



Job Characteristics, Affective Commitment, and Turnover Intentions: A Dual-Theory Examination of Generation Z

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Abstract

This study investigates the extent to which core job characteristics—autonomy, task identity, task significance, and skill variety— influence affective commitment and turnover intentions among Generation Z employees in Vietnam. Based on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) and Conservation of Resources (COR) theoretical frameworks, the study seeks to elucidate how early-career employees interpret job resources within a collectivist, hierarchical, and resource-constrained environment. A structured quantitative design was employed, drawing on survey data from 312 Gen Z respondents across diverse organizational settings. Measurement validity and reliability were established via Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Cronbach's Alpha, while hypotheses were tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Empirical findings reveal that task identity exerts a negative influence on affective commitment, whereas autonomy, task identity, and skill variety are positively associated with turnover intentions. Task significance demonstrates no significant effect on either outcome. Conversely, affective commitment emerges as a strong inverse predictor of turnover intentions, underscoring its role as a stabilizing psychological resource. This research contributes to the existing literature by integrating JD-R and COR theories to challenge the presumed universality of job resource effects. It underscores the contextual sensitivity of job design, particularly for younger cohorts in emerging markets. The findings offer practical implications for designing culturally and generationally responsive retention strategies.

Keywords:

Generation Z;
Affective Commitment;
Turnover Intentions;
Job Characteristics;
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1- Introduction

In today's dynamic organizational landscape, the rise of Generation Z (born 1997–2013) as the emerging workforce brings both opportunities and challenges for talent management, particularly in emerging economies. Often described as “digital natives,” Gen Z employees are shaped by rapid technological advancements and shifting socio-economic values. Unlike previous generations, their work-related priorities emphasize personal development, meaningful contributions, social responsibility, and work-life balance—placing less emphasis on job security or hierarchical advancement [1-3].

These evolving expectations present new imperatives for organizations to re-evaluate traditional job design and retention strategies. While substantial literature has addressed organizational commitment and turnover intentions, most research has focused on older generations or Western labor markets. Studies examining the work attitudes of Gen Z—especially in collectivist, hierarchical, and resource-constrained settings—remain limited. Moreover, job characteristics such as autonomy, task identity, task significance, and skill variety, derived from Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model [4], have been well studied in mature labor markets but have not been extensively validated

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among younger cohorts in emerging economies. Although the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory [5] has been applied to various motivational contexts, its application to early-career job resources remain underdeveloped, particularly in relation to affective commitment and turnover decisions [6].

Recent studies have increasingly questioned the universal applicability of job design theories across generational cohorts. Evidence suggests that younger employees, including Gen Z and Millennials, differ markedly from previous generations in how they perceive job features and assign value to intrinsic versus extrinsic work factors [7, 8]. These generational shifts are often linked to changing societal values, career expectations, and orientations toward autonomy, structure, and meaning. However, few studies have systematically integrated such generational insights into established motivational frameworks, particularly in non-Western labor markets. While JD-R theory conceptualizes job resources as drivers of motivation [5], and COR theory views them as protective buffers against resource depletion, limited research has examined how these roles may vary depending on generational identity, career stage, or cultural context.

To address these gaps, this study integrates the JD-R and Conservation of Resources (COR) theories to examine how job characteristics function as job resources influencing affective commitment and turnover intentions among Gen Z employees in Vietnam. By focusing on a cohort navigating the earliest stages of their careers, the study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how job attributes are interpreted under specific socio-cultural and economic conditions. Notably, it reconceptualizes job resources as context-sensitive constructs, challenging assumptions that autonomy or skill variety are inherently motivational.

This research contributes in three keyways. First, it investigates whether task significance—often underemphasized in empirical models—plays a more salient role than autonomy or skill variety in fostering affective commitment. Second, it repositions job characteristics within the JD-R and COR frameworks as generationally and culturally contingent, rather than universally static. Third, it raises important questions regarding the relative influence of job resources versus personal traits in shaping turnover behavior in emerging labor markets.

To that end, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

- RQ1. How do job characteristics (e.g., autonomy, task identity, task significance, skill variety) influence affective commitment and turnover intentions among early-career Gen Z employees?
- RQ2. Which job characteristic contributes most significantly to affective commitment in this demographic?
- RQ3. How do job resources interact with individual and contextual factors, such as cultural norms or career orientation, to shape workplace adaptation?
- RQ4. What implications do these dynamics hold for organizational design and employee retention in emerging economies

By situating this inquiry in Vietnam—an emerging economy characterized by collectivism, hierarchy, and fast-paced digitalization—the study provides timely insights for scholars and practitioners seeking to understand how new generations interpret work, commit to organizations, and decide whether to stay or leave.

Considering these questions, the study pursues three interrelated objectives: (1) to assess how job characteristics influence affective commitment and turnover intentions; (2) to evaluate which job attribute most strongly predicts organizational attachment among Gen Z; and (3) to explore how these dynamics unfold within the cultural and institutional context of Vietnam as a representative emerging economy.

The remainder of this paper is organized into five sections. Section 2 provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature and outlines the theoretical foundations that guide the study. Section 3 describes the research methodology, including the sampling strategy, data collection procedures, and analytical techniques employed. Section 4 presents the empirical results derived from the data analysis. Section 5 offers an in-depth interpretation of the findings and discusses their theoretical and practical implications. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper by summarizing the key contributions, acknowledging its limitations, and proposing directions for future research.

1-1- Theoretical Background

This study draws upon two complementary theoretical foundations—the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory—to examine how job characteristics shape affective commitment and turnover intentions among Generation Z employees in an emerging economy.

The COR theory provides a foundational lens through which to understand how individuals acquire, preserve, and protect valued resources in the face of stress and uncertainty [9]. In organizational contexts, these resources may include tangible assets (e.g., time, support) and intangible qualities (e.g., autonomy, recognition). When such resources are perceived as insufficient or threatened, employees experience strain, disengagement, and may ultimately develop turnover intentions. COR theory thus positions job characteristics as potential protective or depleting factors, depending on how they interact with employees' perceived ability to cope with workplace demands. Notably, younger employees—such as those in Generation Z—may be especially sensitive to resource depletion due to limited experience, role ambiguity, and evolving career identities, particularly within volatile environments like emerging economies [9].

In parallel, JD-R theory conceptualizes job design through a dual-path model, where job resources enhance motivation and job demands induce strain. Central to this theory is the notion that job resources—such as autonomy, task identity, and skill variety—stimulate engagement, foster development, and reduce turnover by supporting goal achievement and psychological growth [10]. However, JD-R assumes a relatively stable environment in which employees possess sufficient personal and structural resources to activate these benefits. The impact of these resources is also contingent on socio-cultural norms, career stage, and individual coping capacities [11].

