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A New Urban Lifestyle: Determinations of Co-Living Adoption Among Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

As housing affordability becomes an increasing problem, especially for young adults, alternative housing models such as co-living are becoming a viable solution. Against the backdrop of rising housing costs and increasing urbanisation, this study assesses the factors influencing the acceptance of co-living by Generation Z in Ipoh, Perak, where few studies focus on secondary cities in Southeast Asia. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to respondents aged 18-27 years. The study analysed the data from 108 usable responses with SPSS Statistics version 28 using a t-test analysis. The results show that four key factors (i) facilities and amenities offered, (ii) financial considerations, (iii) location accessibility, and (iv) social interaction have a significant impact on Gen Z's acceptance of co-living. In particular, (i) community services, (ii) financial savings, (iii) distance to city centre, (iv) meeting new people, (v) avoiding loneliness, and (vi) YOLO lifestyle resulted significantly. The results provide guidance to developers, stakeholders, and policy makers in designing residential environments that meet the preferences of young adults. In addition, the findings contribute to the limited literature on the acceptability of co-living in secondary cities. Policy makers should consider the possibility of promoting co-living for young people through development plans or tax incentives.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Urbanisation is a global phenomenon that is rapidly increasing the demand for living space worldwide. According to the United Nations, 68% of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas by 2050, creating an unprecedented demand for affordable and flexible housing solutions (United Nations, 2018). In Malaysia, urbanisation has increased from 26.8% in 1970 to 78.72% in 2023, and is projected to reach 88% by 2050 (Christy & Tan, 2022). As housing affordability becomes an increasing problem, especially for young adults, alternative housing models such as co-living are emerging as viable solutions. In Malaysia, affordable housing delivery and financing remain structurally challenging due to regulatory constraints, decentralised delivery mechanisms, and difficulties in accessing home financing, which indirectly intensify rental pressures for younger cohorts (Md. Sani @ Abd. Rahim & Kamaruddin, 2023).

Co-living is a modern housing concept that combines private living space with shared spaces to promote affordability and social interaction (Kim et al., 2020). This model is particularly attractive to Generation Z (Gen Z), a demographic cohort that is moving towards independent living and often prioritises affordability, convenience and community engagement when choosing their housing (Chen et al., 2023). In Malaysia, co-living spaces have gained traction in metropolises such as Kuala Lumpur and Penang, but their adoption in secondary cities such as Ipoh has yet to be adequately explored.

The rising cost of home ownership and rental housing has made it difficult for Gen Z to secure an independent living arrangement (Christy & Tan, 2022). The high rate of urbanisation has exacerbated the housing shortage and is driving young adults towards communal living arrangements (Hsia et al., 2024). Although communal living is a promising solution, empirical research has limited exploration of the key factors influencing its adoption.

Despite the growing popularity of co-living, there are few studies looking at the acceptability of co-living among Gen Z in smaller urban centres such as Ipoh. Most studies have focused on highly urbanised cities, neglecting the unique residential dynamics of secondary cities, where affordability and accessibility can present other challenges (Christy & Tan, 2022; Knight Frank, 2024; Ronald et al., 2024). While the existing literature recognises financial incentives as an important driver, the role of non-financial factors such as social interaction, availability of amenities, and physical quality remains under-researched (Chen et al., 2023).

The motivation for this research stems from the need to fill this gap by conducting a comprehensive analysis of the factors that influence Gen Z's preferences for co-living in Ipoh, Perak. While previous studies have examined cohabitation in large cities such as Kuala Lumpur or Seoul, there is little research on how Gen Z in smaller cities, such as Ipoh evaluate co-living options.

Ipoh was selected as the case study because it represents a secondary Malaysian city where rental market pressures and lifestyle transitions among young adults are increasingly prominent, yet empirical evidence on co-living adoption remains limited outside tier-1 metropolitan areas. As the capital of Perak, Ipoh serves as a regional administrative, commercial, and educational hub. The city council boundary covers 643 km² with a population of over 720,000, indicating a substantial base of potential young renters and early-career workers relevant to the co-living market (Ipoh City Council, 2026). Focusing on Ipoh, therefore, enables this study to test whether determinants commonly reported in highly urbanised contexts remain salient in a secondary city setting where amenity distribution, commuting patterns, and rent gradients may differ.
By utilising the mean in SPSS Statistics version 28, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of what factors play an important role in the decision to co-live. This study contributes to closing this contextual gap and validating decision criteria using a robust statistical approach. The findings will not only

