

THE INFLUENCE OF TOXIC WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR ON TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG GENERATION Z EMPLOYEES: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The purpose of this research was to study the influence of toxic workplace behavior, focusing on toxic leadership and workplace incivility, on the turnover intention of Generation Z employees through perceived psychological safety in the workplace.

Methodology – The research methodology was quantitative with survey method using questionnaires for data collection. The respondents were 400 participants who are Generation Z full-time employees living in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region. Descriptive statistics used for data analysis included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Due to hypothesis testing, inferential statistics were used, specifically Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Results – The research results indicated that toxic leadership and workplace incivility had a positive and significant effect on turnover intention at a significance level of 0.05. In addition, perceived psychological safety had a significant negative effect on turnover intention at a significance level of 0.001, confirming its role in mitigating employee turnover. The results also revealed that both toxic leadership and workplace incivility significantly reduced perceived psychological safety at a significance level of 0.001. Moreover, the mediation analysis demonstrated that these toxic workplace behaviors indirectly increased turnover intention by reducing perceived psychological safety, also at a significance level of 0.001.

Implications – The findings suggest organizations should prioritize psychological safety to reduce turnover among Generation Z employees by implementing supportive leadership behaviors, comprehensive training programs, and clear policies addressing toxic behaviors. Organizations must recognize that younger generations have lower tolerance for violations of personal rights and freedoms, requiring adaptations to management practices.

Originality/Value – This research revealed how toxic leadership and workplace incivility affect Generation Z employees' turnover intentions through perceived psychological safety. By examining generational differences in workplace expectations, the research provided guidance for organizations to develop leadership practices and workplace cultures that align with younger workers' needs, supporting long-term organizational sustainability.

Keywords: Toxic workplace, Turnover intention, Toxic leadership, Workplace incivility, Perceived psychological safety, Generation Z

Paper Type: Research Article

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era of rapid social and technological change, organizations face significant challenges in human resource management, particularly in attracting and retaining Generation Z

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employees. The importance of managing Generation Z employees in a rapidly changing workplace cannot be overstated, as the growing importance of human capital in gaining a competitive advantage has led modern organizations to focus on retaining skilled employees, with a particular emphasis on the younger workforce. Moreover, the intense competition in the labor market and the fast-paced evolution of technology exert pressure on organizations to develop and retain high-potential employees (Deloitte, 2021).

At the same time, organizations must balance the needs of new-generation employees with those of other generations, making human resource management an increasingly complex challenge. Effective human resource management involves both attracting talent to the organization and ensuring employee retention. A key strategy in achieving this is mitigating factors that contribute to employees' decisions to leave. One such critical factor is toxic workplace behavior, which significantly influences job satisfaction and turnover intention.

A toxic work environment not only affects employee satisfaction and productivity but also directly impacts employees' perceived psychological safety. This can lead to negative emotional states such as stress and pressure, resulting in increased absenteeism as employees seek to escape unfavorable work conditions. Ultimately, this may lead to higher turnover intention and actual employee attrition (Rasool et al., 2020).

This research aimed to examine the influence of toxic workplace behavior on the turnover intention of Generation Z employees, with perceived psychological safety acting as a mediating variable. The research aimed to study how toxic leadership and workplace incivility directly affect employee turnover intentions while investigating psychological safety as a potential mediator and developing recommendations for organizations to retain Generation Z employees. This research fills a knowledge gap about toxic workplace behaviors affecting younger Thai workers because it studies their impact in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region which contains most major organizations and shows the most significant workforce demographic changes.

Since Generation Z is emerging as a dominant workforce in the future, understanding the factors influencing their turnover intention is essential for organizations to develop effective human resource management strategies and reduce employee turnover. The findings of this study will contribute to building a work environment that fosters psychological safety and reduces toxic behaviors, enabling organizations to retain high-potential employees in the long run. The research adds theoretical value by showing how workplace behaviors impact Generation Z differently than previous generations while providing Thai organizations with practical guidance to create policies that meet the needs of younger workers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Toxic Workplace Behaviors

Toxic workplace behaviors consist of toxic leadership and workplace incivility as follows:

Toxic Leadership (TL)

Toxic leadership refers to leadership behaviors and management approaches deemed inappropriate, negatively affecting both organizations and employees. Such behaviors foster unsupportive work environments and impede progress, ultimately compromising overall organizational effectiveness (Paltu & Brouwers, 2020).