While both theories emphasize the salience of resources, they diverge in scope and focus: COR is inherently stress-oriented and centers on resource loss and protection, whereas JD-R is motivation-driven and highlights how resource access fuels performance and engagement. Integrating these perspectives allows for a more nuanced account of how the same job characteristic may serve as a motivational enhancer (JD-R) or a stressor (COR), depending on contextual and individual contingencies [12].

The rationale for combining JD-R and COR lies in the complexity of Gen Z's resource evaluation. As digital natives raised in dynamic environments, Gen Z employees simultaneously seek autonomy and clarity, variety and structure, meaning and security. These dualities make it inadequate to view job characteristics through a unidimensional lens. By integrating COR, the present study captures Gen Z's sensitivity to resource threats, especially when autonomy or skill variety are introduced without sufficient support. Conversely, JD-R offers insight into how these same resources can be motivationally catalytic when embedded within enabling structures [13].

This dual-theory framework is especially salient in emerging economies like Vietnam, where hierarchical norms, limited organizational support systems, and economic precarity create complex conditions for resource interpretation. For early-career Gen Z employees in such settings, job characteristics may not function as universally beneficial motivators but as contingent variables—resources that require alignment with both individual capacity and institutional context. Therefore, integrating JD-R and COR enables a culturally and developmentally sensitive examination of how job attributes influence organizational attachment and departure intentions [14].

This theoretical foundation supports the study's three core objectives: (1) to assess how job characteristics influence affective commitment and turnover intentions among early-career employees; (2) to evaluate which job attribute plays the most critical role in fostering organizational attachment; and (3) to examine how these dynamics unfold within Vietnam's collectivist, emerging-economy context—where institutional structures, generational expectations, and labor market uncertainties uniquely shape the meaning and impact of job resources.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study, which outlines the hypothesized relationships among job characteristics, affective commitment, and turnover intentions.

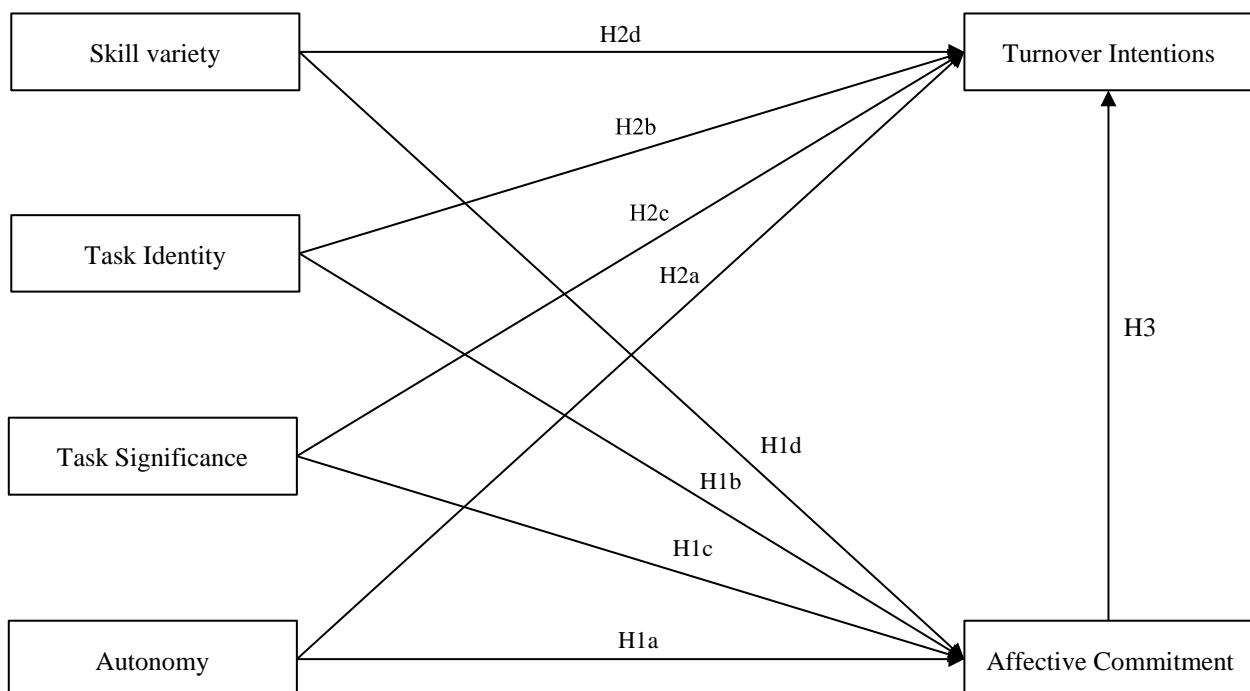


Figure 1. Research Model

2- Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2-1- Job Characteristics and Affective Commitment

Job characteristics refer to the inherent attributes of a job that influence employees' psychological states and work behaviors. According to Job Characteristics Model (JCM) [15], five core job dimensions—skill variety, task

significance, task identity, autonomy, and feedback—have a significant impact on employee motivation, performance, and job satisfaction. Skill variety, task identity, and task significance foster psychological states that make work more meaningful, while autonomy encourages responsibility for job outcomes, and feedback provides employees with an awareness of their actual performance [15]. These dimensions play a pivotal role in shaping employees' engagement and commitment, which are essential for both individual performance and organizational success [16]. Additionally, the importance of these dimensions is further reinforced by recent research, which suggests that job autonomy and task significance are directly linked to higher levels of organizational commitment and improved work outcomes [17, 18].

Shifting focus to Affective Commitment, this concept is recognized as the emotional attachment that employees develop towards their organization, characterized by a desire to stay because of a genuine connection to the organization's goals and values [19]. Affective commitment has been identified as a critical driver of organizational behavior, influencing employees' motivation, retention, and organizational citizenship behaviors [20]. Research has consistently shown that positive job characteristics can lead to enhanced affective commitment, fostering employees' intrinsic motivation and overall job satisfaction [16]. For example, job autonomy enhances employees' feelings of empowerment and responsibility, which has been linked to increased emotional attachment and improved commitment to organizational values [17].