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contribute to academic knowledge but also provide practical insights for property developers, policy makers, and urban planners who wish to promote sustainable models of co-living in Malaysia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Co-living

Co-living refers to residential communities in which individuals live together and share common spaces and amenities. According to Coricelli (2022), co-living is an all-inclusive rental arrangement of furnished private rooms connected to fully equipped common areas, for short- or long-term stays. It is often associated with affordability, community-oriented living, and social engagement. In addition, co-living is also referred to as rental housing with shared amenities, which has developed in cities with high population density (Chen et al., 2023). To summarise, co-living is defined as a community that stays together and uses shared spaces and amenities, which usually exist in cities and urban areas.

2.2 Comparative Insights of Co-living Between Seoul, Hong Kong and Ipoh

Comparative evidence from Asian cities suggests that co-living adoption is driven by both lifestyle preferences and structural housing market stress, with the balance varying by urban context. Insights from high-pressure housing markets were drawn from Seoul and Hong Kong and then compared with the case study of Ipoh (see Table 1).

Table 1: Comparative Insights of Co-living

Cities	Co-living Insights
Seoul	Seoul is a mature, high-density urban market where shared housing or co-living is considered a consumer choice. Evidence shows that young adults are willing to trade privacy for cost-sharing, social benefits, and security, indicating that adoption decisions reflect explicit attribute trade-offs (Kim et al., 2020).
Hong Kong	Hong Kong faces extreme scarcity and high rents, making shared and subdivided rental living widespread and policy-relevant. Official reports document substantial numbers of households living in subdivided units, and the government has implemented tenancy controls and regulatory measures. This demonstrates that shared living is both a market response and a regulated housing condition under severe affordability pressure (Housing Bureau, 2021; Leung et al., 2022).
Ipoh	Ipoh is a secondary-city housing market where co-living adoption is likely driven less by extreme housing scarcity and more by a combined value proposition of affordability, amenity, and service convenience, location accessibility, and social or community benefits, making it a useful case for testing whether big-city co-living determinants generalise beyond tier-1 metros (Christy & Tan, 2022).

Source: Author

2.3 Determinants of Co-living Adoption

Previous empirical data show that co-living with young and single adults offers the following benefits: (i) economic benefits (lower rent/cost sharing), (ii) social benefits (companionship), and (iii) security benefits while limiting privacy. A large study in Seoul quantified the willingness to pay for these attributes, laying the foundation for later work focussing on Gen Z (Kim et al., 2020).

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Studies began to look at co-living as a platform for psychosocial outcomes (belonging, reduced loneliness, self-management), rather than just cheap rent, and to extend acceptability beyond cost to wellbeing and sustainability (Mellner et al., 2021). A Malaysian study in the Klang Valley has shown that tenants' motives are centred on affordability, convenience/access, amenity, and community, anticipating the patterns of Gen Z in secondary cities and making co-living a pragmatic response to affordability pressures (Christy & Tan, 2022)

Furthermore, research on high-density Asian housing has established a link between amenities and economies of scale and perceived value, which explains why Gen Z favours well-appointed, operator-managed schemes that include co-working, fitness, and bundled Wi-Fi (Chen et al., 2023). Academic studies on housing document the shift from ad hoc sharing to commercial co-living (professional management, regulation, investor entry), and consider adoption as part of a maturing asset class explicitly targeting young tenants (Ronald et al., 2024).

Currently, industry reports show rapid pipeline growth and amenity-rich, all-inclusive offerings (bundled utilities/experiences) targeting young urban renters, which aligns with the academic arc of value for money, community, and convenience as equally important drivers for adoption (Knight Frank, 2024). Besides, local planning research captures developers' views on co-living as an innovative rental product that focuses on services, amenities, and access to the city for younger cohorts, which is useful for interpreting Gen Z adoption outside Tier 1 cities (Hsia et al., 2024).