Recent research has reinforced the link between toxic leadership and employee commitment and turnover intention. Earlier studies by Schmidt (2008) and Mehta and Maheshwari (2014) explored toxic leadership's direct impact on employee commitment and turnover intention, supporting the notion that oppressive behaviors, destructive communication, and excessive control significantly diminish employee trust and elevate turnover intentions. Building on this, more recent research highlights that toxic leadership contributes to cognitive distraction, workplace bullying, and emotional exhaustion, further intensifying turnover intentions (Shrivastava & Sharma, 2024). Toxic leadership has also been found to diminish psychological well-being and employee engagement, key factors in job retention (Naeem & Khurram, 2020).

Employees experiencing toxic leadership commonly feel insecure and demotivated. While Generation Y previously tolerated such behaviors due to different societal norms, Generation Z perceives them as violations of their rights and freedoms, particularly regarding unpaid overtime or working during holidays. Research suggests that toxic leadership not only increases turnover intention but also affects job satisfaction and organizational commitment, making Generation Z employees more likely to leave toxic environments (Buyukyilmaz & Kara, 2024). Consequently, conflicts arising from these differing values may lead to increased turnover among Generation Z employees.

Research has shown a positive relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention in different settings (Shrivastava & Sharma, 2024; Naeem & Khurram, 2020), and it has been found that Generation Z employees are more sensitive to toxic leadership than previous generations, making this relationship particularly important for contemporary workforce management (Buyukyilmaz & Kara, 2024).

Workplace Incivility (WI)

Workplace incivility refers to low-intensity deviant behaviors that violate professional norms of mutual respect, negatively affecting both employees and organizational performance. Such behaviors foster hostile work environments and disrupt workplace harmony, ultimately compromising employee well-being and retention (Permatasari & Sugito, 2025).

Recent research has reinforced the link between workplace incivility and turnover intentions. Earlier studies by Porath and Pearson (2012) and Manzoor et al. (2020) explored the direct impact of incivility on employee well-being and turnover intentions, supporting the notion that disrespectful communication, social exclusion, and a lack of recognition significantly increase stress and reduce organizational commitment. Building on this, more recent research highlights that workplace incivility contributes to job dissatisfaction, psychological distress, and workplace disengagement, further intensifying turnover intentions (Permatasari & Sugito, 2025). WI has also been found to increase organizational cynicism, diminish cooperation, and lower employee morale, key factors in employee attrition and reduced productivity (Manzoor et al., 2020).

Employees experiencing workplace incivility commonly feel undervalued, disengaged, and hesitant to communicate openly. While previous generations of employees may have perceived such behaviors as routine workplace challenges, younger generations view them as violations of their professional dignity and expectations for a respectful work culture, particularly regarding collaborative engagement and fair treatment. Research suggests that workplace incivility not only increases turnover intention but also undermines job satisfaction and team cohesion, making employees more inclined to leave toxic environments (Porath & Pearson, 2012). Consequently, conflicts arising from differing expectations regarding workplace behavior may lead to higher turnover rates among modern professionals, necessitating organizational strategies to foster inclusive and respectful workplace interactions. Research shows a consistent positive relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention (Manzoor et al., 2020; Rahim & Cosby, 2016), with several studies showing that even low-intensity uncivil behaviors can significantly increase employees' intentions to leave their organizations, especially among Generation Z workers who typically value respectful workplace interactions (Permatasari & Sugito, 2025).

Perceived Psychological Safety (PPS)

Edmondson (1999) defined psychological safety as an individual's perception of workplace interpersonal safety, where they can express opinions without fear of negative consequences like embarrassment or criticism. The concept differs from other related constructs including trust and job security because it specifically deals with interpersonal risk-taking within the work environment which enables team members to express themselves without fear of negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999). Employees feeling psychologically safe believe their actions won't result in adverse personal consequences. Psychological safety drives organizational success through open communication, innovation, and trust. Research shows psychologically safe environments are vital for employee well-being and organizational effectiveness, encouraging

free expression that increases creativity and problem-solving (Forte et al., 2024; Negara et al., 2023). It also correlates with higher job satisfaction and reduced stress, improving overall performance (Amoadu et al., 2024; Harsha et al., 2024).