However, while there is extensive research on how job characteristics influence affective commitment, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning Generation Z (Gen Z)—the cohort born between 1997 and 2013. Gen Z employees, who are at the beginning stages of their careers, display unique work preferences and values that set them apart from previous generations. Unlike older generations, Gen Z places significant value on flexibility, personal development, and work-life balance, and they prioritize autonomy in their roles [21, 22]. Moreover, their deep connection with digital technology influences their perception of work and their expectations of the workplace environment [23]. These generational differences suggest that traditional job characteristics may not fully capture the factors that drive Gen Z's organizational commitment and turnover intentions.

This research gap is particularly relevant for understanding how Gen Z's unique characteristics influence their interaction with job characteristics and how these interactions subsequently affect their affective commitment. While much of the existing research focuses on older generations or broad job attributes, little attention has been paid to how Gen Z's values—such as the importance of flexibility and autonomy—affect their emotional attachment to organizations during the early stages of their careers. Recent studies have pointed out that Gen Z is less likely to view long-term tenure as a priority, making them more susceptible to turnover unless their job experiences align with their values and career goals [24]. Therefore, it is critical to explore how specific job characteristics, such as autonomy and task significance, influence affective commitment in this generational group.

Given these insights, this study proposes the following hypotheses to address the existing research gap and explore the relationships between job characteristics and affective commitment for Gen Z employees:

H1a: Autonomy is hypothesized to influence affective commitment.

H1b: Task identity is hypothesized to influence affective commitment.

H1c: Task significance is hypothesized to influence affective commitment.

H1d: Skill variety is hypothesized to influence affective commitment.

This research aims to provide valuable insights into how Gen Z's work preferences interact with job resources, offering practical implications for organizations seeking to enhance employee engagement and retention in this emerging cohort.

2-2-Job Characteristics and Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions refer to an employee's desire to leave an organization, driven by dissatisfaction with their current job or the pursuit of better opportunities. These intentions can be divided into two types: voluntary turnover, where employees leave by choice due to dissatisfaction with their job, poor career prospects, or personal reasons; and involuntary turnover, where employees are forced to leave due to factors such as organizational restructuring or poor performance [25]. The desire to quit typically arises from dissatisfaction with the current role, unmet expectations, and the need for more fulfilling job conditions [26]. These turnover intentions reflect a direct response to job dissatisfaction, highlighting the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to such dissatisfaction.

Job characteristics are critical factors that influence employees' turnover intentions. According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, job resources such as autonomy, task significance, and skill variety can help employees manage job demands, increase job satisfaction, and reduce turnover intentions [11]. When job characteristics align with employees' expectations and needs, they feel more engaged and satisfied, which in turn reduces their likelihood of leaving the organization. In contrast, a lack of adequate job resources can lead to dissatisfaction, motivating employees to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Autonomy, or the control employees have over their work processes, is also a critical factor in reducing turnover intentions. Research indicates that employees who are given autonomy are more likely to be motivated and committed to their work, decreasing the likelihood of leaving [27]. On the other hand, a lack of autonomy can lead to frustration and a feeling of helplessness, which are key predictors of turnover intentions.

Task identity, the extent to which employees can complete a whole and identifiable piece of work, influences how connected employees feel to their roles. This sense of completion and accomplishment can increase job satisfaction and commitment, reducing turnover intentions [20]. When employees see a direct connection between their efforts and the outcomes of their work, they are more likely to remain with the organization.

Task significance is the degree to which employees perceive their work as meaningful and important. Research has shown that employees who perceive their work as significant are more likely to feel a sense of purpose and job satisfaction, reducing turnover intentions [28]. When employees feel that their work contributes to broader organizational or societal goals, they are less likely to leave [29].

Skill variety - the extent to which employees perform a variety of tasks requiring different skills—reduces monotony and increases job satisfaction. When employees feel their abilities are underutilized, they may become disengaged and more likely to explore other job options [15]. Similarly, task significance, the degree to which employees perceive their work as meaningful, has been shown to lower turnover intentions by fostering job satisfaction and a sense of purpose [28]. Employees who feel that their work is valuable are more likely to stay with the organization.

Put it simply, job characteristics significantly impact turnover intentions by influencing employees' job satisfaction, engagement, and motivation. Positive job characteristics, such as autonomy, skill variety, and task significance, reduce dissatisfaction and increase retention. In contrast, the absence of these characteristics can increase dissatisfaction and lead to heightened turnover intentions.

While the relationship between job characteristics and turnover intentions is well-documented, the dynamics of these relationships within Generation Z (Gen Z) employees—those born between 1997 and 2013—remain largely unexplored. Gen Z employees differ significantly from older generations in their work preferences. They place a strong emphasis on flexibility, autonomy, and work-life balance [21]. Unlike previous generations, who prioritized job stability and long-term tenure, Gen Z values personal development, work flexibility, and aligning their values with those of the organization [22]. These differences suggest that Gen Z's perceptions of job characteristics and their turnover intentions may differ from those of older generations.

Although much of the existing literature focuses on older generations, the specific preferences of Gen Z—especially their demand for autonomy, work-life balance, and flexibility—have not been sufficiently addressed in relation to turnover intentions. These generationally distinct preferences create a gap in the literature, highlighting the need for research on how Gen Z's values shape their responses to job characteristics and influence their turnover intentions.

To address this gap, this study seeks to explore how specific job characteristics influence turnover intentions among Gen Z employees. Based on existing research on job characteristics and turnover intentions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a: Autonomy is hypothesized to influence turnover intentions.

H2b: Task identity is hypothesized to influence turnover intentions.

H2c: Task significance is hypothesized to influence turnover intentions.

H2d: Skill variety is hypothesized to influence turnover intentions.

In short, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into how job characteristics influence turnover intentions among Gen Z employees, particularly in the context of their unique values and expectations. By examining these relationships, this study aims to offer practical recommendations for organizations to design jobs that meet Gen Z's needs, improving engagement and reducing turnover intentions in this emerging workforce.

2-3-Affective Commitment and Turnover Intentions

Affective commitment refers to emotional attachment, identification with, and involvement in an organization. Employees who experience high levels of affective commitment genuinely care about the organization and its goals, and they are motivated to stay with the organization due to their sense of belonging and alignment with its values [19]. This type of commitment is intrinsically motivated, as employees are emotionally invested in their work, leading to stronger engagement, greater job satisfaction, and long-term retention [20].

The impact of affective commitment on turnover intentions is well-documented in the literature. Generally, affective commitment acts as a negative predictor of turnover intentions. Employees who are emotionally attached to their organization are less likely to leave because they value their relationship with the organization and want to remain for the long term [19]. High affective commitment fosters positive behaviors, such as organizational citizenship behaviors, loyalty, and job satisfaction, all of which reduce the likelihood of turnover [30]. However, there are cases where

employees with high affective commitment may still leave if they perceive a misalignment between their personal and organizational values or if job conditions no longer meet their expectations [27]. Therefore, while affective commitment generally mitigates turnover intentions, other factors, such as job dissatisfaction or external opportunities, may override its effects.

