Generation Z and Their Managers: Experiences and Expectations of Interactions in Contemporary Workplaces

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Abstract

Generation Z are the latest cohort to join the workforce, presenting managers with the challenge of managing four generations simultaneously. A growing body of literature has identified the defining characteristics of Gen Z and the appropriate management styles for successfully engaging them. While the workplace expectations of Gen Z employees have been identified, the relational aspect between their expectations and managers' observations of how these play out in practice has been overlooked.

This exploratory interpretive study sought to understand the expectations of Gen Z subordinates with respect to their interactions with managers, managers observations of how these inform behaviors and experience. To do this, a qualitative, interpretivist research design was employed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 Gen Z participants, and five managers. Five organisations drawn from the banking, law and accounting, and local authority sectors in New Zealand were selected to take part in the research.

Using a thematic analysis, an empirically-based conceptual framework was created. This captures how the relationship between Gen Z subordinates' expectations, and their managers' observations of these shaped how the subordinates' made sense of their workplace experiences, as they journeyed from newcomers towards fully-fledged professionals. This finding highlights the interconnectivity of expectations and interactions, and how this influences Gen Z's perceptions of the support (i.e., scaffolding) they received from managers. Expectations and learning were shown to be mutually constitutive in a socially distributed manner (i.e., across managers, learners and their peers).

This model and these findings contribute new insights. Firstly, they reveal the degree to which expectations are met and comparisons of experiences with peers, shape the interactions between managers and subordinates. Secondly, they extend the theory of the zone of proximal development by capturing how expectations inform the learning process. Finally, the model represents a new adaption of the 3-P model of learning, which integrates the concepts of the zone of proximal development, scaffolding, and legitimate peripheral participation to produce a conceptual framework for studying workplace interaction between Generation Z subordinates and their managers and how this contributes to professional learning.

Keywords: Generation Z, expectations, manager-subordinate interaction, zone of proximal development, legitimate peripheral participation, scaffolding, sensemaking

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Thesis Overview

Generation Z are the latest cohort to join the workforce and managers are now faced with the intricate challenge of accommodating four generations simultaneously. These are, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y/Millennials, and Gen Z. Each brings with them, and are commonly defined by, a distinct set of attitudes, values, knowledge, and expectations (Parry & Urwin, 2011; Rickes, 2016). Not only must managers strive to establish a fair and equitable work environment for members of each generation, but they must also recognise their distinct qualities and requirements. This is because each cohort's ideas, views, and attitudes are reflected in their work practices, communication, and professional lives (Iorgulescu, 2016; Kubatova, 2016; Lyons & Kuron, 2014) including their expectations of their managers.

There is a growing body of research which has identified Gen Z's defining characteristics, expectations (Cillers, 2017; Iorgulescu, 2016; Seemiller, 2017; Sing & Dangmei, 2014) and the appropriate management styles for successfully engaging with them in the workplace (Arar & Yüksel, 2015; Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018; Popova, 2019). However, researchers have so far overlooked the significance of Gen Z's expectations of their dyadic relationship with their managers, and the influence these have in newcomers' integration into their organisations. This means there is an opportunity to not only capture Gen Z's expectations of their managers but compare these to the observations their managers have of interacting with their subordinates. This Masters study took up this opportunity.

This study focuses on the generational-specific values and experiences associated with interaction between a carefully selected sample of Gen Z newcomers and their managers. The study's aim was to understand Gen Z's expectations and behaviour and how these shape the way they make sense of their experiences. Integrating a number of concepts from the organisational learning literature, this research demonstrates how such expectations facilitate Gen Z's journey from newcomer to fully fledged professional.

This study has value because not only does it look at the most recent generation to enter the workforce, but it is the first to look at workers' expectations alongside their actual managers' understandings, and how they adapt to accommodate these newcomers. This provides a comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's dyadic relationships with their managers and how they make sense of their experiences which in turn, inform behaviours. As well as this, it

shapes their initiation into the workplace as they shift from newcomer to a fully participating member of their organisation. While previous research has identified Gen Z's attitudes, perceptions, and expectations towards work (Goh & lee, 2018; Iorgulescu, 2016; Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015; Singh, 2015), there has been little consideration of how these inform behaviours and experiences as they integrate into the workplace and advance their careers.

1.2 Thesis Structure

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters. The present chapter outlines the proposed topic and why it is worth studying, how it makes a novel contribution to the literature, and provides an overview of the thesis.

Chapter Two reviews the existing literature on Gen Z and the relevant theoretical concepts which were used to interpret the data.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology used to meet the aims of this research. This details the philosophical considerations which underpin the research design. Details of the selection criteria of the sample are then provided, followed by a discussion outlining the techniques used to collect and analyse the data. The chapter finishes off by detailing how the research quality was evaluated, how any ethical considerations were approached, and a summary of the chapter.

The findings of the data collection of the Gen Z subordinates and their managers is presented in Chapters Four and Five respectively. These focus on the emergent themes resulting from the analysis of the data from semi-structured interviews. Each chapter reveals the overarching themes, which are comprised of a number of interconnected sub-themes.

Chapter Six discusses these findings, drawing upon relevant theoretical concepts reviewed in the literature to interpret the findings. A conceptual model is developed to capture this interpretation. This conceptualises the expectations and experiences of Gen Z in the workplace.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by providing an overview of what thesis set out to achieve and what it found. It then outlines the theoretical and practical contributions, the limitations of the research scope, and opportunities for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As different generations enter the workforce, they bring with them a distinct set of attitudes, values, knowledge, and expectations (Parry & Urwin, 2011) that are shaped by three defining factors: perceived membership, common beliefs and behaviors and common experiences (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Managers must adjust policies, practices and procedures related to people management to accommodate new generations, while still creating an environment that accommodates an intergenerational workplace (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011; Lieber, 2010). In doing so, professional development (Iorgulescu, 2016), communication (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018), recruitment and retention (Pires, 2017), working arrangements (Bridges, 2015) and overall management style (Pires, 2017) must all be aligned with the expectations of employees.

Whilst a substantial body of previous literature has targeted managing millennials and their workplace expectations, the focus now has shifted to Gen Z as they come of age to enter the workforce, in both unskilled and knowledge-based roles. The contemporary nature of the topic has limited the breadth of research that has been completed concerning Gen Z in the workplace. Research begins to emerge around 2011 (McQueen, 2011) and gains traction throughout years 2013-2014 (Dickerson et al., 2013; Kaur, 2014; Miherich, 2013; Schawbel, 2014; Torocsick, 2014) as the oldest of Gen Z began to leave school. However, given that knowledge-based workers from Gen Z are only now beginning to enter the workforce after completing tertiary studies, much of the literature is focused on students, or predicting behaviours in the workplace, rather than being based on observations.

The purpose of this review is to explore in more depth what we already know about Gen Z in the workplace: their expectations, practices, values, and experiences, in order to contextualise their defining characteristics and provide a platform for investigating the impact of these characteristics on leader-member interaction in the workplace. This review demonstrates how this generation is distinguished from previous generations and identifies what managers already understand. It provides a foundation for this Masters study to learn more about how to adapt and prepare organisations to create a productive environment that meets the ever-changing needs of a multigenerational workforce. The theory of leader-member exchange is enlisted as a useful concept because it maps out both ends of a continuum of communication between subordinates and their managers and provides a lens to study the expectations Gen Z

employees have regarding interaction with their managers. This topic is already relevant to almost all organisations and will only continue to impact more employers, as Gen Z is predicted to make up 20% of the workforce by 2022 (Goh & Lee, 2018).

This review first defines what constitutes a generational cohort, specifically outlining the prescribed dates which comprise Gen Z. It then goes on to explore the defining characteristics of Gen Z and the environmental factors that have shaped these. The focus then shifts to the implications these generational factors have on both the Gen Z and manager experience working alongside in an organisational environment. The manager experience consists of a review of leader-member exchange theory, the impact of technology on managing and interacting with Gen Z subordinates, and the construct of authentic leadership. The Gen Z experience covers the state of these employees when entering the workplace and theories relating to uncertainty management (Section 2.5). The concept of sensemaking is then detailed. Finally, a summary of the review is provided, followed by any gaps identified within the relevant literature.

2.2 Defining Generations

A generational cohort is a somewhat ambiguous concept, with no explicit set of defining principles, nor length of time that determines where one cohort ends and the next begins. The literature suggests that the study of generations is highly value-orientated and, whilst it is easy to label generations, the dates that define their period in time are not rigid (Bejtkovsky, 2016; Rickes, 2016). These dates should be recognised more as analytical tools to understand societal change, rather than defining a generation's characteristics (Dimock, 2019). An individual born a year either side of a generational 'cut-off' would be expected to display characteristics of the generation they may not be perceived to belong to (Goh & Lee, 2018). While there is some variation between studies, generational cohorts are often defined by a common set of values, expectations, and attributes, which distinguish members from previous generations, but are not yet considered the norm (Rickes, 2016). However, it is important not to ignore the distinguishing shared historical events which contribute to these values, along with the social and economic conditions that the generation is subject to (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018; Costanza et al., 2012; Smola & Sutton, 2002). These sources of common experience create a sense of interconnectivity within generations, regardless of their wide span of ages and locations. While these experiences are significant, the connections between individuals are somewhat tenuous, due to the lack of uniformity of an individual's life decisions and fates, as each perceives and experiences life's ordeals uniquely (Torocisk et

al., 2014). Howe and Strauss (2000) narrowed down three overarching defining factors which incorporate all established aspects of a generation: perceived membership, common beliefs and behaviour, and common place/situation in history. Grouping sections of society using commonalities enables researchers to perceive how differing experiences both relate to and influence the lifecycle, and provide a framework to investigate how a particular generation would feel about issues in a different space and time (Dimock, 2019).

It can be argued that understanding generational cohorts contributes to managerial success, as the views, opinions and attitudes of members of each cohort are reflected in their work, communication and professional careers (Iorgulescu, 2016; Kubatova, 2016; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). At first glance, gaining this understanding may seem a simple task, but McQueen (2011) has compared the management of a multi-generational workforce to an art form, due to the contrasting working styles of each generation. Currently, managers are faced with the challenge of managing four co-existing generations; Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Generation Y/Millennials (1981-1996) and Gen Z (1997-2010) (Iorgulescu, 2016; Pires, 2017). Managers must not only understand each generational cohort's values and expectations, but also foster an environment and culture where they are able to work together in harmony. While research has created an in-depth understanding of generational differences, and provides a framework for understanding their decision-making, it also highlights tensions between generations (Torocsik et al., 2014).