Leadership significantly influences psychological safety. Yin et al. (2022) demonstrated that supportive leaders create environments where employees express themselves freely, enhancing openness and creativity. Team leaders using cooperative conflict management styles positively affect team innovation through psychological safety mediation (Yin et al., 2022).

Workplace incivility undermines psychological safety. Negative behaviors affect perceptions of fairness and respect. Research found workplace rudeness impairs performance, reducing medical team functionality by 44% (New York Post, 2024). Incivility compromises psychological safety, causing emotional distress, anxiety, reduced satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions.

Wang (2022) found strong coworker relationships correlate positively with psychological safety. Employees perceiving high psychological safety engage positively, collaborate effectively, and experience greater job satisfaction, reducing turnover intentions. This study showed psychological safety fosters workplace friendships and stronger relationships, enhancing organizational commitment.

Psychological safety mediates between toxic leadership, incivility, and turnover intention. When compromised, employees fear criticism and repercussions, increasing stress and driving them to seek healthier environments (Frazier et al., 2017). A meta-analysis from the study confirmed psychological safety mediates between antecedents like leadership behavior and outcomes including turnover intention. Therefore, organizations should prioritize supportive leadership, respectful cultures, and comprehensive employee support systems to foster psychological safety, enhancing retention and effectiveness, particularly among Generation Z employees.

Turnover Intention (TI)

Turnover intention refers to the process in which employees contemplate and plan to leave their organization, negatively impacting workforce stability and talent retention. This behavior leads to a disengaged work environment, operational discontinuity, and reduced long-term organizational efficiency (Sundari, et al., 2023). Employees often consider leaving due to psychological exhaustion, job insecurity, workload stress, and work-life imbalance, making turnover intention a key indicator of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This issue is particularly prevalent among Generation Z employees, who exhibit higher job mobility than previous generations and prioritize psychological safety and supportive work cultures.

Recent studies have reinforced the link between work stress, psychological safety, and turnover intention. Earlier research by Fong and Mahfar (2013), Nohe and Sonntag (2014), Billing et al. (2014) and Rode et al. (2007) highlighted that job dissatisfaction and workplace stress are primary factors contributing to higher turnover rates. Furthermore, recent findings indicate that psychological stress, particularly emotional exhaustion and burnout, mediates the relationship between workplace stressors and turnover intention. Additionally, toxic leadership has been found to increase employees' turnover intention due to breaches in psychological contracts and negative workplace experiences (Mehta & Maheshwari, 2013; Wolor et al., 2020).

Psychological safety has emerged as a crucial factor in reducing employees' turnover intention, particularly in high-stress environments such as healthcare industries. Research by Hebles et al. (2022) found that psychological safety mediates the relationship between cognitive stress and turnover intention, indicating that employees who perceive a safe and supportive work environment are less likely to consider leaving. When employees experience psychological safety, they report lower stress levels, increased organizational commitment, and greater willingness to engage in workplace problem-solving.

Moreover, employees who lack psychological safety often feel undervalued, disengaged, and hesitant to voice concerns or express their opinions. Research by Frazier et al. (2017) further confirms that psychological safety not only reduces turnover intention but also enhances job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and workplace trust. In addition, a work environment

where employees feel safe to express their opinions fosters stronger workplace relationships, leading to higher trust levels, improved team collaboration, and reduced workplace stress.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Based on the review of the literatures on toxic leadership, workplace incivility, perceived psychological safety, and turnover intention, the conceptual research framework was drawn in Figure 1. In addition, the research hypotheses were drawn in the next part.