When focusing on Generation Z (Gen Z)—those born between 1997 and 2013—the relationship between affective commitment and turnover intentions is influenced by the distinct characteristics and values of this cohort. Gen Z tends to prioritize flexibility, autonomy, and the alignment of personal and professional values [21]. Unlike previous generations, who typically valued job stability and long-term tenure, Gen Z is more likely to seek organizations that offer work-life balance, opportunities for personal development, and roles that align with their evolving needs [22]. This generational shift indicates that affective commitment may not have the same impact on turnover intentions as it did for previous generations. While affective commitment may still foster loyalty among Gen Z employees, their turnover intentions might also be shaped by the organization's ability to meet their expectations for flexibility and growth opportunities. Therefore, the relationship between affective commitment and turnover intentions for Gen Z employees may be moderated by factors such as work-life balance, personal alignment with organizational goals, and the availability of developmental opportunities.

This generational difference creates a significant research gap in understanding how affective commitment influences turnover intentions in Gen Z employees, especially in relation to their specific values and expectations from work environments. To address this gap, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H3: Affective is hypothesized to influence turnover intentions.

In conclusion, affective commitment generally reduces turnover intentions, but for Gen Z, this relationship may be influenced by their unique expectations and values. This research seeks to explore how affective commitment affects turnover intentions in Gen Z and provide practical recommendations for organizations to better meet the needs of this emerging workforce.

3- Research Methodology

3-1- Research Process

This study adopted a structured research process comprising seven key steps (see Figure 2). First, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to develop the conceptual model based on COR and JD-R theories. Next, a survey questionnaire was constructed using validated scales and refined through pilot testing for clarity and contextual appropriateness. Convenience sampling was used to distribute the survey via HR channels to Generation Z employees. Over a four-week period, 250 valid responses were collected and screened for completeness. The measurement model was assessed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha) in SPSS. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was then performed using AMOS to test the hypothesized relationships and evaluate model fit. Finally, the results were interpreted in light of the Vietnamese Gen Z workforce context to draw theoretical and practical implications for enhancing affective commitment and reducing turnover intentions.

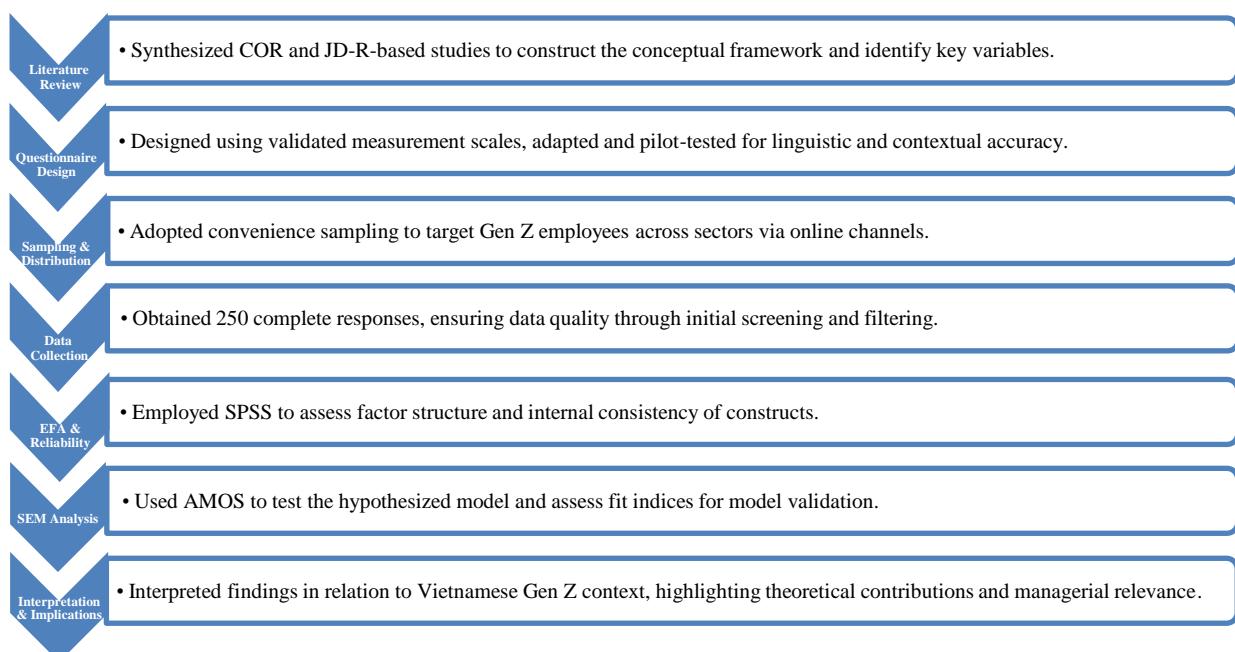


Figure 2. Research process

3-2- Measures and Questionnaire Development

All variables in this study were measured using previously validated scales, adapted to the context of early-career Generation Z employees in emerging economies (see Table 1). Job characteristics were assessed using four core dimensions from Job Characteristics Model model: skill variety, task identity, task significance, and autonomy - each measured by three items capturing perceived task diversity, clarity, meaningfulness, and autonomy [4].

Affective commitment was measured with four items [19], reflecting employees' emotional attachment and identification with the organization. Turnover intentions were assessed using three items [31, 32], indicating respondents' intention and effort to leave their current job.

All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) for consistency and ease of interpretation among Generation Z respondents (see Table 1). A pilot test with six participants was conducted to assess face and content validity, resulting in minor linguistic adjustments. The finalized questionnaire comprised two sections: (1) demographic information (e.g., age, tenure, company size), and (2) measurement items corresponding to each latent construct. This structure facilitated clarity and response accuracy, thereby enhancing the instrument's overall validity.