2.3 Generation Z

Extensive literature has focused on millennials and their workplace expectations (e.g., Chou, 2012; Deal, Altman & Rogelberg, 2010; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Now, practitioners and scholars must acknowledge the latest wave of workers, Gen Z. Recent research has provided findings that are beginning to help both teachers and managers understand how to engage this cohort in the classroom and in the workplace (e.g., Cillers, 2017; Iorgulescu, 2016; Seemiller, 2017)

There is much ambiguity throughout the literature about when Generation Y finishes and Gen Z begins. The most common year acknowledged as the commencement of Gen Z is 1995 (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018; Goh & Lee, 2018; McCrindle, 2014; Schawbel, 2014), however, Taylor (2019) suggest it is as early as 1993 and Ozkan & Solmaz (2015) as late as 2000. Despite this inconsistency, generational cohorts are important for understanding societal change and behavioural norms.

2.3.1 Influence of Gen Z's Life Experiences

While there are some similarities, Gen Z has values, expectations and working styles that are vastly different from those of their predecessors. Scholars suggest that this is because they have grown up in a time characterised by terrorism, public violence, unemployment and environmental concerns that have highly influenced their attitudes towards the world (Seemiller & Grace, 2017; Singh, 2014). The result is a generational cohort who favour meaningful work over financial prosperity, placing emphasis on making a long-lasting difference in the world (Kubatova, 2016; Loveland, 2017; Seemiller & Grace, 2017). A study from Leonard (2014) found only 28% of Gen Z regarded money as their top motivator, compared to 42% of millennials. They prefer to work for community-orientated organisations which align with their perspectives of social responsibility, and provide leaders who display honesty and integrity (Deloitte, 2016; Half, 2015; Middlemiss, 2015). However, some literature contradicts this, suggesting instead that Gen Z workers do value financial rewards and feel a strong need for generous pay (Berge & Berge, 2019; Iorgulescu, 2016). While it may be true that Gen Z value meaningful work over financial prosperity, this contradicting literature suggests members of this cohort do not completely disregard remuneration, but may place less importance on it than previous generations.

Given the social and environmental conditions Gen Z have been exposed to, along with the major historical events they have lived through, it comes as no surprise that social justice issues and diversity play a prominent role in their lives and decision making (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). Gen Z is the most diverse cohort to date, and this has contributed to them being more accepting of minority groups, both inside and outside of the workplace, than other cohorts (Kubatova, 2016; Turner, 2015). Members are less likely to align themselves with, or accept, traditional racist and sexist attitudes. They take a head-on approach to issues such as LGBT rights, the suppression of women, and racial attacks against minorities, and are readily willing to express their views (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015; Seemiller & Grace, 2017). Gen Z seem to value diversity in the workplace and approach it as an advantage rather than a hindrance. However, whilst emphasising social justice issues, Schorth (2019) found that Gen Z have tendencies to shut down those whose beliefs do not align with their own, and place restrictions on free speech. It was also noted by Schorth (2019) that this characteristic could be a product of age, rather than generational differences, as narcissistic behaviours are often associated with youth.

2.3.2 Online Technology

Arguably, the most distinguishing factor of Gen Z is that they are the first generation to be born into the digital world (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). Gen Z have been shaped by the rapid advancement of online technology, having grown up with instant access to information at their fingertips, something which distinctively sets them apart from any other generations (Gupta & Gulati, 2014; Seemiller & Grace, 2017). This is the first generation to have never experienced a world without digital communication technology and the web, earning them titles such as 'digital natives' or 'the wired generation' (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018; Makitalo, 2020).

This has resulted in Gen Z developing an emotional connection to the online world, with studies showing that teens are spending up to nine hours per day on various media channels, with 41% of this time solely using mobile devices (Wee, 2017; Turner, 2015). They are not just passive consumers of online information but create it (Makitalo, 2020), interacting within these spaces. A study by Roberts and Peng (2013) found that Gen Z struggle to abstain from regularly checking their digital devices, fearing they will lose social connections or become disconnected from current events. This challenges managers to work out how they can incorporate technology into the workplace in a productive way.

Literature suggests that this has led to Gen Z becoming less involved in their communities, as they seek to meet their need for belonging online (Iorgulescu, 2016). Furthermore, technology plays a role in every aspect of their lives, and they possess numerous channels in which they can retrieve and share information simultaneously (Gupta & Gulati, 2014; Peres, 2018). Now, more than ever, this generation is connected to the world and aware of what is happening globally. This has led them to be international in their perspective, yet less geographically ambitious than millennials as they often view the world as unsafe (Singh, 2014; Turner, 2015). Social media has provided a platform that, while providing many benefits, has exposed Gen Z to a world of hate, crime and violence at a young age, making them more aware of the harms that both the physical and the digital worlds present (Turner, 2015). Despite this, many scholars argue that Gen Z are a sheltered generation, heavily concerned with emotional, physical and financial safety (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018). This generation values security, having watched their parents struggle through the 2008 recession and pay off hefty student loans, and are motivated by this to achieve financial prosperity (Schlee et al., 2019; Turner, 2015). This is reflected in their workplace expectations of secure jobs and generous pay (Iorgulescu, 2016).

Growing up with instant access to information and the ability to simultaneously access multiple digital channels has moulded Gen Z to be able to multi-task and process high levels of information extremely quickly (Iorgulescu, 2018). Seemiller and Grace (2017) propose that members of this generation are also highly visual learners and often seek information through video. This has resulted in them being highly informed, due to possessing the resources and capabilities to self-educate themselves on any chosen topic at any given time (Bencisk et al., 2016; Farrell & Phungsoonthorn, 2020). However, several researchers perceive this as one of the pitfalls faced by this generation, suggesting that they are impatient and instant-minded, and possess short attention spans (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018; Generational White, 2011; Loveland, 2017), characteristics which are seen to be problematic in the workplace.

Gen Z's technological proficiency has also shaped them to value independence, flexibility and freedom, which is reflected in their expectations of the workplace (Ozkan & Solmaz; 2015; Pires, 2017; Turner, 2015). Gen Z employees desire the independence necessary to take the initiative as a means to prove themselves within the organisation. They crave recognition and this provides them with the confidence to show initiative and be independent (Kubatova, 2016; Mihelich, 2013). Studies have shown that if managers choose to ignore these expectations it can lead to frustration and ultimately low productivity from this generation (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). The prevalence of technology in both their personal lives and the workplace drives their desire for flexible working conditions and freedom. These attributes have the potential to cause tension, as managers are generally hesitant to grant freedom to new recruits, especially in knowledge-based roles (Pires, 2017).

It must be noted that while it is likely that Gen Z are the most accepting generation when it comes to diversity and the most technologically advanced, this is likely due to the natural progression of society, rather than a generation-specific characteristic. Research on millennials present almost identical findings, identifying the cohort as 'digital natives', a title also given to Gen Z (Meng et al., 2017). As technology advances, it is only natural that those who grow up with it as a part of their day-to-day lives are going to be more accepting of it and competent in using it in the workplace. The acceptance of technology, similar to Gen Z's acceptance of diversity, is a natural progression in society. If trends remain constant, each generation will continue to be perceived as more accepting and welcoming of the technology encountered as they grow up compared to their predecessors.

Furthermore, the majority of studies focusing on Gen Z and their characteristics have sampled from developed countries where rates of access to the internet are high. Their findings, therefore, may not provide a truly global representation of Gen Z employees, as they have not considered those in underdeveloped countries where internet access is limited, and where the cohort has grown up in different societal conditions and environments (Farrell & Phugsoonthorn, 2020). Given the influence technology has had on Gen Z, there may be a vast difference in values, expectations and experiences between members from developed and underdeveloped regions around the world.

2.3.3 Work Culture

A work culture that, through a mix of visible artefacts and shared underlying values and beliefs (McShane et al, 2019), encourages learning and development, is best suited to this generational cohort, who feel as though traditional education does not provide them with the framework to successfully navigate the real world (Bridges, 2015; Fratricova & Kirchmayer, 2018; Singh & Dangmei, 2016). While Gen Z have lofty career expectations, Singh and Dangmei (2016) claim that they are also more realistic about these than their millennial counterparts. They also suggest that they are optimistic about future endeavours. However, in contrast to this, research from Christensen (2018) suggests they are less optimistic because of past economic recessions and hardship. The literature is further divided on the Gen Z willingness to work hard towards success in their future endeavours. They are often perceived as demanding, materialistic and entitled (Generational White, 2011). However, it may be the case that they simply thrive in different conditions to their predecessors. Research suggests that Gen Z employees expect managers to act as mentors, value strong working relationships with their superiors, and prefer frequent feedback rather than waiting for annual performance reviews (Kubatova, 2016; Iorgulescu, 2016; Schawbel, 2016). Research also suggests that both productivity and loyalty are strengthened when managers take an active role in Gen Z employees' professional development and establish strong working relationships with them (Montana & Petit, 2008; Singh, 2014).

2.4 The Managers Experience: Managing Generation Z

Statistics from Deloitte (2017) show that Gen Z employees will represent 20% of the workforce by the year 2022 (Goh & Lee, 2018). It is therefore essential that management are pro-active in preparing their workplace for this influx of young employees, by revising their current management styles. It is not enough for employers to just understand how to manage youthful employees, but by understanding Gen Z's values, desires, and expectations which

are shaped by their prevailing socio-political-economic conditions and collective experiences (Jiri, 2016; Schroth, 2019; Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka, 2017), they can better manage these employees.

2.4.1 Interaction Between Managers and Subordinates

The influence that communication has on organisational performance has been comprehensively studied (De Ridder, 2004; Kitchen & Daly, 2002; Mohamad et al, 2014). Expectations of workplace communication differ between generational cohorts (Glass, 2007; Moore & Krause, 2015; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Effective exchanges are built upon mutual trust, respect, and supervisor influence over the employee (Janssen & Yperen, 2004). Given that each generation has its unique attitudes, values, knowledge, and expectations (Parry & Urwin, 2011), it is reasonable to assume that managers must adjust their communication practices accordingly to accommodate the cohort to which the respondent belongs, as they will have grown up in different communication environments which have produced generation-specific expectations. When they move into the workforce, employees enter communication climates which they are unlikely to have encountered before. Communication climate refers to "the subjective views, interpretations and satisfaction of the members of an organisation with the communication phenomena, in a certain situation, in a certain moment" (Tukiainen, 2001. p. 47). The concept of the leader-member exchange (LMX) helps to understand these interactions, capturing the dyadic exchange relationships between supervisors and subordinates, and mangers must grasp these expectations in order to develop meaningful communication with their reportees (Gerstner & Day, 1997).

Leader-member Exchange Theory

A substantial amount of attention has been given to understanding the exchanges between managers and their subordinates and has led to a large body of literature. Prominent in this literature is Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX). The theory emerged in the 1970's, was developed by Danserau, Cashman and Graen (1973), and was originally named Vertical Dyad Linkage Theory. LMX focuses on the exchanges between manager and subordinate and the dyadic relationship and work roles that develop over time (Bauer & Green, 1996) as a result of these interactions. Exchanges according to LMX theory are considered a transactional process where both managers and subordinates actively contribute (Hollander, 1980). The power which subordinates wield over their boss is considered alongside the influence that managers have on the interaction (Breukelen, Schyns & Blanc, 2006). The

leader and member make distinct contributions to the transactional process, bringing various 'goods' or 'commodities' to the table (Danserau et al., 1995).