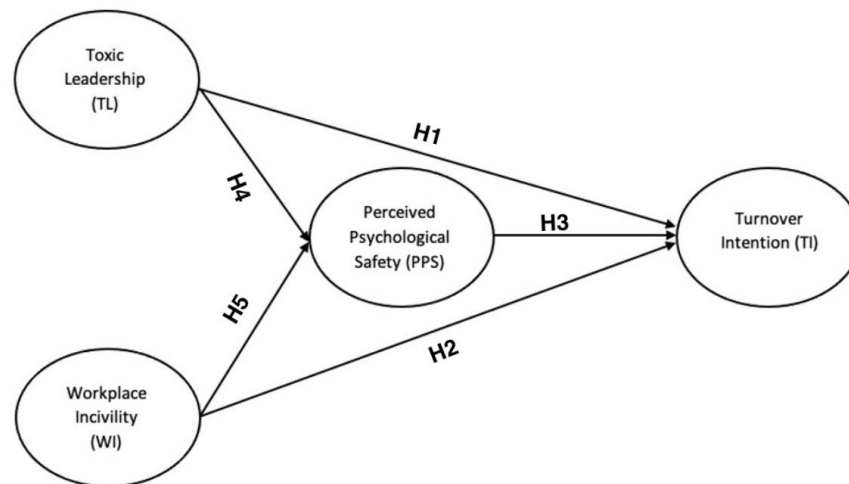


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The research hypotheses were drawn as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Toxic leadership has a significant influence on the turnover intention of Generation Z employees.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Workplace incivility has a significant influence on the turnover intention of Generation Z employees.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Perceived psychological safety has a significant influence on the turnover intention of Generation Z employees.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Toxic leadership has a significant influence on the perceived psychological safety of Generation Z employees.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Workplace incivility has a significant influence on the perceived psychological safety of Generation Z employees.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Toxic leadership indirectly influences the turnover intention of Generation Z employees through perceived psychological safety.

Hypothesis 7 (H7): Workplace incivility indirectly influences the turnover intention of Generation Z employees through perceived psychological safety.

METHODOLOGY

For Sample and Data Collection

The research population consisted of Generation Z employees who were born between 1995-2012 and aged between 22-29 years old in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region. The exact population size was unknown so Cochran's (1953) formula was used to determine the sample size at 95% confidence level which resulted in a required sample of 385 participants. The recommended minimum sample size for structural equation modeling (Yuan & Bentler, 2000; Savalei & Bentler, 2005) was used to recruit a total of 400 participants. Non-probability sampling with purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who had workplace experience in the specified region. Screening questions were used to ensure that participants met the inclusion criteria.

The research methodology employed in this research was quantitative research, utilizing the survey method for data collection. The data were collected through questionnaires

comprising six sections. Section 1 of the questionnaire included closed-ended questions focusing on demographic information, such as age (which served as a screening criterion to ensure respondents belonged to Generation Z), gender, education level, work experience, occupation, and monthly income. The section also included a screening question to confirm that participants worked in organizations operating within the Bangkok Metropolitan Region. These variables provided essential background information to support further statistical analysis.

Section 2-3 contained 5-point Likert scale items measuring toxic leadership and workplace incivility, with the scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). The measures were adapted from established scales (Tepper, 2000; Özer et al., 2017; Cortina et al., 2001; Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Section 4 measured perceived psychological safety using a 5-point Likert scale that was reverse-coded to align with the directional interpretation of other variables in the PLS-SEM analysis. The scale was adapted from the studies by Carmeli et al. (2010) and Edmondson (1999). After reverse coding (using the formula: New Score = 6 - Original Score), higher values indicate lower psychological safety, meaning a greater sense of insecurity. Section 5 assessed turnover intention using 5-point Likert scale items ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). This transformation of the psychological safety scale facilitates a more consistent interpretation of the results across all variables in the research, as higher scores for all variables now represent more negative effects (i.e., higher toxic leadership, higher workplace incivility, lower psychological safety, and higher turnover intention). Section 6 of the questionnaire contained opened-ended questions for those who wish to provide additional comments.