Table 1. Items and variables

Items	Statements	Sources
	<i>Affective commitment</i>	
AC1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.	
AC2	I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	Meyer & Allen [19]; Meyer et al. [33]
AC3	I feel like "part of the family" at my organization.	
AC4	I feel "emotionally attached" to this organization	
	<i>Task Identity</i>	
TID1	The job involves doing a "whole" and identifiable piece of work and it is a complete piece of work that has an obvious beginning and end.	
TID2	The job is arranged so that I can do an entire piece of work from beginning to end.	Hackman & Oldham Model [4]
TID3	The job provides me the chance to finish the pieces of work I begin	
	<i>Task Significance</i>	
TS1	The job is significant or important, and the results of your work are likely to significantly affect the lives or well-being of other people.	
TS2	The job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well the work gets done.	Hackman & Oldham Model [4]
TS3	This job is very important in the overall functioning of the organization	
	<i>Skill Variety</i>	
SV1	The job requires me to do many different things at work, using a variety of my skills and talents.	
SV2	The job requires me to use several complex or high-level skills.	Hackman & Oldham Model [4]
SV3	The job is quite complex and requires that I engage in several different tasks.	
	<i>Autonomy</i>	
AT1	The job provides autonomy and permits you to decide on your own how to go about doing the work.	
AT2	The job gives me a chance to use my personal initiative or judgment in carrying out the work.	Hackman & Oldham Model [4]
AT3	The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work.	
	<i>Turnover Intentions</i>	
TI1	I intend to leave the organization.	
TI2	I intend to make a genuine effort to find another job over the next few months.	Lance [31] and Khatri et al. [32]
TI3	I often think about quitting.	

3-3- Data

This study employed stratified random sampling to obtain a representative and unbiased sample of Generation Z employees across various organizations in Vietnam. Stratification was based on key demographic and occupational characteristics, including job role, tenure, and department, which are known to influence perceptions of job characteristics, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. Within each stratum, participants were randomly selected using a computerized generator to reduce selection bias and enhance the generalizability of the results.

The sampling frame included ten companies across diverse industries—technology, healthcare, education, and retail—selected based on their willingness to participate and ability to provide access to eligible employees. Human Resources departments facilitated the distribution of an online questionnaire link to targeted Gen Z staff within each organization. This structured approach ensured broad coverage of relevant employee subgroups.

A total of 312 questionnaires were distributed, yielding 250 valid responses after data screening and cleaning. This resulted in a high response rate of 80.12%, which strengthens data reliability and minimizes non-response bias. The final sample size meets the recommended threshold for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), as a sample of 200–300 respondents is typically sufficient to ensure robust estimation and model stability [34].

By combining rigorous sampling procedures with a high response rate, the study ensured both the validity and reliability of its findings. The resulting dataset offers strong empirical support for analyzing the hypothesized relationships among job characteristics, affective commitment, and turnover intentions within the context of Vietnam's Generation Z workforce.

3-4- Sample Characteristics

This study surveyed 250 Generation Z employees currently working across various sectors in Vietnam (see Table 2). The sample reflects a predominantly young and early-career workforce, with 64.8% aged 18–20 and 35.2% aged 21–25. Most respondents (67.6%) were interns with less than one year of experience, followed by specialists (18%), employees with 1–3 years of experience (13.6%), and a small proportion of managers (0.8%).

In terms of gender, 71.2% identified as male and 28.8% as female. The majority were employed in small enterprises (56%), while 26.8% worked in medium-sized firms, and the rest in micro (8.8%) and large enterprises (8.4%). Geographically, 71.2% were based in the Northern region, 28.4% in the South, and only 0.4% in the Central region. Most participants were single (71.2%) and held a university degree (93.6%). Regarding digital literacy, 84% reported basic IT proficiency. In terms of organizational tenure, 45.2% had worked for 3–6 months, and 26.8% for 6–12 months.

Overall, the sample provides a relevant and representative profile of early-career Generation Z employees in Vietnam, making it suitable for examining job perceptions and work-related attitudes.

Table 2. Demographic profile of respondents

Demographics	Respondents' details	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Age	18–20 years (2003–2005)	162	64.8
	21–25 years (1998–2002)	88	35.2
Work Position	Intern (less than 1 year experience)	169	67.6
	Employee (1-3 years experience)	34	13.6
	Specialist (3-5 years experience)	45	18.0
Gender	Manager (5-10 years experience)	2	0.8
	Male	178	71.2
	Female	72	28.8
Company size	Other	0	0
	Micro Enterprise (less than 10 employees)	22	8.8
	Small Enterprise (10 to 50 employees)	140	56.0
	Medium Enterprise (50 to 200 employees)	67	26.8
Region	Large Enterprise (over 200 employees)	21	8.4
	Northern Region	178	71.2
	Southern Region	71	28.4
Marital Status	Central Region	1	0.4
	Single	178	71.2
	Married	70	28.0
Education	Divorced	2	0.8
	Intermediate, College	12	4.8
	University	234	93.6
Information Technology Skills	Postgraduate	4	1.6
	Basic	210	84.0
	Advanced	35	14.0
Tenure	Expert	5	2.0
	Less than three months	24	9.6
	Three to six months	113	45.2
	Six to twelve months	67	26.8
	One to three years	23	9.2
	More than three years	23	9.2

3-5-Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 22 and AMOS to examine reliability, validity, and structural relationships among constructs. First, internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with all scales exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 [34]. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), conducted via Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation, confirmed the dimensionality of each construct. Items with factor loadings below 0.50 were excluded to improve convergent validity.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was then employed to test the hypothesized relationships between job characteristics, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. Model fit was evaluated using standard indices: $\chi^2/df < 3$, CFI and TLI > 0.90 , and RMSEA < 0.08 , in accordance with Hair et al. (2010). The model also allowed for testing both direct and indirect (mediated) effects at a 5% significance level.

To ensure the robustness of the model, additional diagnostics were conducted, including multicollinearity checks ($VIF < 3$), effect size analysis (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). These procedures provided comprehensive support for the model's explanatory power and statistical validity.

4- Results and Discussion

4-1-Analytical Approach

This study adopted quantitative research design and applied Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS and SPSS version 22 to evaluate the measurement and structural models. SEM was chosen due to its capability to analyze complex relationships among latent constructs—namely, job characteristics, affective commitment, and turnover intentions—while also addressing potential multivariate normality issues inherent in survey data.

Preliminary analyses were conducted in SPSS, including descriptive statistics, internal consistency testing via Cronbach's Alpha, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation. These procedures ensured the validity and reliability of measurement scales before proceeding to the SEM phase [34]. Model fit and hypothesis testing were subsequently conducted in AMOS using multiple fit indices and path analysis.

4-2- Measurement Model Results

Reliability and construct validity of the measurement scales were evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Internal consistency was confirmed, with all constructs exceeding the recommended Cronbach's Alpha threshold of 0.70 [34]. Affective commitment demonstrated the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.936$), followed by task identity ($\alpha = 0.866$), task significance ($\alpha = 0.814$), turnover intentions ($\alpha = 0.835$), skill variety ($\alpha = 0.748$), and autonomy ($\alpha = 0.716$), indicating acceptable to excellent scale reliability.