Given the hierarchical structure of most organisational settings, subordinates' role-taking behaviour and expectations are heavily influenced by their direct superiors (Dienesch & Liden, 1986) as a result of these exchanges. Therefore, the interpersonal exchange between a newcomer and their direct superior has a very strong influence on the role development of the subordinate, even though it is an ambiguous and often informal process (Graen, 1976). Differentiation (i.e., varying quality LMX) then consequently exists in leaders' relationships with subordinates (Erdogan & Bauer, 2001). The variance is defined in terms of two opposing categories based on the quality of exchanges, depending on the subordinate's in-group/out-group membership (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). These opposing groups are characterised by the level of trust, interaction, support, and rewards, with the in-group displaying high levels compared to the out-group (Bauer & Erdogan, 2015; Graen & Cashman, 1975). The quality of the exchange relationship between leader and subordinate is therefore highly influential in terms of the subordinates' experiences within the organisation and the role-taking process (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden et al., 1997). Mueller and Lee (2002) suggest that those in the manager's in-group who undertake high quality exchanges are rewarded by more open communication patterns, while those in the out-group suffer from closed communication, often bound to the basic terms of the employment contract.

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) interpret the development of the LMX as a process, where leader and member begin the exchange relationship on neutral ground with low-quality exchanges which are developed through trust-building processes such as task delegation and the leader offering a high-quality relationship, characterised by informal interaction and more personal disclosures. Through this process both parties are likely to make assessments of the ability, benevolence, and integrity displayed by the other person, which becomes integral to role taking (Bauer & Green, 1996; Erdogan & Bauer, 2014). Liden and Graen's (1980) study of the relationship between first-level foremen and their direct superior found that those in the in-group were considered higher performers by their superiors and were more likely to take on extra assignments.

The literature suggests high-quality leader-member exchanges are characterised by trust, liking, respect and support (Graen, 2003; Liden & Maslyn, 1998) which is particularly important during organisational change. The change literature suggests a link with the

mitigation of organisational uncertainty in relation to communication, which facilitates effective change management (Hwang et al., 2021). Subordinate members of high-quality exchange relationships perceive their superiors as credible sources of information, which therefore increases their sense of control in ambiguous environments as "information that is credible, trustworthy, and useful is pivotal to successful change" (Hwang et al., 2021, p.4). Furthermore, Henderson et al. (2006) extend this idea, suggesting that source credibility correlates to increased goal commitment generally.

A recent critique published by Gottfredson, Wright and Heaphy (2020) challenges the validity and theoretical foundations of LMX Theory, concluding that the construct is plagued by conceptual, measurement and modelling issues. These authors identified that there is no clear definition of what constitutes the LMX, proposed measurement procedures do not accurately depict LMX's theoretical foundations, and endogeneity exists in modelling techniques. These scholars conclude that LMX is permeated with so many fundamental issues that it could in no way be used as a valid construct. They argue that a complete overhaul of the conceptual underpinnings is necessary for it to have any future value. They are not the first scholars to identify such conceptual issues rooted in the LMX theory, with studies such as those of Van Breukelen, Schynes and Le Blanc (2006), and Sheer (2014), proposing similar findings in their critiques.

Despite the strong criticisms of the construct identified by Gottfredson, Wright and Heaphy (2020), when reviewing the literature, Bauer and Erdogan (2015) observed that over the last decade, LMX theory has had increased research attention and publications, confirming that it is still treated as a pivotal construct, at least within the leadership literature. An analysis of the Scopus database depicted this sudden growth graphically, as displayed in Figure 1. From 2011-2020, 1,350 of the total 1,856 articles available on the database were published, compared to 381 between 2001-2010.

Figure 1: Frequency count of articles containing "Leader-member Exchange" in the title, key words, and/or abstract in four-year increments from 1971-2020 (Scopus database)
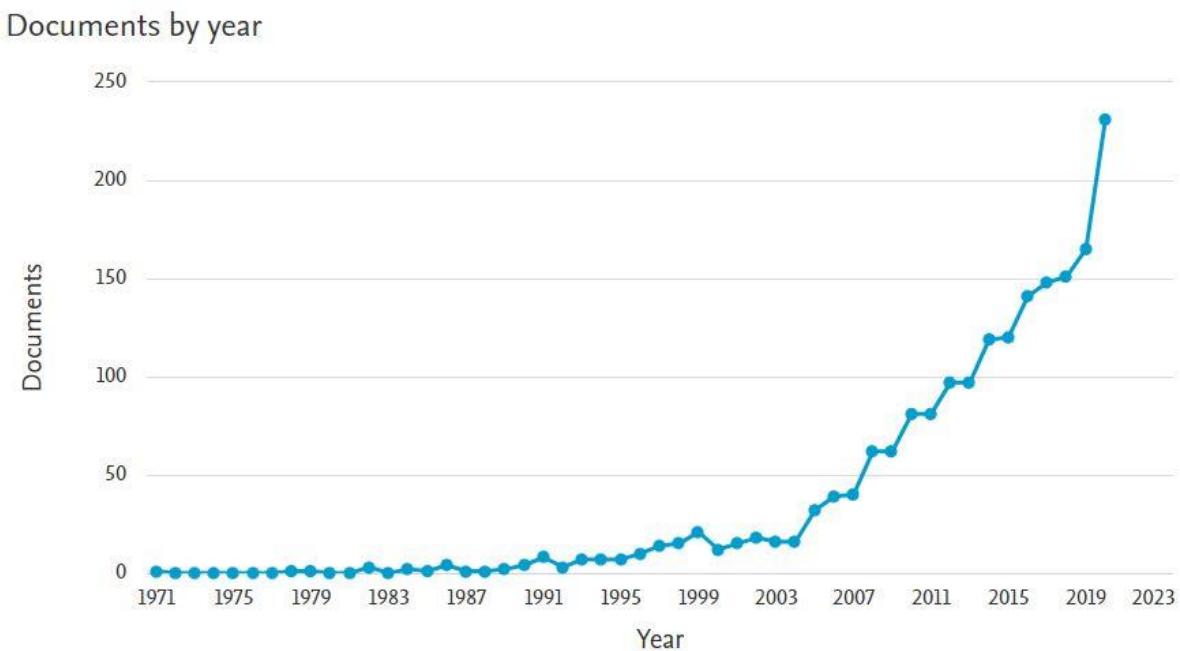
Despite damning critique, this concept has clearly been found to be meaningful by scholars wanting to address the quality of engagement between managers and their subordinates.

2.4.2 Teaching Generation Z

Zone of Proximal Development

Originally developed to conceptualise the cognitive learning and development of children at school, Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) provides a framework for analysing the relationship between development and educational interventions (Allal & Ducrey, 2000). Vygotsky (1978) defined this concept as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). This concept is deeply embedded in the sociocultural context of the phenomenon (Marginson & Dang, 2016; Smagorinsky, 2009), underpinned by the role of social construction in facilitating critical thinking (Schunk, 2004; Verenikina, 2003). Vygotsky perceived social interaction as not only promoting cognitive development, but profoundly shaping and even transforming the way the learner thinks (Cole & Wertsch, 1996).

The concept of scaffolding refers to the instructional techniques used to provide temporary support to help the learner move through the ZPD. This concept, which was never used by Vygotsky himself, was introduced by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976). Scaffolding provides a clear framework for the development process, providing specific support to the learner at each stage so they can reach a goal which was deemed unattainable if not supported (Davis & Miyake, 2004; Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). As the learner becomes more proficient, they internalise their strategies and thinking, applying this to future problem solving, which enables the teacher support to become less necessary and eventually allows the scaffold to be removed (Wass, Harland & Mercer, 2011; Yelland & Masters, 2005). Scaffolding therefore is not about the passing on of knowledge, but rather the shared processual meaning, which is co-constructed through the learning process, resulting in the learner producing new cognitive abilities (Moll, 1992; Kimball & Turner, 2018). While the ZPD assumes that intellectual asymmetry must exist between the learner and a more capable peer or teacher, scaffolding recognises that learning can also take place through social interaction where all participants are of equal cognitive ability and collaborate to gain knowledge (Fernandez et al., 2015). Wass, Harland & Mercer (2011) give the example of a university student, where a number of social actors including other students, professors, lecturers, and researchers provide direct and indirect assistance.

Vygotsky's framework is not without its criticism. Central to this is the critique of Wertsch (1985), who points out that Vygotsky developed the concept without proper definition of what constitutes problem solving with the assistance of a more capable peer or adult, leaving the level of potential development as an ambiguous zone and the ZPD therefore difficult to delineate. Wertsch (1984) argues that to better understand and analyse the ZPD framework, the issues of situation definition, intersubjectivity, and semiotic mediation must be addressed, mitigating the potential for confusion in conceptualisation of the theory. Smargorinsky (2018) provides a more recent critique of the ZPD, describing the concept as "widely misunderstood" (p. 70). This perception is shared by Mahn (2015), claiming the ZPD "has been referred to as the most over-used, least understood concept in educational studies" (p. 252). This is because the interpretive viewpoint is often lost as the concept is frequently extrapolated from its sociocultural underpinnings. The work of Chaiklin (2003) supports this critique, suggesting there are three common misconceptions when applying the ZPD. The first is that the ZPD is not a focus on the acquisition of a certain competency through instruction, but rather the development of the learner. The second misconception outlined is

that the emphasis is often placed on the notion of learning through collaboration with a more knowledgeable teacher, where rather it is about comprehending the significance of that support in terms of the learner's development and growth. Thirdly, the potential learning perpetuated by the ZPD is not a pre-existed characteristic of the learner, as frequently construed, rather is an indicator of the presence of particular developing functions. It is argued by Smargorinsky (2018) that Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD, along with Wood's accompaniment of the scaffolding concept, have been approached by scholars in ways that have hindered the considerably wider potential for comprehending human development. This is due to the application of the concept throughout the literature having focused on short-term problem solving, whereas Vygotsky's work sought to understand the development of higher mental functions over time (Verenikina, 2003), as a "historically grounded, culturally-orientated, socially-mediated, long-term process" (Smargorinsky, 2018) (p.74).

Adult Learning in the Workplace

Whilst the early conceptualisations of the ZPD and scaffolding were predominantly applied to the development of children, there is now a strong body of literature which has applied this to adult learning (e.g., Donato, 1994; Harland, 2003; Metso, 2013, Shah & Rashid, 2016; Wass, Harland & Mercer, 2011). Applying ZPD and scaffolding to adult learning in the workplace has additional dimensions; adults' sense of dignity and autonomy need to be simultaneously taken into account alongside their prior knowledge and experience (Shah & Rashid, 2016).