Descriptive statistics used in quantitative data analysis included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Mean scores were interpreted using standard criteria (1.00-1.80 = strongly disagree to 4.21-5.00 = strongly agree). Due to hypothesis testing, inferential statistics were used, specifically Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

RESULTS

The results of the research showed that most of respondents were female (52%), had age range between 24-26 years old (50%), obtained a bachelor's degree (100%), had career as employees of private companies (50%), and had work experience for less than 1 year (43%), for travel approximately 1-2 times per year (43%), and earned monthly income between 15,000 - 25,000 THB (46%). The research results showed that the respondents had an overall agreement toward toxic leadership, workplace incivility, perceived psychological safety and turnover intention at the agree level, with mean scores of 3.87, 3.74, 3.68 and 3.43 respectively, as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation for Variables

Latent Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Level
Toxic Leadership (TL)	3.87	1.16	Agree
Workplace Incivility (WI)	3.74	1.14	Agree
Perceived Psychological Safety (PPS)	3.68	1.13	Agree
Turnover Intention (TI)	3.43	1.26	Agree

Validity and Reliability

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were investigated to measure construct reliability. All factor loading values ranged from 0.702 to 0.852, which is more than the recommended value of 0.50, but WI7, WI9, TI4, and TI5 were dropped from the scale after measurement purification since the factor loading values were below 0.5; hence, the constructs in the research model are acceptable (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Cronbach's alpha coefficient of each construct ranged from 0.839 to 0.928, meaning that all constructs are acceptable according to the recommended threshold value of 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Similarly, in terms of composite reliability, all values

ranged from 0.882 to 0.940, further supporting construct reliability (Hair et al., 2013). In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.555 to 0.636, which exceeded the minimum threshold value of 0.50, thereby confirming convergent validity as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor Loading, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (CA), Composite Reliability (CR) and Average variance extracted (AVE) for Measurement Model

Latent Variable		CA	CR	AVE	Indicators	Loads
Toxic Leadership (TL)		0.928	0.940	0.636	TL1	0.835
					TL2	0.852
					TL 3	0.815
					TL 4	0.820
					TL 5	0.817
					TL 6	0.737
					TL 7	0.774
					TL 8	0.752
					TL 9	0.769
Workplace Incivility (WI)		0.866	0.900	0.600	WI1	0.766
					WI2	0.765
					WI3	0.833
					WI4	0.791
					WI5	0.761
					WI8	0.731
Perceived Psychological Safety (PPS)		0.880	0.907	0.581	PPS1	0.783
					PPS2	0.736
					PPS3	0.717
					PPS4	0.779
					PPS5	0.785
					PPS6	0.765
					PPS7	0.771
Turnover Intention (TI)		0.839	0.882	0.555	TI1	0.702
					TI2	0.738
					TI3	0.837
					TI6	0.746
					TI7	0.730
					TI8	0.711

Notes: Items WI7, WI9, TI4 and TI5 were dropped from the scale after measurement purification.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

Variables	Toxic Leadership	Workplace Incivility	Perceived Psychological Safety	Turnover Intention
Toxic Leadership	0.798			
Workplace Incivility	0.740	0.775		
Perceived Psychological Safety	0.746	0.736	0.763	
Turnover Intention	0.633	0.635	0.731	0.745

In Table 3, the discriminant validity was tested, and the square roots of AVEs exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.50, and all values were higher than the correlations among the latent constructs (ranging from 0.633 to 0.746), confirming discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

Analysis of Structural Model

From the structural model in this research, the direct effects indicated that the R^2 value of the dependent variable, or turnover intention was 0.631 indicating that 63.1% of employees' turnover intention could be explained by the independent variables, toxic leadership and workplace incivility. For the indirect effects, the R^2 of the mediating variables showed that R^2 perceived psychological safety (PPS) was 0.561.