To examine dimensionality, EFA was conducted using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. Six distinct factors emerged, corresponding precisely with the six theoretical constructs. All factor loadings ranged from 0.678 to 0.922, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50 [34]. Items loaded strongly onto their intended factors, demonstrating both convergent and discriminant validity. For instance, affective commitment items consistently loaded above 0.89 on a single factor, while items for task identity, task significance, skill variety, turnover intentions, and autonomy each formed clearly defined and separate dimensions.

These results confirm the robustness of the measurement model, supporting its suitability for subsequent structural model testing. Detailed reliability values and item-level factor loadings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Internal consistency and factor loadings of measurement items (EFA results)

Variables	Codes	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor					
			1	2	3	4	5	6
Affective commitment	AC4	0.936	0.922					
	AC1		0.900					
	AC2		0.896					
	AC3		0.894					
Task Identity	TID3	0.866		0.882				
	TID1		0.866	0.872				
	TID2			0.835				
Task Significance	TS2	0.814			0.908			
	TS1		0.814		0.817			
	TS3				0.811			
Skill Variety	SV2	0.748				0.802		
	SV1		0.748			0.789		
	SV3					0.773		

	TI1		0.893
Turnover Intentions	TI2	0.835	0.754
	TI3		0.678
	AT3		0.818
Autonomy	AT2	0.716	0.770
	AT1		0.747

4-3- Structural Model Results

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted to examine the hypothesized relationships among the latent constructs: autonomy (AT), task identity (TID), task significance (TS), skill variety (SV), affective commitment (AC), and turnover intentions (TI). Figure 3 presents the final model, including standardized path coefficients and overall model fit indices.

The model demonstrated a good fit to the data, with $\chi^2 = 261.962$, $df = 137$, and $\chi^2/df = 1.912$ —well below the recommended threshold of 3 [34]. Additional fit indices further supported model adequacy: CFI = 0.950, TLI = 0.937, and RMSEA = 0.061, all within accepted cut-off values (CFI, TLI > 0.90; RMSEA < 0.08).

Standardized factor loadings for all observed variables ranged from 0.61 to 0.97, exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.50 and confirming strong convergent validity. In particular, affective commitment items exhibited high loadings (≥ 0.89), reinforcing their measurement strength.

Path analysis revealed differential effects among job characteristics and outcomes. Affective commitment had a significant negative effect on turnover intentions ($\beta = -0.39$), confirming its central role in employee retention. Meanwhile, other job characteristics displayed varying levels of influence, reflecting the complexity of motivational dynamics. The model explained 53% of the variance in turnover intentions ($R^2 = 0.53$) and 8% in affective commitment ($R^2 = 0.08$), indicating moderate to strong explanatory power.

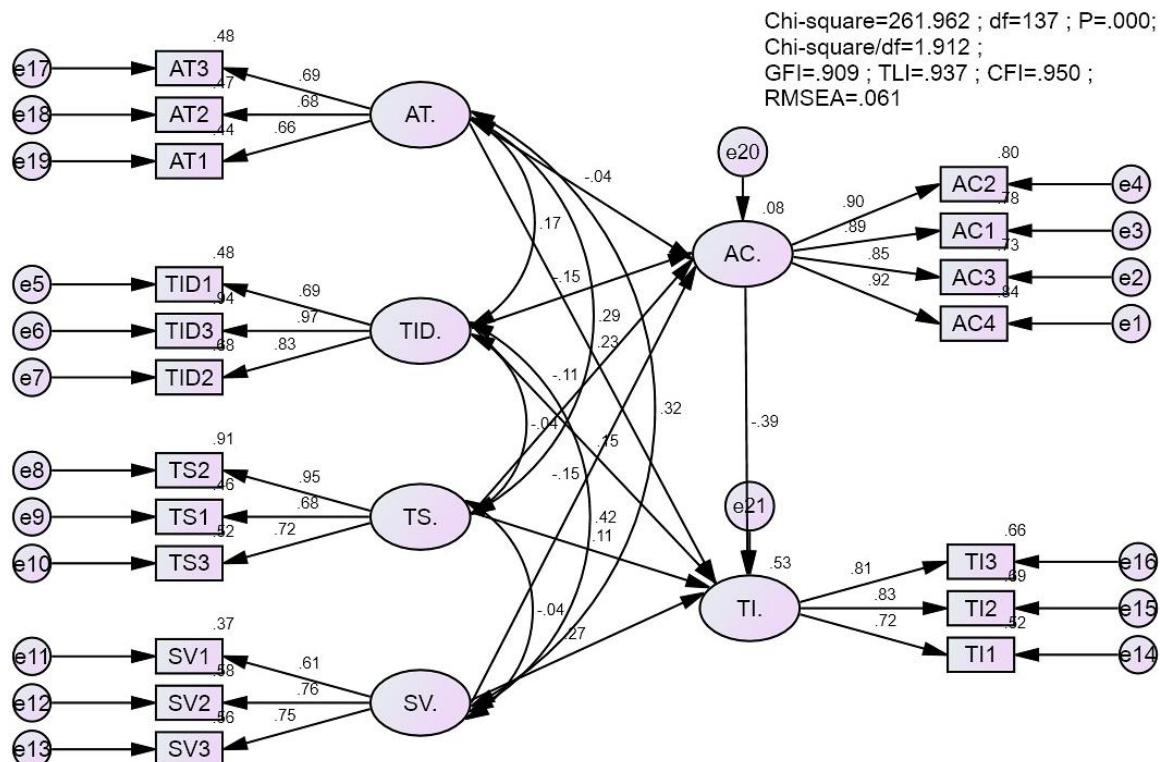


Figure 3. Structural equation modeling results

These findings offer robust empirical support for the proposed model. Detailed hypothesis testing results, including standardized coefficients and significance levels, are presented and discussed in the next section.

4-4- Hypotheses Testing Results

Table 4 summarizes the results of hypotheses testing using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), providing statistical evidence for the acceptance or rejection of each hypothesized relationship. Critical ratios (CR) and p-values were assessed at a 5% significance level to determine statistical support.

