself as the president, some international students question it—like, 'Oh, a woman?'..." (P7)

Lastly, one participant (P9) also raised a language barrier, especially for East Malaysian students based in Sabah and Sarawak. This leader explained how unintentional misunderstandings resulted from misreading tone or vocabulary. Figure 2 presents the challenges Generation Z leaders face in leading their peers in the digital age.

"... I am Sabahan, and sometimes people misunderstand my tone. They think I am being rude, but it is just how I speak..." (P9)

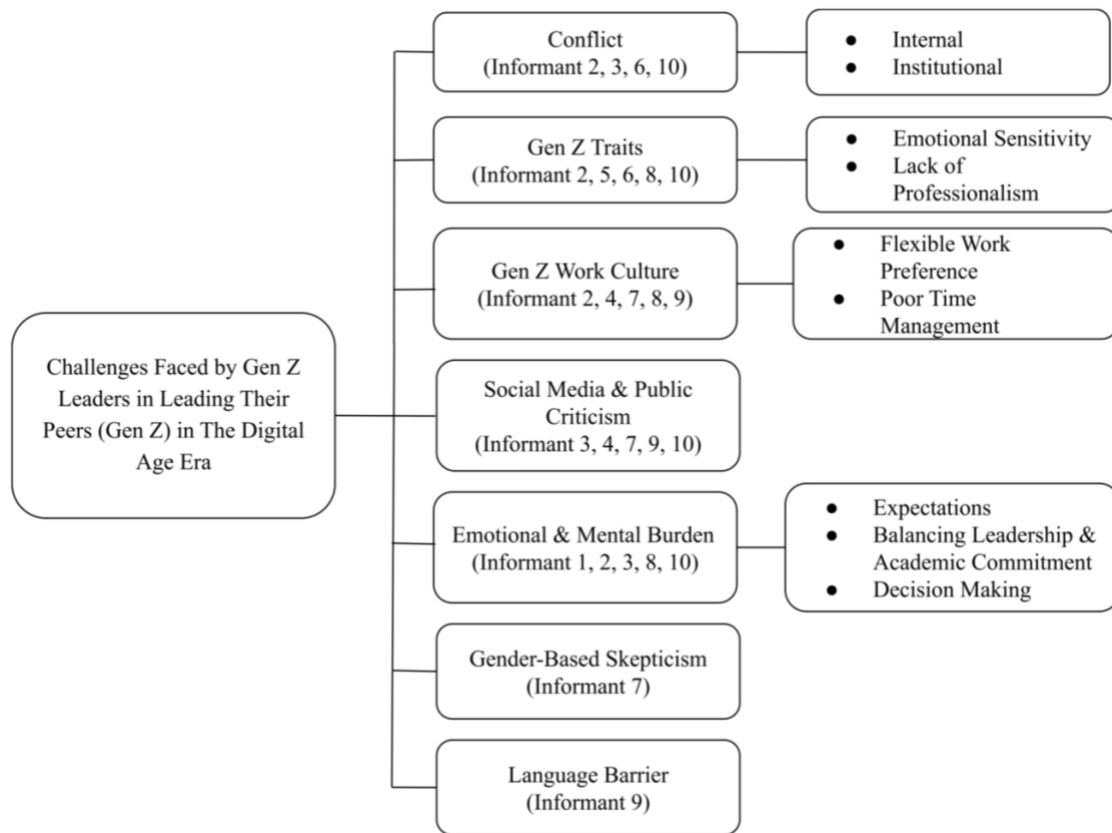


Figure 2. Challenges faced by Generation Z student leaders in peer leadership.

3.4 Coping Strategies Used by Generation Z Student Leaders to Manage Challenges

This study identified various coping methods that individuals employed to manage stress, emotional fatigue, and perform well under pressure. These strategies include self-regulation, time management, leadership skills, and prioritising mental health, as shown in Figure 3. Self-regulations consisted of cognitive and emotional. Informants 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 stated that instead of reacting immediately, they chose to pause, reflect, and consider before making a decision. This helped them remain cool and prevent emotions from taking over. Meanwhile, informants 2, 4, and 10 discussed how they managed their emotions by expressing them appropriately before returning to their leadership positions. They allowed themselves to experience feelings such as melancholy or worry but did not let them consume them.

"...So when we face difficulties, I always take a step back and ask myself, what are the challenges trying to teach me? So, I reflect on my own reactions. I think this mindset shifts from seeing problems as obstacles to seeing them as an opportunity, probably. It helps me to stay calm and also grounded, besides that..." (P8)

"...I always hold on to this where if I feel like crying, then just cry, but not for too long. If we suppress or deny our emotions and do not let them out, they will build up and eventually burst..." (P4)

Informants 2, 5, 6, 7, and 10 described how they practice proactive time management by establishing a clear timetable and preparing in advance to stay on course. To assist them in organising their time, some people utilise digital applications like Google Calendar or basic to-do lists.