An example of this can be found in Ohta (2006), who looked to understand second language acquisition with adults using the concept of ZPD. The research suggested that adults were inadvertently using the ZPD as a tool, functioning in a self-managed manner, requesting and receiving help from an array of sources, and continuously self-assessing their needs as their level of proficiency grew. Ohta's (2005) research therefore emphasises ZPD gap which is internalised by the individual. This is defined as "a gradual increase in the individual's skill in managing their own ZPDs and creating developmentally rich settings for themselves" (p. 163). When applying this to adult learning, adults, unlike children, are able to internalise the ZPD itself, and therefore the idea may be applied to a larger range of learning situations for adults than it can be for children.

Kimball & Turner (2018) discuss the function of the ZPD and legitimate peripheral participation in apprentice-style learning, focusing on undergraduate students in an

immersion experience learning about undertaking qualitative research. They discovered that the expert researcher's scaffolding function was not to educate, but to collaborate with the students, engaging them as colleagues and placing importance on their contribution. Consequently, the students experienced a fundamental transformation in their identity towards that of a qualitative researcher.

Learning the ropes: Becoming a fully-fledged professional

Workplace learning is a continuous and collaborative process of both individual and social involvement whereby the organisational artifacts and sociocultural environment are central to learning (Guile & Griffiths, 2001; Hager, 2013). In order to generate new knowledge and practices, learners recontextualise their pre-existing theoretical and practical knowledge in new settings through enlisting the help of more experienced individuals (Akkerman & Baker, 2012; Griffiths & Guile, 2003). Tynjala (2013) in attempt to capture the complex multi-layer concept workplace learning, proposes an adaption of Biggs' (1987, 1999) the 3-P model, based on the idea that the sociocultural environment defines the possibilities and constraints of the workplace. The framework consists of three components: *Presage* refers to the learner factors (e.g., pre-existing knowledge and experience, ability, self-confidence) and learning context (e.g., organisational structure, manager support, collaborative climate). *Process* is the learning activities which are undertaken through participation, collaboration, and interaction (e.g., taking on new challenges and tasks, participating in networks, reflecting, and evaluating performance), and *Product* specifies the diverse learning outcomes (e.g., task performance, personal development, improved productivity). Billett (1995) points out that there are however a number of limitations which inhibit the efficiency of workplace learning. These are: undesirable knowledge, access to activities, reluctance of experts, absence of expertise, knowledge which is opaque and instructional media. Vocational education and training (VET) encapsulate workplace learning in action, comprised of the activities related to an individual learning and acquiring job-specific skills and competencies through experience and social interaction (Billet, 2002; Hager, 2013; Mikkonen et al., 2017). This is often undertaken in apprentice-style learning, where the construction of knowledge is moulded through social and cultural circumstances (Billett, 1995; Scribner, 1985).

The theory of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) looks at learning in the context of newcomers to a community, conceptualising their transformation to becoming an experienced member through the induction into a social system (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Consistent with the ZPD (Consalvo, Schallert & Elias, 2015; Hasrati, 2005), LPP portrays learning as a

situated activity, where learning is perceived as a social phenomenon, as the learner interacts with both their peers and the wider sociocultural environment (O'Donnell & Tobbell, 2007). Participation and by extension, learning, is only fully possible after becoming a member of the community of practice, signifying an identity shift within the learner. The processes, connections and experiences that make up the participant's sense of belonging then affect the form and scope of later learnings (Fuller et al., 2005). The LPP has been employed by scholars as a theoretical tool to understand workplace learning. Fuller and Unwin (2003) focuses on the connection between apprentices and senior employees, and the larger learning setting in which the operate in the UK steel industry. A further example is that of Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2003), who investigated the LPP in the context of secondary school teachers learning within their roles. A study from Metso (2014) looking at the development of professional skills in vocational students during workplace learning revealed three key organisational factors: an innovative climate, guidance, and interactions with seniors. Furthermore, they suggest that contrary to traditional perceptions, the autonomy of the learners did not positively correlate with enhanced development, but rather the social involvement of their colleagues played a central role in their learning. Given the sociocultural underpinnings of the ZPD and LPP, scaffolding opportunities in adult learning are extended beyond formal education settings to more informal environments (Kearsley, 1991; Lave, 1991). This interactive and collaborative style of learning, in association with the accessibility to people and materials provided by technology, greatly expands the horizons of learning possibilities for adults from traditional perspectives (Johnson, 1994).

While much of the literature reflects a one-size-fits-all approach to adult learning, it is also important to consider the unique set of histories, preferences and values which comprise each generational cohort (Holyoke & Larson, 2009). There is now a wide body of learning literature which has set out to do this (e.g., Boya & Kroth, 2001; Dirkx, 2005; Field, 2013; Holyoke & Larson, 2009; Jennifer, 2017). However, there is little known about the application of these adult learning concepts to the latest cohort, Gen Z. A lot more is known about previous generations, but these groups have different life experiences to Generations Z, so it is important not to generalise across the cohorts.

2.4.3 Implications of Technology on Workplace Management

Due to the prevalent role technology plays in their lives, Gen Z are entering the workforce with underdeveloped social and relationship skills (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018). They are accustomed to communicating via digital channels, such as email or text, resulting in calling

others and face-to-face communication being out of their comfort zone (Dickerson et al, 2013). With technology developing at such rapid pace, this research has quickly become outdated - very few Gen Z use email as a predominate form of communication outside of the workplace. More recent findings from Makitalo (2020) state that "social media is, without a doubt, the right channel for interacting with Generation Z" (p. 48). Social media is one of Gen Z's most commonly used digital channels (Kaur, 2014), further research aligns with this, suggesting that Gen Z are inclined towards using newer forms of digital communication (Kitchen & Daly, 2002). This poses a challenge to managers in two ways; first, they must find a way to incorporate social media into the workplace without it being detrimental to productivity. Second, this illustrates the rapid pace at which Gen Z's preferences are evolving, making it difficult for managers to stay ahead of trends and effective management policies.

Whilst literature suggests Gen Z are highly educated (Bencisk et al., 2016) and technologically skilled (Singh, 2014), managers are observing that they struggle to collaborate with others in the workplace (Kick et al, 2015). This could be due to their lack of interpersonal communication skills, characterised by an individual's ability to express themselves (Kick et al, 2015). Gen Z lacking these skills can be problematic in the workplace in hampering expression of their ideas and opinions. It also affects their ability to build effective relationships with colleagues. Their proclivity for digital communication and tendency to use abbreviated language has also negatively influenced their listening and writing skills (Iorgulescu, 2016). In a study by the Society for Human Resources Management (2011) surveying various HR managers, 41% of respondents identified written communication as the most important skill current applicants were lacking. While this may be slightly before Gen Z's time in the workforce, it is none-the-less analysis that can reasonably be applied to the next generation.

Although Gen Z employees suffer from underdeveloped interpersonal skills, Ozkan & Solmaz (2015) suggest that they value high sociability in the workplace. A wide body of literature supports this, proposing that Gen Z employees prefer frequent, informal, face-to-face communication, regardless of their lack of social skills (Chicca & Shellenbarder, 2018; Kubatova, 2016; Lanier, 2016; Loveland, 2017; Tayfun & Yuksel, 2015). This again could be linked to the prevalence of technology that already exists in this generation's lives. The workplace may provide an environment where they can develop social relationships that they otherwise lack the confidence to try, or that they may not have had the opportunity to do in

other parts of their life. As the wider body of literature portrays Gen Z individuals to be highly emotionally connected to digital media and less connected to their local communities (Iorgulescu, 2016; Turner, 2015; Wee, 2017), the workplace may provide a sense of belonging for Gen Z outside the boundaries of the digital world.

The negative impact of technology goes further than just interpersonal skills. Scholars and practitioners have also found cognitive issues in Gen Z employees' problem-solving abilities, with 51% of HR managers indicating that this was the most important skill lacking in applicants (SHRM, 2011). This could be a result of a combination of factors - Gen Z having instant access to an immense amount of information via the internet, and over-parenting preventing opportunities to learn life skills (Schroth, 2019). Singh (2014) suggests that managers must be ready to teach such skills that previous generations may have already possessed when entering the workforce.

Milligan (2014) proposes introducing the theory of 'reverse mentoring' to combat both the older generation's negative perceptions of social media and Gen Z's shortcomings in interpersonal communication skills. This involves pairing a Gen Z employee with an older partner, to mentor each other. The Gen Z employee can illustrate the benefits of social media, and the older employee can help them understand how to develop meaningful workplace relationships (Kick et al, 2015). Studies shows that Gen Z do not have preference in who they develop relationships within the workplace and are willing to cooperate with all generations (Jiri, 2016). This aligns with their acceptance and expectation of seeing diversity in the workplace (Kubatova, 2016; Lanier, 2016; Turner, 2015).

While the wider body of literature suggests some truth to the conclusion that Gen Z members possess underdeveloped interpersonal and cognitive abilities, intergenerational differences may also contribute to communication issues between Gen Z and other generations. The problem may not lie solely with Gen Z's perceived inability to communicate effectively in the non-digital world, there is also the issue of the inability of older generations to understand the best ways to communicate with them. Deal et al., (2010), declared that Baby Boomers often perceive Millennials as difficult to interact with, believing they come across as entitled. This illustrates that older generations may always have a natural bias to believe that those younger than them are less effective at communicating than their own generation. This is due to not truly understanding them and perhaps forgetting the differences they once experienced as they entered the workplace.

2.4.4 Values, Expectations and Authenticity in Generation Z's Workplace Relationships

Employer's values and expectations may differ from those of Gen Z, so to effectively manage them requires that mangers reflect on their management style. The literature suggests that, to work well with Gen Z, managers should take a more organic approach to leadership, rather than being autocratic (Arar & Yuksel, 2015; Pires, 2017). This aligns with research that highlights Gen Z employees' desire for flexibility, freedom and independence in their work (Ozkan & Solmaz; 2015; Pires, 2017; Turner, 2015). Taking into consideration Gen Z's global perspective and tech-savvy nature, telecommuting can provide their desired flexibility and independence, whilst also benefiting the organisation, as set hours do not necessarily translate into effectiveness and efficiency (Arar & Yuksel, 2015) for this group. The availability of telecommuting also provides the opportunity for managers to pick the best candidate for the job, regardless of their location, as physical presence may not always be a job requirement. However, such arrangements may not be practical due to Gen Z's youth and inexperience, as telecommuting brings privileges that generally must be gained as trust is established. Managers are generally hesitant to grant this level of freedom to new recruits (Pires, 2017) until they are confident that there is satisfactory alignment between the subordinate's and their own values, expectations, and subsequent behaviour.

2.4.5 Leadership Style

Alignment between values and actions is also an important consideration for leaders wishing to achieve authenticity. The construct of authenticity has theoretical roots that can be traced back to Greek philosophy, where it meant "to thine own self to be true" (Luthans & Avoilio, 2003). Harter (2002) interprets authenticity as taking ownership of one's personal experiences, reflecting upon their thoughts, emotions, needs, desires or beliefs. It is suggested by Erickson (1995) that authenticity should not be perceived as an absolute state of said person but rather that one can be more or less authentic.