Among the paths predicting affective commitment (AC), only task identity (TID) demonstrated a significant negative effect (H1b: $\beta = -0.221$; CR = -2.047 ; p = 0.041), supporting hypothesis H1b. This suggests that, in this context, higher task identity may reduce affective commitment—possibly due to the pressure of ownership or responsibility perceived by younger employees. In contrast, autonomy (H1a: $\beta = -0.053$; p = 0.686), task significance (H1c: $\beta = -0.119$; p = 0.127), and skill variety (H1d: $\beta = -0.244$; p = 0.088) did not significantly affect affective commitment. Therefore, hypotheses H1a, H1c, and H1d were rejected.

Regarding turnover intentions (TI), autonomy (H2a: $\beta = 0.285$; p = 0.003), task identity (H2b: $\beta = 0.179$; p = 0.018), and skill variety (H2d: $\beta = 0.347$; p < 0.001) were positively and significantly associated with higher turnover intentions, supporting hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2d. These findings suggest that although these job characteristics are often considered motivating factors, they may also elevate departure intentions—potentially due to job complexity, insufficient support, or unrealistic expectations among early-career employees. Task significance (H2c: $\beta = 0.094$; p = 0.085) was not significant, leading to rejection of H2c.

Finally, affective commitment exerted a significant negative influence on turnover intentions (H3: $\beta = -0.317$; CR = -6.159 ; p < 0.001), strongly supporting H3 and reinforcing its protective role in employee retention.

Table 4. Structural Path Estimates and Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Estimate (β)	SE	CR	p-value	Decision
H1a	AC \leftarrow AT	-0.053	0.131	-0.404	0.686	Not supported
H1b	AC \leftarrow TID	-0.221	0.108	-2.047	0.041	Supported
H1c	AC \leftarrow TS	-0.119	0.078	-1.526	0.127	Not supported
H1d	AC \leftarrow SV	-0.244	0.143	-1.708	0.088	Not supported
H2a	TI \leftarrow AT	0.285	0.095	3.006	0.003	Supported
H2b	TI \leftarrow TID	0.179	0.076	2.363	0.018	Supported
H2c	TI \leftarrow TS	0.094	0.054	1.725	0.085	Not supported
H2d	TI \leftarrow SV	0.347	0.105	3.301	<0.001	Supported
H3	TI \leftarrow AC	-0.317	0.052	-6.159	<0.001	Supported

Note: $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance. CR = Critical Ratio; SE = Standard Error; β = Standardized Path Coefficient.

In summary, the findings confirm the central role of affective commitment in reducing turnover intentions (H3) and highlight the complex effects of job characteristics. While task identity and skill variety positively influenced turnover intentions, only task identity negatively affected affective commitment. These nuanced results underscore the need for tailored human resource strategies when managing Generation Z employees.

5- Discussion

This study examined the influence of specific job characteristics on affective commitment and turnover intentions among Generation Z employees in Vietnam, grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) and Conservation of Resources (COR) theories. The findings provide empirical insight into how autonomy, task identity, task significance, and skill variety are interpreted by early-career employees and how these interpretations shape their emotional attachment and intention to remain with the organization.

Hypothesis H1a examined the relationship between autonomy and affective commitment among Generation Z employees in Vietnam; however, this was not supported ($\beta = -0.053$; p = 0.686). Previous studies rooted in JD-R theory have consistently shown that autonomy positively influences affective commitment by promoting psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and ownership of one's work [16, 17, 22]. These findings are largely based on Western and individualistic contexts, where employees tend to value independence and self-direction. In contrast, the current study's null result may reflect the cultural and generational realities in Vietnam. Gen Z employees in hierarchical, collectivist contexts may not perceive autonomy as a desirable job resource, especially if it is introduced without sufficient guidance or structural support. From a COR perspective, autonomy without scaffolding may represent a potential resource loss rather than a gain [35, 36]. Given Gen Z's limited experience and high need for direction during early career stages, unstructured autonomy can create uncertainty and emotional fatigue, reducing their affective commitment. This highlights the importance of pairing autonomy with mentoring, clear task expectations, and culturally responsive supervision.

Hypothesis H1b assessed the relationship between task identity and affective commitment, and it was statistically significant but unexpectedly negative ($\beta = -0.221$; p = 0.041). Prior research has suggested that task identity enhances affective commitment by enabling employees to derive meaning and coherence from completing a whole and identifiable task [17, 22]. However, the present result deviates from this view and suggests a more complex interaction. Among Vietnamese Gen Z employees, a clearly defined task scope may be interpreted as rigidity or constraint,

particularly when they seek fluidity, multitasking, and opportunities to explore new skillsets. From the COR perspective, narrowly bounded roles may reduce the perceived availability of developmental resources and limit self-expansion [36]. Furthermore, Vietnamese Gen Z employees, who are often still exploring their professional identity, may feel restricted by excessive structure. This reflects a broader generational shift toward valuing dynamic, growth-oriented roles over fixed responsibilities.

Hypothesis H1c examined the impact of task significance on affective commitment, but the relationship was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.119$; $p = 0.127$). Task significance has been widely regarded as a key factor driving employee motivation and emotional attachment, as it enhances the perceived impact of one's work on others [16, 17, 22]. However, this effect has predominantly been confirmed in mature labor markets and among older cohorts who may prioritize purpose and contribution. In contrast, Gen Z employees in Vietnam are often more pragmatic, especially in the early stages of their careers. They may prioritize personal growth, job security, or financial incentives over abstract notions of meaningfulness. From a COR standpoint, if task significance does not translate into visible or immediate benefits, it may not be viewed as a valuable resource. Vietnamese Gen Z employees, shaped by exam-oriented education systems and competitive entry-level job markets, may not yet have developed a strong orientation toward purpose-driven work. Organizations should therefore communicate the societal value of roles in a way that aligns with the career aspirations and development trajectories of younger workers.

Hypothesis H1d tested the relationship between skill variety and affective commitment and again found no significant effect ($\beta = -0.244$; $p = 0.088$). Previous literature typically emphasizes that skill variety increases job satisfaction and emotional attachment by fostering continuous learning and engagement [16, 17, 22]. However, these benefits presume a context where employees possess adequate support, experience, and confidence to handle multifaceted roles. In the current study, Vietnamese Gen Z employees may experience skill variety as overwhelming or even disempowering if they lack mentoring or sufficient onboarding. Under the COR lens, varied skill demands without compensating resources may threaten rather than replenish employees' psychological reserves [35]. In a transitional labor market like Vietnam, where training systems may not be fully institutionalized, early-career employees may find variety cognitively taxing rather than enriching. This negative interpretation likely stems from both the inherent complexity of multi-skill tasks and a perceived lack of structured support for skill development. For Gen Z employees in early stages of their careers, such demands may quickly lead to emotional strain unless they are paired with clear learning pathways, mentoring, or upskilling opportunities. Thus, skill variety should be introduced progressively and paired with coaching mechanisms to ensure it serves as a genuine motivator.