"...I have my own timetable. I use the time attack method. Before I go to sleep at night, I will write down what I want to do the next day..." (P5)

Among Generation Z student leaders, leadership skills such as communication, conflict resolution, and flexibility have become essential coping mechanisms. Participants discussed how they deliberately cultivated these abilities to manage pressure better and lead their teams. Informants 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8 emphasised that communication was a safeguard against miscommunication, emotional conflict, and exhaustion, in addition to being a useful tool. Active communication promoted psychological safety, set expectations, and decreased poor judgment. Informants 4, 5 and 7 perceived conflicts as a chance to restore team cohesion rather than as a source of hostility. The coping strategy here is the individual's emotional control and readiness to confront tension openly yet politely. At the same time, half of the informants stated that adaptability has emerged as an essential leadership skill and coping mechanism. Leaders adjusted not just to logistical changes (e.g., regulations, scheduling) but also to interpersonal variations among team members.

"...You have to be adaptable and flexible. In any organisation, you will meet all kinds of people. You cannot expect everyone to follow what you say. A good leader is someone who knows how to mingle..." (P1)

All participants in this study see mental health as a crucial foundation of effective leadership while juggling academic and leadership commitments. This symbolises a generational transition in which well-being is incorporated into leadership identity rather than addressed separately. The findings from this study identified two key areas for prioritising mental health: self-care and social coping. For these student leaders, self-care was taking intentional steps to replenish their psychological and physical energy.

"...I often go to the beach to calm myself down. Just take a minute. Do not carry your emotions with you..." (P3)

Meanwhile, social coping played an important part in Generation Z leaders' well-being. These support-seeking acts were intentional ways to obtain perspective and feel validated by trusted people. Figure 3 illustrates the coping strategies employed by Generation Z student leaders.

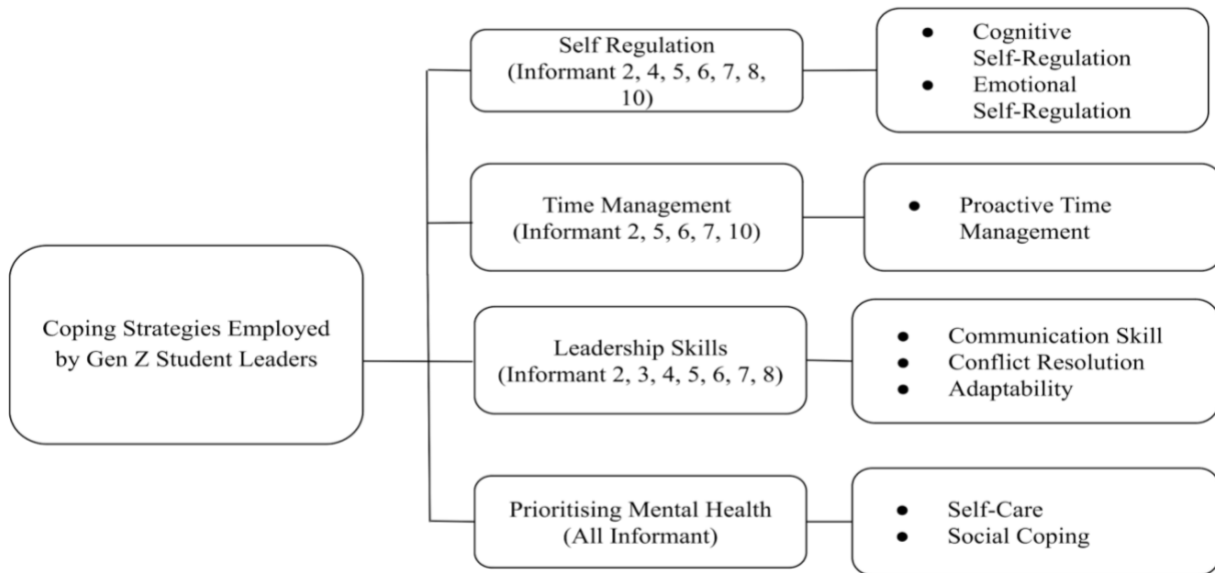


Figure 3. Coping strategies employed by Generation Z student leaders.

3.5 Resilience Levels of Generation Z Student Leaders Measured Using the Brief Resilience Scale

According to the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) results, three out of ten individuals were in the "High" resilience category. In contrast, seven out of ten participants were in the "Neutral" range. None of the participants received a "low" resilience score, suggesting that all of the Generation Z student leaders in this study had at least average resilience. Stronger cognitive self-regulation, well-established coping strategies, and solid support networks were all characteristics shared by the three people who scored in the high resilience range. They frequently discussed overcoming obstacles to personal development, reframing challenges as opportunities, and upholding emotional boundaries.

3.6 Factors Contributing to the Development of Resilience among Generation Z Student Leaders

According to Richardson's Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency (2002), resilience is a process of reintegration influenced by a person's internal resources and the support networks in their immediate environment. In this study, two primary categories were addressed: internal and external factors that play a significant role in developing resilience among Generation Z student leaders. All participants regularly displayed these internal qualities in their narratives: growth mindset, emotional intelligence (EI), sense of purpose, and religious beliefs. A growth mindset is the idea that abilities and intellect can be improved through devotion, learning, and effort. Many participants in the current research expressed a great desire to push themselves beyond their comfort zones, take on new tasks, and learn from setbacks. Meanwhile, EI is important for Generation Z student leaders in how they lead, manage stress, and maintain resilience, particularly in emotionally charged or high-pressure contexts within university groups.

"...With emotional intelligence, you will be better. You will better understand your own emotions and also those of others, your team members and whatever not, which is critical for effective leadership..." (P8)

Participants also often talked about how their purpose, why they selected leadership in the first place, serves as an anchor when confronted with stress or disappointments. Three participants acknowledged that religion is not only a belief but also a source of emotional control or even a reason to serve others.