In summary, the literature ranges from affordable housing communities to community and well-being to amenity-rich, professional housing communities, with Gen Z acceptance consistently attributed to affordability, location/access, amenities/services, and social belonging, not just structure. The study, therefore, categorised all the elements that contribute to the acceptability of co-living and grouped them into five determinants. Each determinant indicator was coded and is presented in Table 2 below

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Table 2: Determinants and Indicators of Co-living Adoption

Determinant	Indicator	Indicator Code	Sources
Facilities and amenities	Communal service	FAC1	Hsia et al. (2024); Ronald et al. (2024); Urban Land Institute (2022)
	Provided utilities	FAC2	Kent (2025); Knight Frank (2024)
	Accessible amenities	FAC3	Chen et al. (2023); Hsia et al. (2024); Knight Frank (2024); Ronald et al. (2024)
Financial	Retal price	FIN1	Kim et al. (2020); Rangel et al. (2024)
	Financial saving	FIN2	Christy & Tan (2022); Kim et al. (2020); Rangel et al. (2024)
	Affordable housing	FIN3	Christy & Tan (2022); Rangel et al. (2024); Stone (2006)
Location	Distance to city centre	LOC1	Dziauddin (2016); Hsia et al. (2024)
	Distance to workplace/study	LOC2	Dziauddin (2016); Peker et al. (2024)
Physical	Room proximity	PHY1	Brkanić Mihić & Koški (2024); Mohit et al. (2010); Saleem & Alchalabi (2024)
	Unit size	PHY2	Chan et al. (2024); Maina et al. (2025); Mohit et al. (2010)
	Size of common spaces	PHY3	Urban Land Institute (2022)
Social	Meet new people	SOC1	Kvietkute & Lappegard Hauge (2022); Ronald et al. (2024)
	Avoid loneliness	SOC2	Kvietkute & Lappegard Hauge (2022); Mellner et al. (2021); Ronald et al. (2024)
	YOLO (You Only Live Once) lifestyle	SOC3	Kvietkute & Lappegard Hauge (2022)

Source: Author

In addition, the conceptual framework for this study was developed as shown in Fig.1. The Fig. 1 shows the framework, which consists of a dependent variable (decision to co-living) coded as COL. There are also 5 independent variables: Facilities and Amenities (FAC), Financial (FIN), Location (LOC), Physical (PHY) and Social (SOC).

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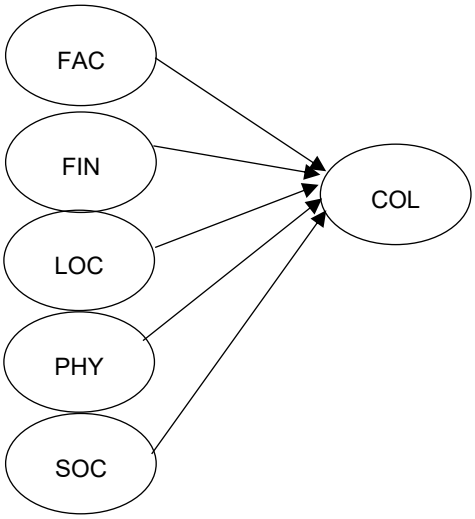


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of Co-living Determinants
Source: Author

2.4 Facilities and amenities offered

The presence of high-quality facilities such as gyms, co-working spaces, and communal kitchens increases the attractiveness of co-living spaces (Hsia et al., 2024; Knight Frank, 2024; Ronald et al., 2024). Many co-living providers market their properties as luxurious facilities at affordable prices (Cohabs, 2025; Folkcoliving, 2025). These facilities and amenities add value to the location, which will subsequently encourage more Gen Z to stay. However, overuse of amenities can lead to higher operating costs, which could reduce affordability (Chen et al., 2023). Developers need to know how to strike a balance between what they offer Gen Z and affordability.

2.5 Financial consideration

The affordability of shared housing is one of the strongest incentives for young adults to choose this housing model (Christy & Tan, 2022; Rangel et al., 2024). Faced with rising rents and home ownership costs, Gen Z is looking for cost-effective solutions that make shared housing a viable option (Chen et al., 2023). The ability to share expenses such as rent, utilities, and maintenance further increases the financial attractiveness of shared accommodation (Kim et al., 2020). It is therefore clear that co-living is the best solution for Gen Z to survive in the city. However, critics argue that despite the lower rent, hidden costs such as management fees and community service charges can diminish the financial benefits (Alyedreessy & Dalton, 2024). Instead of renting, Gen Z must also consider other costs before deciding to live together.

2.6 Location accessibility

Proximity to city centres, workplaces, and educational institutions has a major influence on the decision to live together (Dziauddin, 2016; Hsia et al., 2024). Many young professionals and students prefer living spaces that offer convenient access to public transport, shopping centres, and social hubs (Sohaimi & Shuid, 2023; Ying et al., 2023). As Gen Z tends to be very busy and has just started to live independently, most of

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them rely on public transport and avoid long commutes, making mobility accessibility a priority. Although central locations improve accessibility, they often lead to higher rents, which cancel out the advantage of affordability (S. Y. Tan et al., 2025). Due to the good accessibility, the rental value increases so that some can no longer afford to live in this location.