An intricate link is present between authenticity and authentic leadership, as for one to be deemed an authentic leader, it is necessary that they achieve authenticity (Gardner et al., 2005). Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of authentic leadership, the body of literature is underpinned by the common idea that authentic leaders own their personal experiences and their actions reflect their true selves (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Shamir & Eilam, 2005). In the postmodernism leadership literature, authenticity is linked to leaders who exhibit high levels of self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours (Avolio, Luthans & Walumbwa, 2004; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Authentic leadership, however, is a

multi-dimensional construct which extends beyond the self, incorporating the development of authentic relationships with followers (Gardner et al., 2005). The concept of 'authentic followership' is introduced by Shamir and Eilam (2005), when followers follow leaders for authentic reasons, resulting in them displaying internalised regulatory processes, balanced processing of information, relational transparency, and authentic behaviour paralleling what we describe as characterising authentic leaders (Gardner et al., 2005). Gardner et al. (2005) propose that such relationships are characterised by: "(a) transparency, openness and trust, (b) guidance toward worthy objectives, and (c) an emphasis on follower development" (p. 345). Avolio (2005) focuses on authentic leader development, portraying this as an interactive process between leader and follower, developing relationships shaped by openness, transparency, trust, and genuineness (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). These are the qualities that the literature suggests Gen Z seek and value in their managers (Half, 2015; Middlemiss, 2015).

2.5 The Gen Z Worker's Experience: Communicating with Line Managers

Makitalo (2020) makes the point that Gen Z want to be heard not seen. They expect two-way communication and their ideas to be valued and listened to by managers, regardless of their age or inexperience (Schawbel, 2014). Managers may benefit from considering a flatter organisational structure with decentralised decision-making (Arar & Yuksel, 2015). Allowing employees to be involved in not only the decision-making process, but also the overall direction of the organisation, can increase Gen Z employees' motivation and loyalty (Pires, 2017). Gen Z perform best when managers take time to develop meaningful working relationships with them, acting as more of a mentor to help them achieve their goals (Bridges, 2015; Pires, 2017). Berge & Berge (2019) found that they expect continuous training from the beginning to the end of their career, compared to previous generations who focus on training early in their career.

Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka (2017) point out that Gen Z do not plan on long-term employment with a single company and are constantly looking for new opportunities. Much of the Gen Z cohort have a desire to work for themselves, or freelance, rather than commit to long-term contracts. Their high entrepreneurial drive (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018), tendency to get bored easily, and ambition to learn new things may be key drivers for this. To combat this, managers may need to focus on job enrichment (Arar & Yuksel, 2015). Given Gen Z's ability to process high volumes of information quickly and multi-task (Iorgulescu, 2018), it is not unreasonable for employers to look to vertically expanding roles as they progress, to keep

these employees mentally stimulated. Tulgan (2013) suggests structuring jobs around the strengths and goals of Gen Z employees to strengthen loyalty and encourage long-term commitment.

2.5.1 Work Experience

It is important for managers to be prepared for Gen Z entering their workplace, as in comparison with past generations they are the least likely to have worked in their youth. Schroth (2019), states that in 1979, 60% of teens had jobs, compared with just 34% in 2015. This statistic is expected to drop to a mere 25% in 2024. She also outlines possible reasons for this, such as low-skilled jobs being occupied by older workers, competition to gain entrance to high-end tertiary education facilities causing students to take part in more extracurricular activities, and less need to help their families financially due to more prosperous economic conditions. Considering this lack of work experience, it would be logical to assume Gen Z are likely to have unrealistic expectations about what their working conditions should be. Managers can mitigate this by giving accurate job previews and managing the terms of the psychological contract through clear and concise communication (Schroth, 2019).

2.5.2 Uncertainty Management

Considering Gen Z's lack of work experience, relatively youth and recent arrival in the workforce, it is logical to assume they are at risk of experiencing some level of uncertainty, especially at the beginning of their tenure in their organisation, where the leader-subordinate relationship is in the early stages. Developed by Berger and Calabrese (1975), uncertainty reduction theory (URT) seeks to explain the interaction between two individuals when they are uncertain about their environment (Knobloch, 2015). URT is a prominent theory in communication literature, providing scholars with model of how people manage uncertainty and shape their communication to do so. Although URT focused primarily on the meeting of two strangers, it inspired the development of a number of uncertainty management theories which can be applied throughout a range of contexts, where uncertainty is generally defined as "a state in which individuals lack confidence in their ability to predict the outcomes of an event, an issue, an interaction, a relationship, or a particular behaviour" (Afifi, 2009, p. 973). Drawing upon the change management literature, Hwang et al., (2021) points out that effective communication is crucial in reducing uncertainty as it gives the employee a sense of control through changing environments, highlighting the intricate link between communication and uncertainty reduction.

As the literature surrounding uncertainty has developed, increasing attention has been paid to the alternative behavioural and psychological responses, as reducing uncertainty is only one of an indefinite number of possibilities (Brashers, 2001; Brashers & Barbrow, 1996; Brashers, Neidig, Haas et al., 2000). Brashers (2001) points out that although in times of decision-making, planning, or predicting behaviours the mitigation of uncertainty may be in the persons' best interests, in other situations it can be a source of hope and optimism. Responses are dependent on the persons' appraisals and emotional reactions to the given situation, shaped by the impact it has on their lives and pre-existing knowledge (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Kramer (1999) focuses on such appraisals in an organisational setting, suggesting that employees' motivation to mitigate uncertainty depends on whether their appraisal is positive, neutral or negative. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) provide a further example where uncertainty may be welcomed, proposing that in interpersonal relationships it can provide level of spontaneity desired by the individual. Brashers et al. (2000) note that a person's appraisal and emotional response to uncertainty can shift over time as new information is discovered, or it does not get resolved in due diligence. Gen Z, being newcomers to the workplace, are likely to try avoid uncertainty, as this hinders their ability to contribute to the organisation. Given that there is a specific set of performance expectations which they must meet, it is important that ambiguity is mitigated.

2.6 Sensemaking

Sensemaking is a prominent construct in organisational studies, drawing attention from scholars from a diverse range of disciplines (Maitlis, & Christianson, 2014; Sandberg * Tsoukas, 2020; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). As proposed by Weick (1995), sensemaking is an activity central to organising (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), a constructive process through which the individual attempts to understand and explain (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988; Weick, 1995) environments which are equivocal, confusing or unexpected (Maitlis, 2005, Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weick, 1995). Colville, Brown and Pye (2012) point out the importance that the distinction between equivocality and ambiguity plays in regard to understanding sensemaking. They state that when people seek to lessen the ambiguity they are confronted with, they take action in order to answer the question 'what is going on?' (or 'what is the story?') (Weick et al., 2005). That is different to when they are dealing with equivocality. These authors suggest that action clarifies information through influencing what it is you are paying attention to and shaping what's going on while you're doing it, rather than allowing you to "eliminate lack of clarity" (Colville et al., 2012 p.7;

Weick et al., 2005). This is homogenous to Weick's (1995) distinction between interpretation and sensemaking, as the term interpretation suggests that there is objective meaning waiting to be discovered by the individual, whereas sensemaking is more about invention rather than discovery (Brown, Colville & Pye, 2015; Paul, Gioia & Mehra, 1996). Action therefore is not exclusive to sensemaking, rather it provides another means of comprehending new environments, offering extra information for us to interpret and give meaning to (Ancona, 2012; Weick et al., 2005).

In order to mitigate the experience of equivocality, the individual extracts and interprets cues from their environment (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Brown et al, 2015), seeking to create a world which is 'sensible' (Weick, 1995). They extract cues and make logical sense retroactively, all while enacting some level of order into the ongoing conditions (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfield, 2005). Sensemaking therefore goes beyond interpretation, it entails the on-going composition of reality, as people actively participate in the construction of the reality which they are attempting to grasp (Brown et al, 2015).

Engrained within the concept of sensemaking is the component of sensegiving (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) define sensegiving as the "process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organisational reality" (p. 442). Organisational leaders and other stakeholders, such as middle managers, directors, and other employees (Balogun, 2003; Corley & Gioia, 2004) utilise sensegiving as an interpretive process (Bartunek et al., 1999; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) in which actors influence one another using persuasive or evocative language (Dunford & Jones, 2000) to achieve an acceptance of their particular understanding (i.e., sense) of a situation. This sensegiving is less about discovery and more about definition than is sensemaking.

Sensemaking and sensegiving in organisations predominantly take place as a consequence of the occurrence of unprecedented circumstances (Weick, 1995) where the meaning is obscured by equivocality and uncertainty, leaving the individual unsure how to act (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). This occurs as a result of the misalignment between expectations and reality, whether that be an unexpected event, or the non-occurrence of an expected event (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). When the magnitude of this misalignment is large enough, it prompts the organisational members to construct a story to make sense of what is going on (Colville et al., 2012). When the members are the leaders, they are likely to be engaging in

sensegiving to ensure that their subordinates share their own sense of the situation (Ancona, 2012)

This is consistent with the body of work which suggests that sensemaking occurs in a collective, facilitated through discourse (Mills, 2002; Weick, 1995; Hutchins, 1991; Giogia & Thomas, 1996). Mills, Thurlow and Mills (2010) state that an "organisation's rules, routines, symbols, and language will all have an impact on an individual's sensemaking activities and provide routines or scripts for appropriate conduct." An example of this is the study undertaken by Mills (2002), focusing on blue-collar workers at a food-processing factory in New Zealand. She concluded that sensemaking was not solely anchored in their linguistic code but meaning was also drawn from the employees' daily geosocial surroundings. Sensemaking therefore is a collaborative process between organisational members, as they seek to create sense of their constantly evolving organisational identity within the relevant social constructs (Mills, 2010). As such, it is composed of cycles of sensemaking and sensegiving – a process that occurs when senior workers mentor junior staff (Clark & Geppert, 2011; Gioia & Hamilton, 2016).

Weick insists that one of the features of sensemaking was that it is intimately involved with identity (Weick, 1995). This has prompted many scholars to examine the role which sensemaking plays in identity management (Boncori & Smith, 2020; Vough & Cazam 2020; Wegner, Jones & Jordan, 2019). When collecting and analysing data from a sensemaking viewpoint, the emphasis can be placed on the individual's perceptions of their identity (i.e., self-identity), which is formed through their comprehension of the organisational environment and its social processes (Mills, 2009) or the collective sense of identity (i.e., group or organisational identity). Karreman and Alvesson's (2001) research places sensemaking central to identity construction, investigating the simultaneous development of believable organisational realities (i.e., organisational identity) and professional identities (i.e., self- and group identities) at a Swedish evening newspaper. While their workplace meetings on the surface seem ordinary and insignificant to sensemaking, an ethnographic study revealed that individuals who appear to be discussing their job are actually co-creating meaning of their "multiple social, group, professional and organisational identities" (Brown et al., 2015). There is a plethora of imbricated research on sensemaking, spanning the individual's sense of self as well as group (e.g., profession) and organisational identity work (Maitlis, 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mills, Thurlow & Mills, 2010; Thurlow & Mills, 2009; Vough & Caza, 2020). Brown et al. (2015) agrees, pointing out that the literature is not

homogenous in assuming that sensemaking "is best regarded primarily as sets of individual-cognitive (e.g., schemata, metal maps), collective-social (interactions between people), or specifically discursive (linguistic/communicative) processes" (p. 267).