"...I just talk to God. Listening to music is also important for me. I listen to spiritual songs when I am going through something..." (P9)

All participants emphasised how external factors, such as family support, peer encouragement, and mentoring, promote their resilience.

"... I would say the people around me keep me going. Having good people around reminds me that it is normal; everyone has ups and downs. They encourage me with kind words and help me think rationally again..." (P4)

Figure 4 presents the factors contributing to resilience development.

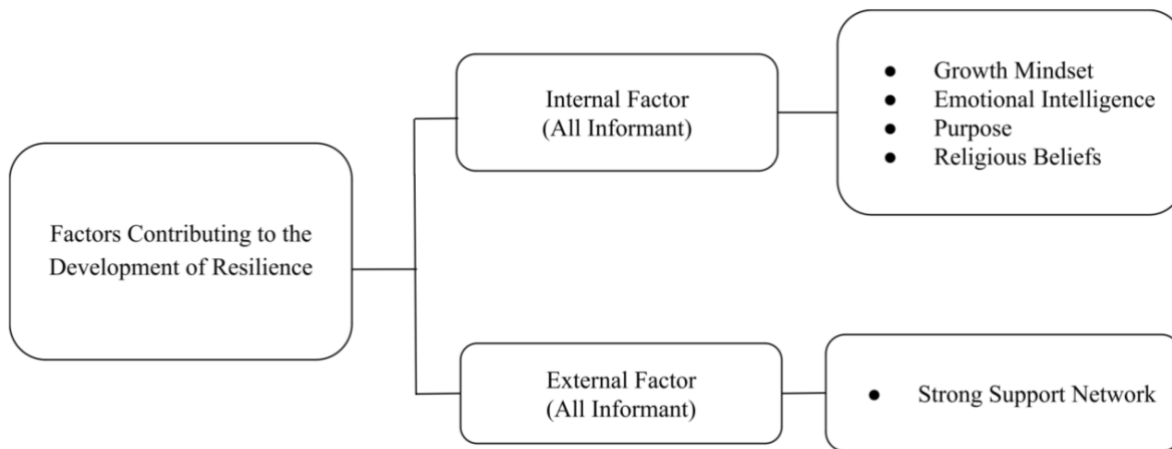


Figure 4. Factors contributing to the development of resilience among Generation Z student leaders.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Transformational Leadership as a Dominant Trend among Generation Z Leaders

The dominance of transformational leadership among Generation Z student leaders aligns with previous research suggesting that younger generations prioritise purpose-driven, relational, and inclusive leadership styles (Himawan, 2024; Kwartawaty et al., 2024). Within the framework of FRLT (Bass & Avolio, 1994), this finding indicates that Generation Z leaders naturally gravitate

toward transformational behaviours such as inspirational motivation and thoughtfulness, which resonate with their emphasis on empathy and psychological safety.

However, the findings also demonstrated that the emergence of hybrid leadership styles suggests that Generation Z's flexible in adopting different leadership approaches. For instance, while handling duties and expectations, the majority of the leaders used transactional aspects, demonstrating contextual adaptability. This supports earlier findings that digital-native leaders adopt flexible leadership strategies in response to situational demands (Yuananda & Alfianto, 2025). The presence of limited *laissez-faire* tendencies further indicates that while autonomy is valued, complete disengagement is generally avoided, reflecting a balance between empowerment and responsibility.

These findings extend the application of FRLT by illustrating how transformational leadership manifests within digitally mediated, peer-led university environments. They also highlight the need to consider flexibility and situational responsiveness as defining features of Generation Z leadership, reinforcing the argument that traditional leadership frameworks must be interpreted within contemporary digital and generational contexts.

4.2 Factors Contributing to the Development of Leadership Skills among Generation Z

The findings indicate that leadership development among Generation Z university leaders is shaped by an interaction between internal and external factors, reflecting a dynamic and self-directed leadership development process. The emergence of *internal drive* (passion, continuous learning, and reflective learning from failure) suggests that Generation Z leaders are intrinsically motivated to assume leadership roles. This aligns with prior studies by Raksithaa (2024), which highlight Generation Z's preference for personal growth, self-actualisation, and meaning-driven engagement rather than leadership motivated by status or authority.

Passion-driven leadership, as expressed by the informants, indicates that leadership identity is gradually constructed through active involvement and experiential commitment. This supports experiential learning theory, which posits that leadership competence develops through reflection on concrete experiences rather than formal instruction alone (Di Pede, 2024). Furthermore, the strong emphasis on learning from past failures suggests a reflective leadership orientation, where setbacks are reframed as developmental opportunities. This reflective tendency also contributes to resilience formation, reinforcing the interconnectedness between leadership development and adaptive coping processes among Generation Z leaders.

The findings further reveal that Generation Z leaders actively seek knowledge through diverse sources, including role rotation, mentorship, and informal learning channels. This learning approach reflects a non-linear leadership development pathway, consistent with the characteristics of digital-native learners (Naim, 2021). Unlike traditional leadership development models that emphasise hierarchical progression, Generation Z leaders appear to value exposure to multiple roles and responsibilities, enabling them to develop flexibility, empathy, and situational awareness. Externally, early exposure to leadership through co-curricular activities in public education in Malaysia provides decision-making skills, communication skills, team management skills and confidence, all of which are crucial to their present leadership style, which is aligned with a study

conducted by Fauzi et al. (2022) and Ochangco (2023). The influence of role models, particularly family members, further reinforces role identity theory, whereby leadership behaviours are acquired through observation and imitation of significant others (Palanski et al., 2021).