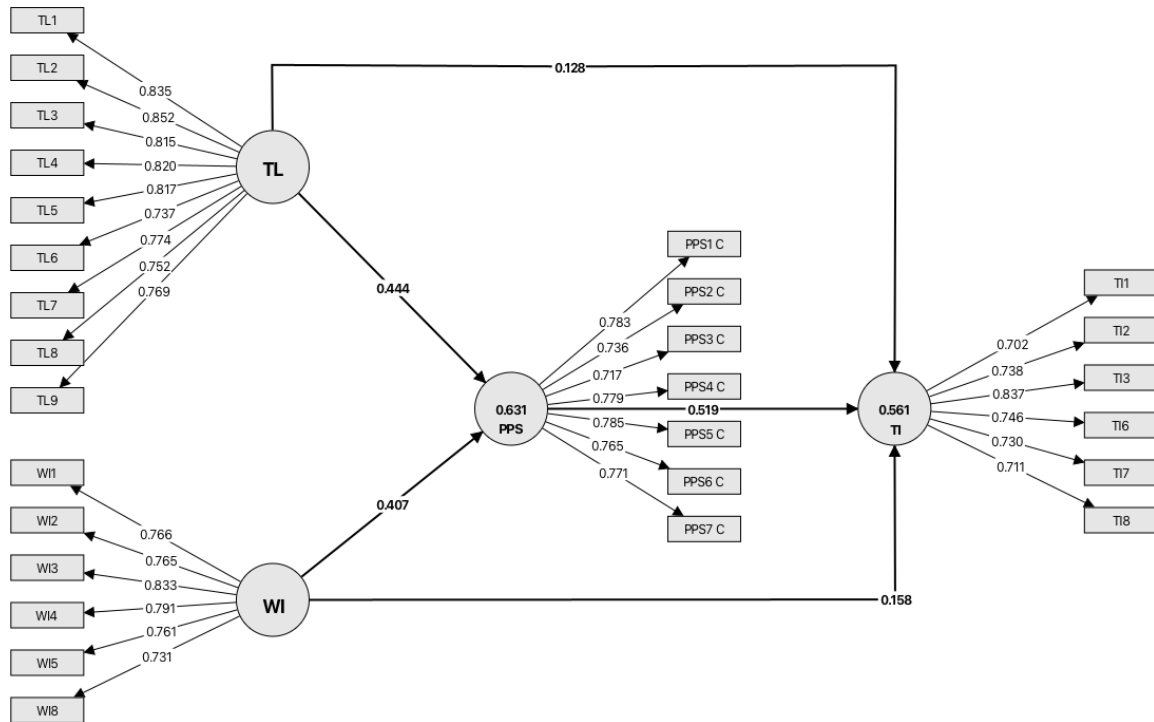


Figure 2. The results of testing the structural model of the theoretical framework

Table 4. Structural Model

	β	T Statistics	P-value	Result
H1: TL → TI	0.128	1.985	0.047*	Supported
H2: WI → TI	0.158	2.268	0.023*	Supported
H3: PPS → TI	0.519	8.170	0.000***	Supported
H4: TL → PPS	0.444	7.403	0.000***	Supported
H5: WI → PPS	0.407	6.878	0.000***	Supported
H6: TL → PPS → TI	0.231	5.171	0.000***	Supported
H7: WI → PPS → TI	0.211	5.535	0.000***	Supported

Note: ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05 (two-tailed test)

The results of the structural model indicated that toxic leadership had a significant positive effect on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.128$, $p < 0.05$), while workplace incivility also had a significant positive effect on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.158$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H1 and H2. Additionally, perceived psychological safety, which was reverse-coded (higher values indicate lower safety), had the strongest significant positive effect on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.519$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H3 and reinforcing its role as a mediator in the relationship.

The results also revealed that toxic leadership significantly reduced perceived psychological safety ($\beta = 0.444$, $p < 0.001$), and workplace incivility also significantly reduced perceived psychological safety ($\beta = 0.407$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4 and H5. Moreover, the mediation analysis demonstrated that toxic leadership indirectly increased turnover intention by

reducing perceived psychological safety ($\beta = 0.231, p < 0.001$), while workplace incivility also contributed to higher turnover intention via lower psychological safety ($\beta = 0.211, p < 0.001$), supporting H6 and H7.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research showed the significant effects of toxic workplace behaviors, specifically toxic leadership and workplace incivility, on the turnover intentions of Generation Z employees, with perceived psychological safety as a crucial mediator in these relationships.