2.7 Physical quality of living spaces

The physical characteristics of residential communities, such as the size of the room, the efficiency of the floor plan, and the quality of care, influence resident satisfaction (Brkanić Mihić & Koški, 2024; Maina et al., 2025; Saleem & Alchalabi, 2024). While compact designs maximise space utilisation, they can compromise comfort and personal space (Preece et al., 2023). Even if they have only rented the places, these elements are an important part of living comfort for them. Well-maintained properties with modern interiors tend to be more attractive to long-term residents (He & Jia, 2024). As they have to stay longer, they need to ensure that the place can last longer so that they do not have to move out.

2.8 Social interaction and community engagement

One of the most important aspects of co-living is the sense of community it fosters (Kvietkute & Lappegard Hauge, 2022; Ronald et al., 2024). Generation Z appreciates the opportunity to network and socialise, which makes shared housing attractive (Hsia et al., 2024). Some Z have moved out of their families' homes in the village to the cities to work and study, which is why they greatly appreciate better social interaction. However, concerns about privacy and potential conflicts between tenants are often cited as disadvantages (Mellner et al., 2021). Meeting strangers sometimes leads to conflict rather than a better housemate. Some people have different lifestyles and attitudes that others cannot accept.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative research design to assess the determinants that influence the adoption of co-living. A structured questionnaire was developed and distributed to Gen Z individuals residing in Ipoh, Perak via self-administered and electronic mail. Pretests were conducted with 33 respondents prior to the final survey. The result of Cronbach's alpha was 0.919, which is considered excellent and indicates that the study is highly reliable.

3.2 Derivation of Determinants and Indicators

The determinants (as listed in the previous section) and their indicators were derived through a focused scoping review of the co-living and shared rental housing literature, supported by industry evidence. A scoping review is appropriate when the objective is to map key constructs and operationalisations across a developing evidence base, rather than to estimate pooled effects (Tricco et al., 2018).

The research was conducted using Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, with combinations of terms including "co-living", "shared housing", "communal living", "rental housing", and "young adults/Generation Z". Eligible sources were English-language peer-reviewed studies and reputable market

or sector reports that examined (i) adoption, preference, willingness to pay, or satisfaction with co-living or shared housing, and/or (ii) measurable housing-choice attributes relevant to young renters.

Candidate variables were extracted and charted, then grouped into conceptually coherent determinants consistent with housing-choice logic and recurrent empirical operationalisations. Indicators were retained where they appeared repeatedly across sources and were interpretable in the Malaysian context. Finally, the survey items were reviewed for clarity and validity through a pilot pretest before full deployment, ensuring that the wording was understandable and context-appropriate for respondents.

3.3 The Respondents

The target group for this study is Gen Z, aged between 18 and 27. Gen Z is the most active demographic segment entering rental markets and facing affordability challenges, making them a crucial cohort for urban housing policy (McKee-Ryan, 2021). Purposive sampling was used to collect the required relevant information from the target population, with 108 valid responses collected for analysis

3.4 Data Analysis

The questionnaire contained demographic information and the five key factors that influence co-living preferences. The quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (SPSS) version 28.0. The SPSS procedure included the following two techniques: (1) descriptive statistical tests using measures of central tendencies and frequency analyses and (2) parametric tests, i.e. one-sample t-tests.

The factors were categorised based on a frequency analysis using the values obtained from the central tendencies, such as the standard deviation and the mean values. The frequency analysis made it possible to categorise the factors influencing the decision to co-living. This analysis was based on the mean values obtained using the descriptive techniques of SPSS.

On the other hand, a one-sample (single) t-test of the mean was performed to measure the significance of the determinants that influence co-living. The one-sample t-test was selected based on the objective of hypothesis testing to determine whether mean perceptions exceeded a decision threshold (Kavishe et al., 2019). Rather than simply if mean scores above 3.0 are significant or critical, it was considered appropriate to perform statistical tests, such as t-tests, to determine whether the mean scores were significantly different from 3.0 or even 3.5 (to fit a five-point scale). Previous studies have used a cut-off point of 3.5 for a five-point scale in a one-sample t-test analysis. According to Kavishe et al. (2019), the value of ‘3’ would be the midpoint of the identified variables, corresponding to 50% success and resulting in equidistance. In this study, the same logic was applied and the μ value was set at 3.5. The hypothesis formulated was that the above determinants have a significant influence on the decision to co-living.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULT

The demographic profile of the respondents in this study provides important insights into the composition of Gen Z living in shared accommodation in Ipoh, Perak. The analysis included respondents aged 18 to 27, representing a group of young adults who are in transition to independent living. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with a slightly higher proportion of male respondents compared to female respondents, indicating an almost equal interest in shared accommodation between the genders (see Table 3).