Hands-on experiences through university events and volunteering enabled participants to put theory into practice in a variety of settings, and these experiences acted as key developmental opportunities, indicating times of pressure and responsibility that drove individuals to find their actual abilities (Lester, 2021). This also supports Safian et al. (2022), who highlighted the role of university programs in creating the future workforce via experiential learning. Such environments allow leaders to manage real-world challenges, make high-stakes decisions, and navigate interpersonal dynamics, thereby accelerating leadership maturity.

Lastly, digital platforms such as TikTok and Instagram expanded learning opportunities regarding leadership, which is consistent with Hidayat et al.'s (2023) observation that Generation Z actively learns from social media, an informal approach to leadership education. Through exposure to leadership narratives and global perspectives, Generation Z leaders are able to expand their leadership knowledge beyond local contexts. This highlights a limitation within traditional leadership frameworks, such as Full Range Leadership Theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994), which do not explicitly account for digitally mediated leadership learning and peer-based influence.

4.3 Challenges Faced by Generation Z Leaders in Leading their Peers in the Digital Age

The findings revealed multiple challenges faced by Generation Z student leaders in Malaysian universities. Interpersonal conflict emerged as a primary challenge, particularly in the form of communication failure, personality clashes, and negative peer dynamics within student organisations. Leaders reported difficulties asserting command while maintaining harmony among peers, reflecting the complexity of peer-based leadership where leaders and followers share similar age and social status. This supports prior research indicating that peer-based leadership among Generation Z requires heightened emotional regulation and psychological labour, especially when leaders must balance authority with inclusivity (Angelina & Priyono, 2024).

In addition to internal conflict, institutional barriers were also distinct. Participants expressed frustration when navigating rigid university regulations, bureaucratic processes, and limited institutional support, which often restrict decision-making and innovation in student-led initiatives. This reflects a mismatch between Generation Z leaders' preference for flexibility and participative decision-making and the hierarchical nature of higher education governance. Such tension reinforces the argument that leadership frameworks designed for formal organisational settings may inadequately capture the realities of student leadership (Chowdhury et al., 2024).

The issue of emotional sensitivity and lack of professionalism among peers confirms Roy et al.'s (2022) findings, which show that Generation Z leaders frequently bear the emotional load of their teams. According to Katmada et al. (2022) and Kraght & Brøndum (2025), Generation Z needs organised mentorship and structured accountability systems due to their lack of professionalism and low engagement. This paradox illustrates the difficulty Generation Z leaders face in motivating peers without resorting to authoritarian leadership.

Digital exposure emerged as a unique challenge in the digital age. Anonymous criticism and public judgment through social media increased leaders' emotional vulnerability and self-introspection behaviour (Hidayat et al., 2023). This finding highlights that the emotional demands of digital leadership necessitate advanced emotional skills and strategies to manage the pressures of constant online presence and surveillance (Smith & Grandey, 2025).

Additionally, role overload and performance pressure were evident as leaders struggled to manage academic responsibilities alongside leadership expectations consistent with Khairiyah et al. (2024). The perceived need to remain emotionally strong and constantly available suggests early signs of burnout risk, reinforcing the importance of resilience in sustaining leadership effectiveness.

Finally, structural inequalities, including gender-based scepticism and language-related misunderstandings, further complicated leadership experiences. These challenges indicate that Generation Z leadership development is not only shaped by generational traits but also by sociocultural factors specific to Malaysia's diverse context.

4.4 Coping Strategies Employed by Generation Z Leaders

The findings indicate that Generation Z student leaders employ various combinations of cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and social coping strategies to manage leadership-related stress in the digital age. Self-regulation emerged as a core coping mechanism, particularly through emotional awareness and cognitive reframing. By pausing before responding and interpreting challenges as learning opportunities, participants demonstrated emotional maturity and adaptive coping. This aligns with Khawar et al. (2023) and Popova (1989), who argue that contemplation and emotional release can buffer stress and enhance competent decision-making.

Time management and organisational strategies were also widely employed to cope with competing academic and leadership demands. The use of structured schedules, prioritisation techniques, and digital tools such as calendars and task lists suggests that Generation Z leaders actively leverage technology to maintain control over their responsibilities while protecting their mental health. This reflects generational competence in digital self-management and supports the view that technology functions as both a leadership tool and a coping resource (Olano et al., 2021).

Leadership skills themselves functioned as coping mechanisms, particularly communication, conflict resolution, and adaptability. Rather than avoiding tension, participants used open communication to prevent misunderstandings and restore team cohesion. Adaptability is consistent with studies that stated Generation Z prefer real-time discussion and collaborative problem-solving, which is associated with greater leadership sustainability and psychological resilience (Monje & Gorjón, 2021)

The emphasis on mental health prioritisation represents a notable generational shift in leadership identity. Practices such as self-care, emotional expression, and seeking social support were not perceived as signs of weakness but as necessary strategies for maintaining balance (Pladdys, 2024). Social coping, including reliance on trusted peers, family members, and mentors, provided emotional validation and perspective, reinforcing Generation Z leadership's collective orientation.