The results confirmed that toxic leadership significantly increases turnover intentions among Generation Z employees, aligning with studies by Schmidt (2008) and Mehta and Maheshwari (2014) who identified oppressive leadership styles and destructive communication as factors increasing departure intentions. The findings are consistent with research by Lopes et al. (2025) which confirmed this association in Portuguese organizations, and Hidayat and Wulansari (2025) who revealed similar effects in West Java, indicating Generation Z's lower tolerance for violations of personal rights. Workplace incivility also emerged as a significant determinant of turnover intentions. In alignment with Porath and Pearson (2012), seemingly minor disrespectful behaviors lead to emotional distress and reduced job satisfaction, ultimately elevating turnover intentions. Permatasari and Sugito (2025) confirmed this relationship in hospitality settings, where job satisfaction acted as a mediator between workplace incivility and turnover intentions.

The research revealed that perceived psychological safety showed the strongest direct effect on turnover intention among all variables studied. This finding contrasts with Sobaih et al. (2022), who found a negative relationship, but aligns with Liu et al.'s (2016) research suggesting that psychological safety awareness influences workplace decisions when other factors are present. Kim and Yun (2023) noted that psychological safety climate impacts job stress related to turnover intention, while Rudolph et al. (2018) highlighted how generational differences affect workplace responses. The analysis also confirmed that both toxic leadership and workplace incivility significantly affect perceived psychological safety. Siddiqui and Iqbal (2024) found that toxic leadership reduced psychological safety within Higher Education Institutions, while Tate and Chalhoub (2024) and Jackson et al. (2024) demonstrated that workplace incivility creates environments of fear and mistrust, making employees feel undervalued and leading to damaged professional relationships. This research contributes to theory by integrating psychological safety as a critical mediating mechanism explaining Generation Z turnover dynamics.

The mediation analysis revealed that both toxic leadership and workplace incivility have significant indirect effects on turnover intention through perceived psychological safety. These findings extend the work of Edmondson (1999) and Kahn (1990) by demonstrating how negative workplace behaviors operate through psychological safety deterioration to influence employee retention decisions. The results suggest that even seemingly minor uncivil interactions can substantially impact turnover intentions when they compromise employees' psychological safety, particularly among Generation Z employees who may place higher value on respectful workplace interactions.

From a practical standpoint, organizations aiming to reduce turnover among Generation Z employees should prioritize enhancing psychological safety through supportive leadership and comprehensive strategies addressing toxic behaviors. In the Thai context, where hierarchical structures traditionally influence workplace relationships, organizations should develop leadership programs emphasizing inclusive communication and implement clear anti-toxicity policies tailored to younger workers' expectations. Cultivating environments that value contributions, recognize individual needs, and encourage professional growth can substantially improve retention and organizational performance. This research extends organizational behavior theory by demonstrating how psychological safety functions as a key mechanism connecting toxic workplace behaviors to Generation Z turnover decisions.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

This research has certain limitations that future research should address. First, employing a broader response scale in questionnaires could more accurately measure the emotional nuances and genuine attitudes of Thai respondents, who often exhibit a tendency to select neutral responses, potentially reducing measurement accuracy. This limitation may affect the strength of relationships found in the study, suggesting that actual effects could be stronger than reported. Second, further research could explore additional individual differences influencing perceptions of workplace incivility, as perceptions vary significantly between individuals. Some employees may interpret certain behaviors as neutral rather than harmful, while others may perceive them negatively. Investigating these subjective perceptions could yield deeper insights into workplace dynamics. This limitation highlights the need for mixed-method approaches in future research. Finally, future studies could expand their focus to investigate additional factors, such as individual personality traits, cultural contexts, and specific organizational policies, that may influence perceived psychological safety, enriching our understanding of its mediating role between toxic leadership, workplace incivility, and employee turnover intentions. These limitations emphasize the need for caution when generalizing results across different organizational and cultural contexts.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research affirms the critical influence of toxic leadership and workplace incivility on the turnover intentions of Generation Z employees, mediated through perceived psychological safety. Organizations must actively address and mitigate these negative workplace behaviors by fostering psychologically safe, respectful, and supportive environments. By doing so, organizations can enhance employee satisfaction, engagement, and retention, particularly among younger generations whose workplace expectations significantly differ from those of their predecessors. Ultimately, recognizing and adapting to these generational differences will be crucial for organizational sustainability and long-term success.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest found in this research.

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