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Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=108)

Variables	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Age		
18-20 years old	31	28.7
21-24 years old	48	44.4
25-27 years old	29	26.9
Gender		
Male	59	54.6
Female	49	45.4
Marital status		
Single	68	63.0
Married	40	37.0
Education level		
SPM/STPM	11	10.2
Pre-university/Diploma	31	28.7
Bachelor's degree	57	52.8
Postgraduates	9	8.3
Employment status		
Student	25	23.1
Employed	83	76.9
Income		
>RM1,000	28	25.9
RM1,000-RM2,999	14	13.0
RM3,00-RM4,999	32	29.6
<RM5,000	34	31.5

Source: Author

In terms of educational background, the majority of respondents had a bachelor's degree or were currently attending university, indicating a well-educated sample population. This aligns with previous studies indicating that university students and recent graduates are more likely to co-living due to financial constraints and a desire to live in the community (Kvietkute & Lappegard Hauge, 2022).

In terms of employment status, a significant proportion of respondents were either employed full-time or in education, suggesting that economic stability plays a role in housing preferences. The monthly income of respondents was largely in the lower to middle range, which is consistent with previous Malaysian evidence that affordability pressures are a key driver of shared and co-living choices (Christy & Tan, 2022; Rangel et al., 2024; Suraya et al., 2019).

The indicators for all five factors were collected during the literature research phase, and a total of 14 indicators were found. All indicators are given to the respondents on a 5-point Likert scale. The results of the survey show that all indicators are important, i.e. above 3.50, but only 7 indicators are significant. Details of the results can be found in Table 4 below.

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Table 4: Determinants and Indicators of Co-living Adoption by Mean, t-value and p-value, in Ranking

Determinant	Indicator	Indicator Code	Mean	t-value	p-value	Result
Facilities and Amenities	Communal service	FAC1	3.81	2.692	0.008	Significant
Location	Distance to city centre	LOC1	3.76	2.341	0.021	Significant
Social	Meet new people	SOC1	3.76	2.341	0.021	Significant
Social	Avoid loneliness	SOC2	3.76	2.341	0.021	Significant
Facilities and Amenities	Accessible amenities	FAC3	3.75	2.269	0.025	Significant
Financial	Financial saving	FIN2	3.75	2.269	0.025	Significant
Social	YOLO lifestyle	SOC3	3.75	2.269	0.025	Significant
Financial	Affordable housing	FIN3	3.62	1.194	0.235	Not significant
Physical	Room proximity	PHY1	3.62	1.194	0.235	Not significant
Physical	Unit size	PHY2	3.62	1.194	0.235	Not significant
Facilities and Amenities	Provided utilities	FAC2	3.57	0.495	0.621	Not significant
Financial	Rental price	FIN1	3.57	0.495	0.621	Not significant
Physical	Size of common spaces	PHY3	3.56	0.675	0.501	Not significant
Location	Distance to workplace/study	LOC2	3.53	0.189	0.850	Not significant

Source: Author

In general, the mean importance rating of all 14 indicators was above 3.50. However, only half of the factors were statistically significant ($p < .05$), while the other half were not significant. The results also show that one of the seven determinants had a p-value < .01, indicating that it has a relatively large influence on the decision to co-living. As shown in Table 3, most respondents felt that availability of facilities and amenities, financial considerations, location accessibility and social interaction were the four most important factors influencing Generation Z's decision to co-living. In particular, indicators such as community services, accessible facilities and amenities, financial savings, distance to the city centre, meeting new people, avoiding loneliness and the YOLO lifestyle have a significant impact on the decision to co-live.

5. DISCUSSION

The results suggest that although several factors are considered important, only a subset significantly influences the decision process for the adoption of co-living. The study found that the availability of facilities was one of the most influential determinants of co-living adoption. Facilities such as community services and accessible amenities were particularly important, highlighting that Generation Z favours convenience and access to communal spaces when choosing a living arrangement (Christy & Tan, 2022). Previous research and industry evidence show that well-appointed co-living communities offering high-speed internet, co-working areas and fitness facilities and bundling access within all-in rents are more attractive to renters and are associated with high resident satisfaction and quick leasing (Chen et al., 2023; Kent, 2025; Knight Frank, 2024; Urban Land Institute, 2022).