4.5 Resilience Levels among Generation Z Student Leaders

Generation Z student leaders in this study demonstrated at least a neutral level of resilience, with none falling into the low category. This suggests that engagement in leadership roles within university settings fosters adaptive coping and psychological recovery among Generation Z leaders (Jansen & Wieland, 2024). Holding leadership positions requires continuous problem-solving, emotional regulation, and role negotiation, which may strengthen individuals' capacity to bounce back from adversity over time.

The presence of a high-resilience subgroup highlights qualitative differences in how Generation Z leaders respond to stress. Participants in this category consistently demonstrated stronger cognitive self-regulation, boundary-setting, and proactive coping strategies. Their tendency to reframe challenges as opportunities for growth aligns with resilience research that emphasises positive cognitive appraisal as a core mechanism for recovery and psychological endurance (Stover et al., 2024). This supports Richardson's Metatheory of Resilience (2002), which views resilience as a reintegration process rather than only restoration that results in growth. However, the dominance of "Neutral" resilience levels also indicates that while most Generation Z leaders can manage adversity, they may still be susceptible to emotional fatigue under prolonged stress, particularly in digitally demanding leadership environments.

4.6 Factors Contributing to the Development of Resilience among Generation Z Leaders

The findings demonstrate that resilience among Generation Z student leaders is shaped by a dynamic interaction between internal personal resources and external support systems, consistent with Richardson's Metatheory of Resilience. Internal factors, including growth mindset, emotional intelligence (EI), sense of purpose, and religious beliefs, were central to resilience development. Participants who demonstrated a growth mindset viewed challenges as opportunities for learning rather than setbacks, enabling positive reintegration following adversity. This aligns with the resilience literature, which emphasises cognitive reframing and meaning making as key mechanisms for psychological recovery (Richardson, 2002). Emotional intelligence further strengthened resilience by allowing leaders to manage their own emotions while navigating emotionally demanding peer relationships, reducing burnout and emotional overload, especially in the Malaysian context, where social peace and relational sensitivity are highly valued (Yunus et al., 2017). A clear sense of purpose also functioned as a stabilising force during periods of stress. Purpose-driven leaders are good at putting challenges into opportunities, facilitating teamwork, and maintaining focus on organisational goals and are better able to tolerate pressure and persist through difficulties (Olmo-Extremera et al., 2022). Additionally, religious beliefs provided emotional grounding and moral reassurance for some participants, offering comfort, self-regulation, and a broader perspective during challenging situations, similar to Suprpto's (2020) findings on religious coping, which argue that religious meaning-making promotes resilience by decreasing despair and providing moral clarity. This finding highlights the culturally embedded nature of resilience in the Malaysian context.

Externally, strong support networks, particularly from family members, peers, and mentors, were crucial in sustaining resilience among Generation Z student leaders, proving that resilience within this generation is collaborative and socially reinforced rather than developed in isolation. Family support provided emotional grounding and reassurance during periods of stress; peer support allowed those experiencing similar leadership challenges to understand and validate one another; and mentoring relationships provided guidance, perspective, and leadership affirmation. Consistent with Richardson's Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency (2002), these external support systems serve as protective resources that promote positive reintegration after stress or disruption. Social support did more than only reduce stress; it helped participants control their emotions, reframe problems, and regain confidence in their leadership abilities. This research supports the findings of Putri et al. (2023), who point out that support networks serve as emotional regulators that foster psychological stability and leadership resilience. They emphasise the importance of support networks for Generation Z leaders working in emotionally taxing, technologically dominated academic settings.

4.7 Implications and Limitations

This study provides theoretical and practical insights into leadership and resilience among Generation Z student leaders in Malaysian universities. Theoretically, it extends the Full Range Leadership Theory (FRLT) by showing that Generation Z leaders adopt flexible, context-driven approaches and benefit from resilience-focused frameworks that address emotional and digital challenges (Richardson, 2002). Resilience is a dynamic process interacting with leadership demands, highlighting its role as a core adaptive capacity in emotionally complex and digitally saturated contexts. Practically, leadership programmes should embed emotional regulation, self-reflection, mental health awareness, adaptive coping, and structured digital learning (Kazanskaia, 2025).

The study is limited by a small qualitative sample of 10 purposively selected leaders, which provides in-depth but context-specific insights (Guest et al., 2006). Data were self-reported, which may introduce bias, though they offer valuable insight into participants' meaning making and identity construction. Future research could expand across diverse institutions and cultures, adopt longitudinal or mixed-method designs, and incorporate multiple data sources for triangulation.