Petreiglieri (2011) discusses sensemaking in relation to an identity threat, more specifically, the numerous responses to different types of threats. She suggests that individuals are motivated to modify the meaning of their new identity when they obtain it for the first time (e.g., starting a new career) (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). For example, Pratt et al. (2006), focused on medical students transitioning into the workforce, recognising that the contrast between their new identity as a "physician" and their experience of the many mundane duties required by their new role, sparked sensemaking. This can be applied to the wave of Gen Z employees entering the workforce in their respective industries for the first time, seeking to make sense of their identity within the new environment (Blaka & Filstad, 2007)

Making Sense of Workplace Experiences

Gen Z, as newcomers to the workplace, must make sense of their experiences of workplace interaction. As Gen Z are initiated into the workplace, this signifies a change in the organisational landscape and the identity of the subordinate. To make sense of this, managers endeavour to communicate the meanings of the change to stakeholders by articulating, advocating, disseminating, or shaping what is happening (Rouleau, 2005; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015; Søderberg, 2003). As sensemaking occurs in a collective, the dynamic interactions between manager and subordinate act a facilitator of sensemaking and sensegiving, through which identity is constructed (Clark & Geppert, 2011)

2.7 Conclusion

Due to the rapid evolution of technology, Gen Z is deemed to have experienced the greatest generational shift the world has seen. Literature suggest that Gen Z possess the capabilities to be of high value in the job market, but most organisations are not yet sufficiently well set up to exploit this value (Marthur & Hameed, 2016).

This review firstly has provided an overview of what defines a generation, focusing particularly on Gen Z. It reveals that generation is a broad concept, not defined by specific dates, but rather by changes in the behavioural norms of a group. Secondly, it explored the key characteristics that define Gen Z and sets them apart from previous generations. Understanding members' common values and experiences allows managers to gain a deeper understanding of different generations' behaviours, and what shapes these. Once employers

understand the characteristics and expectations of the generational cohort, the focus can then shift to how they can effectively manage and communicate with members in a way that encourages optimum output and mutual benefit for both the employer and Gen Z employee.

It is evident that managing an intergenerational workforce is challenging. Managers must ensure that they possess an exhaustive understanding of each generational cohort and how to deal with their members on an individual basis (Stiehr & Vandermause, 2017). The clear generational differences the literature presents illustrate that there is no universal managerial and communication style that will uniformly accommodate the needs of all generational cohorts within an organisation. Organisations and their managers need to adapt their styles to fit the generational diversity in their workforce, rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach to leading and communicating with their people. The review suggests this should happen at an individual level so that individual worker's expectations about leader-member communication and their sense of self, not just the general generational profile, are taken into account. While the literature review revealed a substantial literature on student's expectations about classroom communication, it highlighted that there is a shortage of research exploring managers' and Gen Z workers' experiences and expectations about leader-member communication in the workplace.

2.7.1 Research Gap and Focus

A gap in the literature is that researchers often have not taken into consideration whether the characteristics of Gen Z are specific to their generation, or are traits associated with youth, and therefore typical of all new generations. There is an opportunity to look at both Gen Z employee's values and expectations, in conjunction with managers perceptions of these expectations, and provide a comparison in order to identify any discrepancies between the two. This would help to resolve any misconceptions that managers currently have about Gen Z, or that Gen Z employees may have about the workplace. Furthermore, the understandings of workplace interactions, specifically the leader-member exchanges between Gen Z members and their lines managers, are poorly covered in the literature, even though there is a considerable body of literature suggesting that the quality of the LMX is important for effective frontline operations. With regard to Gen Z, more is known about their interaction with teachers than with managers. More needs to be known about the interactional experiences of managers and their Gen Z reports. Thus, the questions that remain unanswered, which this study endeavours to answer are:

1. What are Generation Z's expectations of workplace interactions with their line-managers in knowledge-based sectors, and how do these expectations inform behaviour?

2. How do these expectations compare to the assumptions, experiences and observations of Generation Z's managers and how do these inform their interaction with Generation Z subordinates?

The following chapter addresses the research design used to answer these research questions.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The focus of this exploratory research is to explore and understand Gen Z subordinates' expectations of their dyadic relationships with their managers, and managers' observations of these. As the research sought to interpret the participants' subjective reality, an exploratory, interpretative approach was taken. This was facilitated by an inductive, qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interviews to collect the data. It was then interpreted through a thematic analysis, using two layers of data coding and the construction of participant profiles.

This chapter first seeks to outline the philosophical assumptions which underpinned this research, discussing the ontological, epistemological, and methodological considerations. Next, it reviews the research process, providing justification for the data collection, analysis, transcription, and ethical considerations. The chapter concludes with discussing the limitations of the research and a summary.

3.2 Philosophical Considerations: Choosing a research paradigm

This study sought to understand the quality of Gen Z and their managers' experiences of communicating with each other at work. This meant that rich data of the sort generated by qualitative research was required. Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose that there are four main paradigms suited to qualitative approach: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism, with positivism and critical theory defining opposing ends of a continuum and constructivism occupying the middle ground (Crotty, 1998). The philosophical paradigm adopted by the researcher is an important choice as it provides the organising framework for choices and decisions made throughout the research process. Basically, "what, how and why research is carried out" needs to align with the chosen paradigm (Carson et al., 2001. Pg. 1). Guba and Lincoln (1994) agree, defining a paradigm as the "basic belief system or worldview that guides investigators, not only in choices of methods but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (p. 105). In order to align the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions with an appropriate philosophical perspective the researcher must decide upon their core beliefs in relation to the nature of society and the nature of science (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) before choosing their research paradigm.

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and the structure of being (Bryman, 2004, Rawnsley, 1998). Bahari (2010) defines ontology as being "about the nature of the world –

what it consists of, what entities operate within it, and how they interrelate with each other" (p. 23). The researcher's ontological perspective can assume one of two dimensions; a subjective ontology where the idea of reality is a projection of human imagination and is socially constructed through social interaction, giving life to multiple realities, (Holden & Lynch, 2004; Mogan & Smircich, 1980) or an objective ontology where the assumption lies that social phenomenon is independent of social actors (Brymon, 2004). Holden and Lynch (2004) note that these philosophical assumptions exist as opposites on either end of an ontological continuum, with various ontological perspectives positioned between them.

Epistemology addresses "what it means to know" (Gray, 2013) and is concerned with "the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994. p. 108) The epistemological position taken by the researcher therefore is consequentially informed by their ontological assumptions of the nature of reality (Holden & Lynch, 2004).

This study sought to understand the participants' subjective reality and how they accounted for this reality, while recognising that this understanding is inevitably a collaborative construction between researcher and participant. For this reason, an interpretivist paradigm was chosen, that proposes knowledge and reality are co-constructed through communication, interaction, and practice. (Tracy, 2013).

Interviews and observations are common techniques for gathering subjective data. In this study, interviews were the only possible data collection mechanism, due to workplace confidentiality issues. The researcher recognised that each interview would necessarily be unique even though its purpose was the same in each instance. This necessitated an inductive, analysis - one that allows rich and variable data to suggest organising codes and subsequent categories. Thus, an emergent methodology was employed that allowed the researcher to "develop concepts, insights and understandings from the patterns in the data, rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses or theories" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 7). This provided the latitude to be sensitive to the variability and richness of the data - an important consideration when pursuing a subjective ontology. It also meant that the literature was used in a different way to how it would be used if a positivist paradigm was followed. In this study the literature served to confirm that the research questions were worth asking (i.e., the literature had not already addressed them) and was then used as a

source of category names when appropriate ones existed. Finally, it was used for comparison, so the contribution of the emergent conceptual model to the literature could be confirmed.

3.3 Data Collection

As noted in the previous sections, this research study was interested in individuals' expectations and subjective experiences of interacting with each other, so rich and potentially highly variable accounts were wanted. Qualitative data facilitated by an exploratory approach provides the researcher with the ability to evoke responses which are "meaningful and culturally salient to the participant, unanticipated by the researcher, and rich and explanatory in nature" (Mack, 2005, p. 4).

3.3.1 Sample Selection Criteria

It is important that this research is guided by an explicit set of sample selection criteria to ensure that fellow researchers who duplicate this procedure will obtain similar results (Merkens, 2004). This study targets two sample groups of knowledge-based workers - line managers and their Gen Z subordinates. Gen Z were selected under the working definition of being born between 1995 and 2010. This definition was established through reviewing the literature and using the most common dates constituting Gen Z. A manager in the context of this research is an individual in the organisation who is directly responsible for the day-to-day activities of Gen Z subordinates, as well as having regular interactions with these employees. Both managers and Gen Z participants must be employed in knowledge-based roles within their respective organisations. In the context of this research a Gen Z knowledge worker will be defined as an employee who is in the designated age group, holds an under- or post-graduate degree which is relevant to their current employment. If a manager belonged to Gen Z themselves, they were to be excluded from the sample. It was preferred that within each organisation at least one male and one female Gen Z knowledge worker was interviewed, enabling the researcher to identify any trends in the data influenced by gender. However, this was not possible at one of the five organisations had no male employees fitted the selection criteria.

In order to gain a trans-sector view of professional knowledge workers, it was important that a variety of different organisation types were targeted. The sample was purposively selected from organisations belonging to the following sectors: commercial services, local authorities and finance. These three sectors were chosen as they provided a diverse range of

organisations, giving the researcher the ability to compare and contrast different working environments in the analysis.

The study needed managers who had Gen Z subordinates reporting to them. To achieve an appropriate sample a pre-existing contact in each business was approached and asked to share the researchers' details, information about the study, and an invitation with managers meeting this criterion. Managers voluntarily chose to contact the researcher. Within each organisation one manager and three of their Gen Z subordinates were selected, with the preference that all subordinates were under the direct leadership of the one manager, rather than sourced from different departments. However, this was only made possible at three of the five organisations due to the limited number of suitable Gen Z participants at each organisation.

3.3.2 Sample Recruitment

The recruitment method to source participants involved first gaining access to prospective organisations where one line manager and three of their subordinates were to be interviewed. As noted, prospective organisations were initially contacted through pre-existing contacts of the research team to discuss their suitability and availability to participate in this research. The researcher was then put in contact with an authorising staff member to obtain approval to recruit interviewees.