The financial factor was also decisive, with financial savings serving as an important indicator in the decision to cohabit. Many respondents stated that co-housing is a cost-effective solution compared to traditional rental models, where tenants bear the entire financial burden alone (Kim et al., 2020). This finding is consistent with previous studies highlighting cost-sharing and affordability as central reasons why young adults choose for co-living and shared housing (Christy & Tan, 2022; Corfe, 2019; Kim et al.,

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2020; T. H. Tan & Toh, 2025). Furthermore, the importance of financial factors in this study aligns with Malaysian evidence showing that affordability stress from expensive housing and barriers to financial access remain persistent constraints on housing decisions (Aminudin & Md. Sani, 2023). However, some studies argue that hidden costs, such as management fees and additional service charges, could offset these savings (Alyedreessy & Dalton, 2024).

The results suggest that location plays a crucial role in the adoption of co-living, particularly in relation to proximity to the city centre. This is in line with previous research showing that young professionals and students prefer co-living near educational institutions, business districts and entertainment centres (He & Jia, 2024). In addition, access to public transport and essential services significantly increases the attractiveness of a shared apartment (Olfindo, 2021; Suhaimi et al., 2021). However, studies also suggest that prime locations can drive up rental costs, potentially cancelling out the affordability advantage of shared housing (Kvietkute & Lappegard Hauge, 2022).

The study also found that social interaction and lifestyle preferences contribute significantly to the acceptance of co-living. Indicators such as meeting new people, avoiding loneliness and the YOLO (You Only Live Once) lifestyle were rated highly by respondents. This aligns with the findings of Hsia et al. (2024), who emphasise that Gen Z values community engagement and networking opportunities in their housing choices. Research by Bruzaite (2023) and Carrere et al. (2020) also supports the idea that co-living fosters a sense of belonging, which can improve psychological wellbeing and overall life satisfaction.

Although all determinants were rated with a mean above 3.5, several factors did not show statistical significance ($p > .05$). This suggests that while Gen Z recognises these factors as important, they may not be the most important factors in their decision-making process. For example, factors such as the physical quality of housing and long-term financial investment potential were less influential, suggesting that short-term affordability and social benefits are more important than structural or ownership considerations (Christy & Tan, 2022). This finding is consistent with the research findings of Mellner et al. (2021) that younger people prioritise flexibility and lifestyle adaptation over traditional housing stability.

6. CONCLUSION

Overall, this study provides empirical evidence that while several factors influence the acceptance of shared housing among Gen Z, amenities, financial savings, location and social interaction are the most important determinants. These findings contribute to the existing literature by confirming the importance of community amenities, cost-effectiveness and social engagement on preferences for co-living. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the housing preferences of young adults in secondary cities. The findings not only emphasise the importance of affordability and community for young urban dwellers but also suggest that co-living is a viable way to address housing pressures in medium-sized cities. The model developed here can serve as a reference for replication in similar Southeast Asian contexts.

This study is limited by its geographical focus on a single secondary city, which may affect its generalisability. In addition, the cross-sectional nature of the data prevents an assessment of causality. Future research should be extended to larger urban samples and utilise multivariate techniques (e.g., regression, SEM) to investigate the relationships between factors.

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Future research should further investigate how these factors vary in different urban contexts and cultural settings to develop a more holistic understanding of co-living trends. It should replicate this study in other Malaysian medium-sized urban areas such as Kuantan, Alor Setar, and Melaka, and extend coverage to East Malaysian contexts in Sarawak and Sabah. Such replication would strengthen external validity, identify whether the salience of determinants varies across different urban structures and housing market conditions, and provide a broader evidence base for place-sensitive housing strategies in Malaysia.

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8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

9. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed to the design of the research. The questionnaire and the write-up were conducted by Nurul Afiqa Farhani Mohd Sufian and Asma Senawi. The on-line survey, data cleaning and tabulation was undertaken by Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

10. DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE WRITING PROCESS

AI tools (ChatGPT) were used for drafting and assistance. All content was critically reviewed and edited by researcher

11. DATA AVAILABILITY/SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The datasets used and/or analysed during this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

12. ETHICS STATEMENT

The authors declare that this research did not involve human or animal subjects.

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