5 CONCLUSION

This study offers valuable insights into the leadership styles and resilience of Generation Z student leaders at Malaysian universities. The findings demonstrate that, while transformational leadership is the dominating style, most adopt hybrid and adaptive leadership influenced by both internal drives, which are passion, a knowledge-seeking mentality, and reflective learning, alongside external drives such as early exposure, role models, and experience learning. Despite facing internal and institutional conflict, emotional labour, peer dynamics, public criticism, and time management concerns, these leaders employ various coping strategies grounded in self-regulation, proactive time management, leadership agility, and a strong focus on mental health. Their moderate-to-high levels of resilience demonstrate their ability to rebound from stress, shaped not just by internal factors such as growth mindset, emotional intelligence, purpose, and religious convictions, but also by external factors, particularly strong and persistent support systems. By

integrating perspectives on leadership style and resilience, this study contributes to a more holistic understanding of Generation Z leadership in higher education. It underscores the importance of leadership development approaches that are responsive to the digital, emotional, and relational realities emerging leaders face, particularly within multicultural university contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors sincerely acknowledge the student leaders from various public universities in Malaysia for their generous participation in this study. The authors also extend their gratitude to the lecturers and peers from the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) for their guidance, support, and encouragement throughout the research process.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author conducted the research, including conceptualising the study, collecting and analysing the data, and preparing the initial manuscript draft. The second author provided guidance throughout the research process, particularly in refining the study design, advising on methodology and result interpretation, and reviewing and editing the manuscript. Both authors contributed to revising the paper and approved the final version for publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided their informed consent prior to participation. The research procedures were conducted in accordance with appropriate ethical guidelines to ensure the confidentiality and voluntary participation of all participants.

FUNDING

This research received no external funding from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

REFERENCES

- Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In K. E. Newcomer, H. P. Hatry, & J. S. Wholey (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (4th ed., pp. 492–505). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19>
- Ahmad Fuad, N. A., Mohd Rizuan, Y., Ramli, N. A. N., Heitin, F. S., Ravindran, D., Hussin, N. A. A., & Jafry, N. H. A. (2024). Stress factors among university students: A case study at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business & Social Sciences*, 14(11), 1694–1707. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i11/21956>
- Amat, S., Subhan, M., Wan Jaafar, W. M., Mahmud, Z., & Ku Johari, K. S. (2014). Evaluation and psychometric status of the Brief Resilience Scale in a sample of Malaysian international students. *Asian Social Science*, 10(18), 240–245. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ASS.V10N18P240>
- Angelina, C., & Priyono, J. (2024). Kepemimpinan persahabatan bagi Generasi Z berdasarkan perspektif Yohanes 15:14–17. *Logon Zoes: Jurnal Teologi, Sosial dan Budaya*, 7(2), 108–127.
- Ariffin, S. H. S., & Lazim, N. A. M. (2024). Academic management and leadership in Malaysia Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): Financial provision and social impact perspectives. In K. Kankaew, S. Shilpa, & S. Widtayakornbundit (Eds.), *Contemporary management and global leadership for sustainability* (pp. 19–38). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-1273-5.ch002>
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Chatpibal, M., Chaiyasoonthorn, W., & Chaveesuk, S. (2023). The development of qualitative research instruments to explore the role of Chief Financial Officer (CFO). *Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Information Communication and Management (ICICM '22)*, 69–74. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3551690.3551701>
- Chowdhury, T. I., Al Saeedi, A. S., Karim, A. M., Ahmed, A. R., & Karim, A. M. (2024). Effective contemporary leadership in the tertiary education: Global stakeholders viewpoint. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business & Social Sciences*, 14(1), 479–490. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i1/20466>
- Dhinakaran, V., Partheeban, P., Ramesh, R., Balamurali, R., & Dhanagopal, R. (2020). Behavior and characteristic changes of Generation Z engineering students. *2020 6th International Conference on Advanced Computing and Communication Systems (ICACCS)*, 1434–1437. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICACCS48705.2020.9074322>

- Dhingra, D., Srivastava, S., & Srivastava, N. (2024). Psychometric validation of the multifactor leadership questionnaire form 6-S in Indian context. *International Journal of Religion*, 5(8), 502–512. <https://doi.org/10.61707/eyspwg27>
- Dimock, M. (2019). *Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>
- Di Pede, G. (2024). How students learn to lead in pre- and early-career experiences. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2024(182), 59–70. <https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20602>
- Fatima, S., & Srivastava, U. (2024). Exploring work-life balance strategies among Generation Z in the education sector: An exploratory analysis. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(4), 9597–9611. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i5.4438>
- Fauzi, N. F., Don, Y., & Yusof, M. R. (2022). Inculcating student leadership practice through co-curricular activities among secondary school students. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counselling*, 7(47), 281–289. <https://doi.org/10.35631/ijepc.747024>
- Gentina, E. (2020). Generation Z in Asia: A research agenda. In E. Gentina & E. Parry (Eds.), *The new Generation Z in Asia: Dynamics, differences, digitalisation* (1st ed., pp. 3–22). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80043-220-820201002>
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough?: An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>
- He, Z., Huang, H., Choi, H., & Bilgihan, A. (2022). Building organizational resilience with digital transformation. *Journal of Service Management*, 34(1), 147–171. <https://doi.org/10.1108/josm-06-2021-0216>
- Hidayat, D., Tjandra, E. U., & Herawati, N. (2023). Generation Z digital leadership through social media. *Widyakala: Journal of Pembangunan Jaya University*, 10(2), 62–71. <https://doi.org/10.36262/widyakala.v10i2.779>
- Himawan, A. (2024). Kepemimpinan transformasional, humanistik dan menghargai bagi lulusan Sekolah Inspektur Polisi (SIP), terhadap Generasi Milenial dan Generasi Z. *Jurnal Litbang Polri*, 27(2), 111–120. <https://doi.org/10.46976/litbangpolri.v27i2.242>
- Jancourt, M. (2020). Generation Z and the workplace: Can we all get along? *Corporate Real Estate Journal*, 10(1), 41–50. <https://doi.org/10.69554/zirl5192>
- Jansen, A. L., & Wieland, A. (2026). Developing resilient leaders: A training for students. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 25(1), 21–28. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jole-06-2024-0073>