This recruitment method resulted in a total of five participating organisations, consisting of two organisations from the commercial services sector, two local authorities and one from the finance sector. It was initially intended by the researcher to include two organisations from each of the three sectors to give equal representation throughout the sample. However, the decision of an organisation from the finance sector to withdraw from the study after the research process had begun made this impossible. Due to time restrictions, it was unviable for the researcher to source a replacement organisation.

Each organisation contributed four employees, this gave a total sample size of 20 interviewees (one manager and three subordinates) as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Participants

Participant Code	Role	Gender
SAM	Manager	Female
SSG	Generation Z	Female
SEG	Generation Z	Female
SOG	Generation Z	Female
CJM	Manager	Female
CBG	Generation Z	Female
CGG	Generation Z	Female
CSG	Generation Z	Male
LAM	Manager	Male
LEG	Generation Z	Female
LSG	Generation Z	Male
LAG	Generation Z	Female
AJM	Manager	Female
AMG	Generation Z	Male
AVG	Generation Z	Female
ANG	Generation Z	Female
PIM	Manager	Female
PJPG	Generation Z	Male
PHG	Generation Z	Female
PJMG	Generation Z	Male

Before any interviews were conducted, all participants were provided with an information sheet. Upon their agreement to participate, they were supplied with a consent form to read and sign as part of the procedure, for the researcher to ensure confidentiality. In the analysis of the data, any names or places were given a pseudonym.

3.3.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are question-answer exchange typically between two persons, guided by the interviewer (Tracy, 2013 pg.131) with a specific purpose related to a theme of mutual interest (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As noted previously, semi-structured interviews closely align with underlying principles of the interpretative paradigm, providing a platform for the researcher to foster a discursive understanding of a subject's self-interpretations of situational meanings or motives for action (Hopf, 2004) in a way that allows the interviewee's answers to influence the questions asked. This is appropriate for this study where the researcher seeks to understand the subjective experiences from the viewpoint of the participant. Semi-structured interviews are pertinent to the exploration of a respondent's perceptions and opinions and enable the researcher to clarify answers or probe for additional information (Barriball & While, 1994).

Semi-structured interviews consist of a series of open-ended questions that provide a framework for collecting and analysing data on aspects of the phenomenon under study (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). In this study the researcher followed two interview guides (one for Gen Z, one for managers), each composed a set of guiding questions (See Appendix 1 & 2). For example, the Gen Z guide began by first focusing on the participant's journey to their current position (e.g., "I am interested in your professional career to this point. What roles have you had prior to your current employment?"). The questions then turn to understanding the participant's espoused values and expectations when interacting with their (line) managers, (e.g. "What do you value most in a line manager?"), before exploring their leader-member relationship with their current superior, focusing specifically on communication (e.g., "How would you describe the relationship you have with the superior who you directly report to – your line manager or supervisor?"). Following this, the question guide directs the participant's attention to their perceptions of generational differences in the workplace (e.g., "Overall, how do you consider generational differences influence the way people communicate in your workplace?"). The researcher used colour coding throughout the guide (Table 2) to visually depict the themes each question covered throughout the interview. This allowed the researcher to make sense of the purpose of the questions, ensuring any prompting questions stayed relevant to the intended outcome.

Table 2: Interview Themes

Colour	Theme
Blue	Communication Style
Green	Communication Channels
Red	Communication Values
Purple	Generational Comparison

The structure of the interview guide is flexible so that answers or issues that arise are able to be further explored or clarified by the researcher asking additional questions (Chachia & Millward, 2011). This highlights the benefits of semi-structured interviews, in that the systematic approach makes analysis more straight-forward, but the opportunity for additional probing questions remains, ensuring candidates can be encouraged to explain their responses in more depth where necessary (Brewerton & Millward, 2001). For example, in the interview with participant ANG, the researcher asks a follow-up question to prompt further information, "then are you able to build on that a little bit in the way that you guys

communicate?". The researcher then asks, "Why is that?", to elicit further explanation and interpretation.

It is up to the researcher to establish rapport and maintain control over the direction of the interview, keeping to the core areas, while also ensuring the interviewee is at ease (Brewerton & Millward, 2001). Whilst interviews are a two-way exchange, the interviewer possesses a clear power imbalance as the guiding entity of the conversation and therefore is responsible for the ethical treatment of the respondent and resulting data (Tracy, 2013 pg.132). This is discussed in further detail in Section 3.7.

Interviews for this research took place once a time and date were agreed upon which suited both the researcher and the participant. These were organised in one of two ways; directly organised with the participant themselves, or coordinated by a third-party within the organisation, such as an HR manager or receptionist. All interviews took place at each of the participating organisations' premises in private meeting rooms and ranged in time from 30-54 minutes. For the purpose of transcription, all interviews were audio-recorded with the verbal and signed permission of the participant.

3.4 Transcription

Hawkins (2018) defines a transcription system as "the collective result of transcript notations that allows a researcher to understand and describe items present in data regarding language present in talk transcribed from audio or video files" (p. 1777). Transcription allows for the detailed analysis of discourse (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999), providing a graphic representation of fleeting conversational behaviour between researcher and participant (Kowal & O'Connell, 2004). It is up to researchers to establish a number of guidelines which facilitate the transcription of audio data, as there is no universal format which acts as a best fit for all qualitative studies, given the distinguishing settings, theoretical frameworks, and practical considerations. McLellan et al. (2003) point out that these guidelines should not place constraints on the data but rather encourage an iterative process, where textual data are generated in a systematic and consistent manner.

Transcription of the data in this study was done by both an external transcriber and the researcher, completing half of the interviews each. The researcher undertaking the transcription process facilitated immersion of the data, enabling a comprehensive understanding and accurate interpretations to be made. While it would have been ideal

practice for the researcher to transcribe all of the data, this was not a viable option due to time constraints.

Given that the transcription process was shared, it was of upmost importance that the guidelines set were clear, with a shared understanding of their purpose between the researcher and external transcriber, ensuring consistency in the textual data. To further the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations, the guidelines adopted the approach of Kowal and O'Connell (2004), incorporating nonverbal features such as body language, laughing and gestures, as well as verbal features.

3.5 Data Analysis

This qualitative research employed an inductive interpretive approach and thematic analysis method. As the analysis simultaneously organises and describes the data set, it provides rich details, and a complex and comprehensive account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following the work of Cohen et al. (2011), data collection and its analysis were not mutually exclusive but rather there was an overlap of analysis and interpretation throughout the research process (Alhojailan, 2012). The analysis of the data was therefore an iterative process, where the analysis of interviews was on-going, and the data collected informed subsequent interviews as interpretations were made.

A thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). This process systematically identifies common themes within the data set, allowing the researcher to then analyse the frequency throughout the whole content (Alhojailan, 2012).

The methods accessibility and flexibility are promoted by Braun and Clarke (2012) as to why researchers select a thematic analysis. This is a versatile method which is able to be applied to a wide range of qualitative research questions, underpinned by varying methodological assumptions. The researcher is not required to possess a complex understanding of theoretical perspectives but rather the process guides them through the mechanics of coding and analysing qualitative data in a systematic process, which can then be applied to wider theoretical contributions (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

The researcher began the analysis by immersing himself in the data, familiarising himself with the transcripts and reading them multiple times (Braun et al., 2019). This was an on-going process that began when the interview was reflected upon immediately after it was

conducted, but then in earnest when the transcript was completed. This meant each interview was able to inform subsequent interviews, rather than waiting until all were completed. This is part of an iterative process, where the researcher continually revisits the data, connecting it to emerging interpretations and progressively refining the researcher's understandings (Tracy, 2013). Through examining the transcripts, the researcher began with a primary layer of coding, comprising a list of preliminary, surface level codes, "focusing on 'what' is present in the data" (Tracy, 2013, p. 189). These codes focused on the basic descriptors in the data the participants provided on their behaviours, expectations, and any themes they included pertaining to the quality of manager-subordinate interactions. The researcher implemented a constant comparative method, which means comparing "data with data, data with code, and code with code, to find similarities and differences" (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014, p. 158). This iterative and reflective process ensures consistency in defining of the codes, fitting the codes to the data, rather than forcing the data to fit a pre-determined set of codes (Tracy, 2013). Upon completion of the preliminary level of coding, the researcher established a total of 86 codes for Gen Z and 62 for managers. These codes were than categorised by similarity, revealing the overarching themes for each data set. The overarching themes in the Gen Z data were leadership style, uncertainty, and feedback. The overarching themes in the manager's data were leadership style and communication style. The codes within each group's significant themes were then consolidated and categorised once again into two levels of sub-themes: (1) the expectations relevant to each overarching theme, and (2) the codes which constituted these expectations. Within the Gen Z data, there were a number of integrating preferences which ran through the findings but were not specific to a single expectation. The managers findings did not reveal preferences, as they were discussing their observations of another group, rather than self-reflecting as Gen Z were.

However, through analysis of these primary codes and identification of preliminary themes, it became evident to the researcher that such categorisation stripped away the individuality of each participant. Retaining this individuality was an important part of the analysis given that the focus was on the subjective accounts of the individuals' manager-subordinate interaction, as well as the specific circumstances which influenced these. This prompted the researcher to return to the transcripts and to see which concepts they suggested for characterising the participant as a person and the work context while maintaining the integrity of each interview. The concepts chosen were Self-Identity, State of Mind, Attitudes, Expectations of Manager-Subordinate Relationship, Experiences of Manager-Subordinate Relationship,

Communication Style Preferences and Organisational Setting. Using these generic concepts enabled the expectations, behaviours, and experiences of individual participants to be all be compared and described using factors such as their organisational environment, personal life and preferred communication style.

This secondary analysis produced profiles of each participant. Not only did this generate a holistic picture of the participant's views, expectations, experiences, and how they made sense of these, but also enabled comparisons to be made across the whole data set, in an integrative way which never lost sight of the individual. The researcher then had the ability to identify how differing or similar contexts influenced participants' sensemaking accounts of, and attitudes towards, the nature and quality of interaction with their managers, as well as categorising participants on the basis of their profile. This allowed the researcher to identify if there were any underlying themes (from the coding process) to link and categorise the profiles together, while still taking into consideration the individual experiences and contexts of the participants. However, the concepts which emerged from the secondary analysis clearly did not permeate the whole sample in the same way. This suggested to the researcher that while there was consistency in the expectations in the Gen Z sample in relation to their relationships with their managers, individuals had unique experiences which facilitated these.

The findings of the thematic coding and the profile creation were conceptualised in relation to how they answered the research questions, while at the same time comparing the emerging conceptualisation with relevant concepts drawn from the extant literature. This produced a model which represented the findings as a whole.