Regarding turnover intentions, **Hypothesis H2a** found that autonomy significantly increased turnover ($\beta = 0.285$; $p = 0.003$). This result contrasts with findings from Western and high-autonomy cultures, where job control is associated with higher retention and lower stress [27]. Among Vietnamese Gen Z employees, however, autonomy may signify abandonment rather than trust when introduced without structure. Although autonomy is typically framed as an empowering resource, the lack of clear direction and feedback may lead employees to feel unsupported. This is especially relevant for Gen Z workers in Vietnam, who, despite valuing flexibility, are still navigating their early professional identities and rely heavily on external guidance. From the COR perspective, this scenario represents a perceived loss of essential resources, such as clarity, mentorship, and reassurance [36]. Consequently, the increase in turnover intention may not stem from a rejection of autonomy itself, but from the anxiety and ambiguity generated when autonomy is not scaffolded. For autonomy to function effectively as a motivational lever, it must be gradually introduced and aligned with the individual's developmental readiness and the organization's cultural expectations.

Hypothesis H2b showed that task identity positively influenced turnover intentions ($\beta = 0.179$; $p = 0.018$), deviating from the conventional assumption that task ownership enhances employee retention [20]. In Gen Z's case, the pressure to "own" an entire task may amplify role stress and limit perceived flexibility. According to COR theory, overdefined job scopes can inhibit exploration and increase the likelihood of emotional depletion [35]. Vietnamese Gen Z, whose learning styles often emphasize breadth over depth, may interpret rigid tasks as narrowing their developmental bandwidth. HR managers should thus consider flexible task configurations that allow room for iterative learning, experimentation, and shared responsibility.

Hypothesis H2c found no significant link between task significance and turnover intentions ($\beta = 0.094$; $p = 0.085$), a finding that diverges from prior studies indicating that perceived impact lowers attrition [28, 29]. Again, this may reflect generational and contextual priorities: Vietnamese Gen Z employees often prioritize instrumental benefits, especially early in their careers. As such, task significance may not strongly influence their retention decisions unless it is explicitly linked to career progression or tangible rewards. Employers aiming to improve retention through job meaning should frame significance in individualized terms, highlighting how impactful roles also contribute to professional advancement.

Hypothesis H2d showed a strong positive association between skill variety and turnover intentions ($\beta = 0.347$; $p < 0.001$), a counterintuitive result in light of JD-R research that treats variety as a protective factor [16, 17, 22]. For Gen Z employees in Vietnam, however, being tasked with a wide range of duties without adequate support may lead to anxiety, confusion, and disengagement. From the COR perspective, such environments can accelerate resource

depletion [35]. Many Gen Z employees, especially those with less than one year of experience, interpret skill variety as excessive expectation, signaling that the organization lacks a structured development pathway. This finding underscores the need to match skill expectations with actual training investments.

Finally, **Hypothesis H3** confirmed that affective commitment significantly and negatively predicts turnover intentions ($\beta = -0.317$; $p < 0.001$), which aligns with substantial prior evidence [16, 17, 22, 30]. JD-R and COR both recognize affective commitment as a vital personal resource that buffers against exit behaviors [35]. In the Vietnamese context, where group identity and interpersonal ties are culturally salient, affective bonds may be particularly stabilizing. Gen Z employees, despite their emphasis on autonomy and flexibility, still value belonging and recognition. Thus, investing in workplace cultures that support emotional connection may be one of the most effective retention strategies.

In summary, the study challenges the universalist assumptions of job design and emphasizes that job characteristics may yield divergent outcomes across cultural and generational contexts. The findings illustrate that while previous studies celebrate autonomy, skill variety, and task significance as inherently positive, these factors may function differently—or even backfire—among Vietnamese Gen Z employees if not delivered with adequate support. Affective commitment remains a critical anchor, and its cultivation should be prioritized through relationship-based management. Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of designing roles that are not only structurally sound but also psychologically attuned to the expectations and realities of a new generation in an emerging economy.

6- Conclusion

This study examined the influence of four core job characteristics—autonomy, task identity, task significance, and skill variety—on affective commitment and turnover intentions among Generation Z employees in Vietnam, using the theoretical frameworks of Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) and Conservation of Resources (COR). The results revealed several counterintuitive patterns: autonomy, task identity, and skill variety significantly increased turnover intentions, while only task identity negatively influenced affective commitment. Task significance had no significant effect on either outcome. Affective commitment emerged as a strong negative predictor of turnover intentions, reaffirming its protective role in employee retention.

Theoretically, the study contributes by integrating JD-R and COR models to examine how job characteristics are cognitively appraised and effectively internalized by early-career employees in an emerging market. This dual-framework approach enables a more nuanced interpretation: JD-R explains the motivational function of job resources, while COR highlights how these same resources may become stressors when inadequately supported. The findings challenge universalist assumptions by showing that autonomy and skill variety can trigger withdrawal when mismatched with developmental readiness. Task identity revealed a paradoxical effect, hindering commitment while increasing turnover. Affective commitment functioned as a core emotional resource that mitigates attrition—especially relevant in collectivist, relationally oriented cultures.

Practically, the findings call for more culturally and generationally responsive HR strategies. Employers should avoid job enrichment universally drives positive outcomes. Instead, autonomy, variety, and task ownership should be carefully calibrated with structured support. Emotional commitment should be cultivated through inclusive leadership and value alignment, not transactional incentives.

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations. Its cross-sectional design and an intern-heavy sample may affect generalizability. Additionally, individual-level cultural values were not directly measured, and industry-specific effects were not analyzed. Therefore, future research should adopt longitudinal, cross-cultural, and multi-method approaches to explore Gen Z's workplace adaptation more comprehensively.

7- Declarations

7-1- Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Y.M.T.H. and C.T.T.; methodology, Y.M.T.H.; software, C.T.T.; validation, Y.M.T.H.; formal analysis, Y.M.T.H. and C.T.T.; investigation, Y.M.T.H.; resources, C.T.T.; data curation, C.T.T.; writing—original draft preparation, Y.M.T.H.; writing—review and editing, Y.M.T.H. and C.T.T.; visualization, Y.M.T.H.; supervision, Y.M.T.H.; project administration, Y.M.T.H.; funding acquisition, Y.M.T.H. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

7-2- Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

7-3- Funding and Acknowledgments

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7-4- Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

7-5- Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

7-6- Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

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