- Katmada, A., Komninos, N., & Kakderi, C. (2022). The landscape of digital platforms for bottom-up collaboration, creativity, and innovation creation. In N. A. Streitz & S. Konomi (Eds.), *Distributed, ambient and pervasive interactions: Smart environments, ecosystems, and cities* (pp. 28–42). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-05463-1_3
- Kazanskaia, A. N. (2025). *Mental health in leadership*. NEYA Global Publishing <https://doi.org/10.64357/mental-health-leadership-2025>
- Khairiyah, S. K., Safitri, F., Wulandari, M., Susanti, P. Z., Oktavia, S., & Fikran, A. G. (2024). The role of guidance and counseling teachers in forming the mental health of Generation Z. *Bukit Tinggi International Counselling Conference Proceeding*, 2, 97–102. <https://doi.org/10.30983/bicc.v1i1.111>
- Khawar, R., Attia, S., Zulfqar, A., & Hussain, S. (2023). Self-regulation and cognitive emotion regulation among adolescents. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 11(2), 1990–1998. <https://doi.org/10.52131/pjhss.2023.1102.0500>
- Kraght, H., & Brøndum, L. (2025). Bridging the generational divide: Soft skills and value perceptions of Generation Z in the workforce. *Journal of Innovation in Polytechnic Education*, 6(2), 41–70. <https://doi.org/10.69520/jipe.v6i2.209>
- Kwartawaty, N. N., Ismail, M. H., & Martadi, N. S. D. (2024). Most effective leadership styles for Generation Z: A review. *Formosa Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(9), 3321–3338. <https://doi.org/10.55927/fjmr.v3i9.11009>
- Laudert, E. (2018). *Generation Z: Utilizing adaptive and authentic leadership to promote intergenerational collaboration at work* [Master's thesis, University of San Diego]. University of San Diego Digital Repository. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/solesmalscap/30>
- Lazar, M.-A., Zbucnea, A., & Pînzaru, F. (2023). The emerging Generation Z workforce in the digital world: A literature review on cooperation and transformation. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Excellence*, 17(1), 1991–2001. <https://doi.org/10.2478/picbe-2023-0175>
- Lester, P. B. (2021). The role of crucibles as developmental experiences in organizations. In P. D. Harms, P. L., Perrewé, P. L., & C.-H. D. Chang (Eds.), *Examining and exploring the shifting nature of occupational stress and well-being* (pp. 47–66). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-355520210000019003>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mahayosnand, P. P., & Sabra, S. M. (2024) Generation Z: Increasing self-perceived employability and well-being through serious leisure. *GILE Journal of Skills Development*, 4(3), 87–92. <https://doi.org/10.52398/gjsd.2024.v4.i3>

- Naim, M. F. (2021). Exploring learning preferences of Generation Z employees: A conceptual analysis. In T. Gerhardt & P. J. Annon (Eds.), *Applications of work integrated learning among Generation Z and Y students* (pp. 1–14). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-6440-0.ch001>
- Nugroho, Y. A. W., Yanti, B. E. D., & Haryanto, F. (2025). A systematic literature review on workplace expectations and behavioral characteristics of Generation Z employees. *Psikostudia: Jurnal Psikologi*, 14(3), 367–375. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/psikostudia.v14i3.19486>
- Ochangco, E. L. I. (2023). Early socialization of adolescent female student leaders: Gender stereotypes, leadership purpose, and role models. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Legal Studies*, 5(2), 42–54. <https://doi.org/10.34104/ajssls.023.042054>
- Olano, M. L. R., Alfonso, J. L. C., Arpon, A. C. L., Bautista, A. B. T., Lim, C. A., Mangosing, C. M. S., & Cano, E. A. A. (2021). "Time is gold": Phenomenologizing the essence of time management on the lived experiences of medical technology student leaders. *International Journal of Progressive Research in Science and Engineering*, 2(8), 633–641. <https://journal.ijprse.com/index.php/ijprse/article/view/407>
- Olmo-Extremera, M., Townsend, A., & Segovia, J. D. (2022). Resilient leadership in principals: Case studies of challenged schools in Spain. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 28(5), 1010–1029. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2022.2052758>
- Palanski, M. E., Thomas, J. S., Hammond, M. M., Lester, G. V., & Clapp-Smith, R. (2021). Being a leader and doing leadership: The cross-domain impact of family and friends on leader identity and leader behaviors at work. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 28(3), 273–286. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15480518211005452>
- Pladdys, J. (2024). Mitigating workplace burnout through transformational leadership and employee participation in recovery experiences. *HCA Healthcare Journal of Medicine*, 5(3), 215–223. <https://doi.org/10.36518/2689-0216.1783>
- Popova, E. I. (1989). Emotional self-regulation. In K. V. Sudakov (Ed.), *Perspectives on research in emotional stress* (1st ed., pp. 227–238). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315075488-19>
- Putri, A., Darmayanti, N., & Menanti, A. (2023). Pengaruh regulasi emosi dan dukungan sosial keluarga terhadap resiliensi akademik siswa. *JIVA: Journal of Behaviour and Mental Health*, 4(1), 21–31. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30984/jiva.v4i1.2528>
- Raksithaa, S. (2026). Unlearning the past, relearning for tomorrow — A Generation Z perspective. *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, 40(1), 5–8. <https://doi.org/10.1108/DLO-10-2024-0296>

Ramón Monje, L. M., & Gorjón Gómez, F. J. (2021). Mediación para la reducción de los conflictos interpersonales en el contexto organizacional. *Justicia*, 26(39), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.17081/JUST.26.39.4690>

Richardson G. E. (2002). The metatheory of resilience and resiliency. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 58(3), 307–321. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.10020>

Roy, A., Masih, S. S., Saha, S. D., & Shaw, T. (2022). Emotional labour and sustainable leadership. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(6), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2022.v04i06.1302>

Safian, A., Ibrahim, A., Md Rami, A. A., Wan Mokhtar, W. K. A., Mohd Ghazalli, F. S., & Mat Saad, K. N. (2022). The influence of public university student leadership on democratization education in Malaysia. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 12(3), 40–49. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v12i3.20089>

Sari, D. K., & Setyadi, D. (2024). Development of resilience module for Generation Z students. *Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling Pandohop*, 42(2), 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.37304/pandohop.v4i2.14745>

Shek, D. T. L., & Wilkinson, A. D. (2022). Leadership and resilience: Where should we go next? *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 16(2), 50–55. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21817>

Sirat, M., & Wan, C. D. (2024). Higher education in Malaysia. In L. P. Symaco & M. Hayden (Eds.), *International handbook on education in Southeast Asia* (pp. 609–631). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-8136-3_14-1

Smith, B. W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008). The Brief Resilience Scale: Assessing the ability to bounce back. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 15, 194–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705500802222972>

Smith, D. D., & Grandey, A. A. (2025). Leading with humanity in the digital age: How to navigate the promise—and tensions—of technology. In D. D. Smith & A. A. Grandey (Eds.), *Emotionally charged: How to lead in the new world of work* (pp. 189–203). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197750155.003.0013>

Soliman, H. (2017). *Measuring post-secondary student resilience through the Child & Youth Resilience Measure and the Brief Resilience Scale* (Publication No. 10634503) [Master's thesis, University of Toronto]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Stover, A. D., Shulkin, J., Lac, A., & Rapp, T. (2024). A meta-analysis of cognitive reappraisal and personal resilience. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 110, 102428. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2024.102428>

- Sudorjin, O. A., & Agafonov, A. V. (2024). Impact of digitalisation on the structure of youth political leadership. *Upravlenie / Management*, 12(3), 111–120. <https://doi.org/10.26425/2309-3633-2024-12-3-111-120>
- Suprpto, S. A. P. (2020). Pengaruh religiusitas terhadap resiliensi pada santri pondok pesantren. *Cognicia*, 8(1), 69–78. <https://doi.org/10.22219/cognicia.v8i1.11738>
- Tjiptono, F., Khan, G., Yeong, E. S., & Kunchambo, V. (2020). Generation Z in Malaysia: The four 'E' generation. In E. Gentina & E. Parry (Eds.), *The new Generation Z in Asia: Dynamics, differences, digitalisation* (1st ed., pp. 149–166). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80043-220-820201015>
- Toh, S. -Y., Lim, S. -L., Kaur, R., & Too, C. -T. (2022). Can the leadership sense of duty of Generation Z be bought? Evidence from Malaysian Generation Z students. *Business Perspectives and Research* 13(2), 279–290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/22785337221119589>
- Turner, A. (2015). Generation Z: Technology and social interest. *The Journal of Individual Psychology*, 71(2), 103–113. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jip.2015.0021>
- Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy—and completely unprepared for adulthood—and what that means for the rest of us*. Atria Books.
- Wan Yakob, W. R., & Don, Y. (2025). Influence of digital leadership on Malaysian public university branding: Professionals' identity as mediator. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 14(1), 124–132. <http://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v14i1.28286>
- Warren, V., & Bell, R. (2022). The role of context in qualitative case study research: Understanding service innovation. In *SAGE research methods cases part 1*. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529604467>
- Yuananda, D. P., & Alfianto, E. A. (2025). Gaya kepemimpinan situasional pada motivasi kerja karyawan Generasi X, Y dan Z: Studi pada PT. Blue Ocean Heart Area B Malang. *Al-Kharaj: Jurnal Ekonomi, Keuangan dan Bisnis Syariah*, 7(7), 2941–2947. <https://doi.org/10.47467/alkharaj.v7i7.8982>
- Yunus, N., Tamam, E., Bolong, J., Adzharuddin, N. A., & Ibrahim, F. (2017). Validation of intercultural sensitivity three-factor model in Malaysian context. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 33, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20173300049>
- Zhang, R. (2024). A comprehensive study on the resilience of organizational leadership in the VUCA era. *Modern Economic Management Forum*, 2(3), 24–27. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18686/memf.v2i3.4536>

Zuhrufillah, I., & Putri, P. L. (2024). Pengaruh kepemimpinan digital pada keunggulan bersaing Generasi Z Jawa Tengah. *Applied Research in Management and Business Journal*, 4(1), 41–49. <https://doi.org/10.53416/arimbi.v4i1.249>