3.6 Evaluating Research Quality

3.6.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) accredit credibility as an imperative factor in determining trustworthiness of research. Cope (2014) states that "credibility is enhanced by the researcher describing his or her experiences as a researcher and verifying the research findings with the participants" (p. 89). In qualitative study such as this one, for the research to be deemed credible, the experiences of the participants depicted by the researcher should be instantly recognisable by those who have shared similar or the same experiences (Sandelwski, 1986). To maintain credibility, the researcher summarised this interpretation of the participants accounts at the end of each interview, ensuring that their understandings aligned (Beck, 1993).

It is suggested by Patton (1999) that the credibility of qualitative research is enhanced by three distinct but related inquiry concerns: "rigorous techniques and methods for gathering and analysing qualitative data; the credibility, competence, and perceived trustworthiness of the qualitative researcher; and philosophical beliefs or paradigm-based preferences such as objectivity versus subjectivity and generalizations versus extrapolations" (p. 1207).

The credibility of semi-structured interviews when conducting qualitative research is not dependent on the researcher conducting identical interviews with each individual, but rather posing questions in a similar manner so the same meaning is conveyed to each participant (Hardie, Shilbury, Ware & Bozzie, 2010). This allows each question to take into account what has already been discussed in the interview in previous answers from the participant. When undertaking an inductive approach, facilitated by one of the many grounded theory approaches, this allows the data of each interview to inform the next as the researcher constructs knowledge.

3.6.2 Transferability

Given the nature of qualitative research, as reality is often co-constructed between the researcher and participant, generalisation is likely not the goal of the study (Slevin & Sines, 1999). Guba and Lincoln (1985) suggest transferability as a more fitting term than generalisation in terms of qualitative research, following the notion that such findings may be able to be applied to other sites or situations (Slevin & Sines, 1999). Given the interpretivist paradigm underpinning this study, the researcher does not believe that each individual shares a sole reality, but rather a consensus of meaning is established between the researcher and participant. Therefore, if the study was to be replicated using another sample, their perceptions of reality may differ from the current sample.

Schofield (1993) suggests that by providing rich and dense data, supported by a substantial amount of information about the phenomenon studied and research setting, transferability can be achieved. In response to this, the researcher created profiles of each participant, giving an in-depth description of the individual, as well as their organisational context. This gives the person attempting to transfer the research deep insight into the sample and how their individual previous experiences may have influenced their perceptions of reality. The researcher also provided a comprehensive review of the literature (Chapter Two), two detailed findings chapters including participant quotes (Chapters Four & Five) and an in-depth discussion, relating said findings back to the literature (Chapter Six). As the researcher

is unable predict which population a fellow researcher may anticipate transferring the findings to, this gives them sufficient information to determine for themselves (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

3.6.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the data remaining constant if the research was repeated, using the researcher's process and description over similar conditions with a similar sample (Cope, 2014; Koch, 2006). Through reducing idiosyncrasies, and thus variability, in the interpretation of the research, dependability is increased by the researcher (Baxter & Eyles, 1997).

Due to the unique philosophical perceptions of the researcher and participants, reliability cannot be established through replication, as variability will exist in the interpretation of the interview questions and data obtained. Following the suggestion of Lincoln and Guba (1985) the researcher implemented an 'inquiry audit' strategy to ensure dependability, introducing a third party to review consistency in the interpretation of the data. In the case of this research, the senior research supervisor undertook this role, referred to by Baxter and Eyles (1997) as an auditee-auditor interaction.

The role of the supervisor throughout the research process was to constantly review and judge the methodological decisions made by the researcher. This included the data, findings, thematic analysis, and reflexive journal, suggesting any necessary adjustments that should be made to achieve dependability. This was achieved through regular face-to-face meetings between the researcher and supervisor, along with comprehensive revision of the research plan and all written work.

3.6.4 Confirmability

One credibility, transferability and dependability has been achieved in the research, confirmability is obtained (Thomas & Maglivy, 2011). This refers to the degree which the research reflects the participants interpretations and responses, without bias from the researcher's viewpoints, motivations and philosophical perspectives (Cope, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). However, in qualitative research, it is not in the researcher's best interest to aim to completely eliminate their bias, but rather be conscious of the impact this has on the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). The interpretivist standpoint of the researcher meant the subjectivity is a given, the researcher therefore acknowledged the role which their own

interests, values and motivations played throughout the process (Baxter & Eyles, 1997), drawing subjective conclusions and understandings.

To improve confirmability, the researcher kept a reflexive journal throughout the study, noting their interpretations of the data as an on-going process throughout the interviews. The reflexive journal acted as a tool of self-reflection, enabling the researcher to engage with the research through a critical and analytical lens, noting any on-going observation or limitations that arose throughout the process. This facilitated an iterative process, where the researcher's interpretations were re-defined through experience and informed future behaviour. This was suited to this research, as an on-going analysis, so interpretations made of interviews informed the subsequent interview.

The researcher's primary and secondary supervisors acted as auditors throughout the interpretation process, scrutinising the researchers notes, assumptions, interpretations, and transcriptions of the data. This enabled them to identify any ways in which researcher bias may have influenced the data, ensuring accuracy and consistency in the interpretation. Furthermore, any significant findings within the data were supported by relevant literature and previous academic research.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

When undertaking any type of study, the researcher must pay attention to any ethical considerations in order to mitigate any potential harms to the participant's or participating organisations alike (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). This study entails the researcher being in direct contact with both organisations and their employees, therefore a number of measures were put in place in order to carefully protect their interests and wellbeing.

Before any research commenced and potential organisations were contacted to partake, the research design was reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee in August 2020 (Appendix 3). To ensure participants possessed a comprehensive understanding of their role in the study, they were provided an information sheet and consent form prior to conducting interviews (Appendix 4). The information sheet outlined the aim of the study and the intended use of the data, as well as supplying the direct contact details of the researcher and primary supervisor for participants to seek additional information if necessary. The consent form detailed to the participant their rights in relation to the security and privacy of their data, as well as gaining their permission for the interview to be audio recorded and transcribed. Supplementary to this, the researcher also verbally asked each

participant at the beginning of each interview is they consented to the recording. Subsequent to transcription, participants were provided with a copy of their transcript, seeking permission for their data to be used in the study. This gave them opportunity to request any amendments to be made or information to be removed which they did not want to be made publicly available.

It was important that the researcher ensured confidentiality in both the organisations and participants participation in the study. Therefore, each participant was provided with a pseudonym used in transcription to conceal names, and any names of organisations in the transcript were replaced with "my organisation". Additionally, all digital forms of data were stored on a password protected server, accessible only to the researcher and primary supervisor, with hard copies kept in a locked cabinet in a room with authorised access only. As per standard practice, all data related to the study is to be destroyed five years after the completion of this research.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has explained the interpretive paradigm that informed the way this Masters study was conducted and the rationale for its choice, as well as detailing the methodology employed. This methodology was unique in that it combined thematic coding with profile development and comparison. The research design was discussed, providing justification of the participant selection criteria and recruitment process. Next, the data collection and analysis methods were reviewed, providing insight into the thematic analysis which facilitated the findings. The chapter concludes with outlining the relevant ethical considerations and how these were approached by the researcher. The following chapter will explore the emergent findings of the thematic analysis of the Gen Z participants.

Chapter Four: Generation Z Findings

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis of 15 semi-structured interviews conducted individually with Gen Z subordinates throughout five organisations (three subordinates per organisation). The interviews explored the participants' values and expectations regarding manager-subordinate communication, as well as their experiences when engaging in this sort of interaction, with the purpose of acquiring a holistic understanding of the values informing expectations and subsequent behaviour.

The thematic coding of the data produced a four-level analysis. First the sample revealed three overarching themes: (1) Leadership Style, (2) Uncertainty, and (3) Feedback. The data then embraced two to three subthemes within each one, illustrating the Gen Z participants' expectations of their managers in relation to the key theme. These subthemes were then coded to reveal a further layer of coding within them. The fourth layer consisted of a number of codes which could not be grouped and applied to a specific subtheme. Rather, they ran through the entirety of the overarching theme, illustrating the integrated preferences of Gen Z in relation to their expectations.

This chapter defines each key theme, before outlining and interpreting each subtheme and discussing how they interact to form the overarching findings. The first key theme of leadership style referred to the expectations of the Gen Z sample for relational intimacy, professional development, and approachability. The second key theme of uncertainty was constructed of the expectations of clear expectations and proactiveness. The third key theme of feedback consisted of the Gen Z participants' expectations of affirmation versus criticism, and on-going feedback. This is presented visually in Table 3.

Table 3: Thematic Analysis of Generation Z Sample Describing Expectations of Leader Member Interactions

Overarching Theme 1: Leadership Style			Overarching Theme 2: Uncertainty		Overarching Theme 3: Feedback	
Subtheme 1.1: Relational Intemacy	Subtheme 1.2: Professional Development	Subtheme 1.3: Accessibility	Subtheme 2.1: Clear Expectations	Subtheme 2.2: Proactiveness	Subtheme 3.1: Affirmation versus Criticism	Subtheme 3.2: On-going Reviews

Integrated Preferences

4.2 Overarching Theme: Leadership Style

When the data referring to Gen Z participants' expectations was examined and coded, three second level codes revealed the expectations of the Gen Z subordinates regarding managerial behaviour and interactions. These three codes that emerged were (a) relational intimacy, (b) professional development and (c) approachability. These imply an overarching expectation of Gen Z participants, that managers would interact with them in an authentic and engaging manner. Authenticity in this study was perceived to be characterised by a genuine concern for subordinates' wellbeing and development and aligns with many of the constructs within the theory of authentic leadership. This theory proposes that an authentic leader is someone who demonstrates self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours, leads with internalised moral perspective, and develops genuine and meaningful connections with subordinates, leading to a synergy of leadership action and organisational success (Begley, 2004; George, 2010; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Whitehead, 2009). Gardner et al., (2005) propose that such relationships are characterised by "(a) transparency, openness and trust, (b) guidance toward worthy objectives, and (c) an emphasis on follower development" (p. 345). While ideas from this theory are able to be applied here, the expectations of Gen Z regarding their manager's leadership style go beyond the functions of authentic leadership. These subordinates indicated an expectation for managers to not only be genuine, but take a hands-on, engaging approach to leadership, taking into account who their subordinates are as people and what their role is within the organisation. This can be linked to the ZPD, as they expect managers to scaffold their learning through active engagement and a genuine care for their wellbeing and development to maximise the potential of their learning.

4.2.1 Relational Intimacy

Overall, the Gen Z participants expressed an expectation to develop genuine and engaging relationships with both their peers and leaders, going beyond the economic purpose of the interaction to incorporate a more personable aspect.

*"I personally kind of expect quite, you know, a friendly relationship, you know like asking how your weekend was, or how your day was. Kind of showing building that relationship rather than just it all just being about work kind of thing. It's probably something I prefer and enjoy."***-AMG**

"For me I think genuineness is really important in terms of generally caring and showing an interest in you as a person. The best managers I have had, had that quality about them." **-LEG**

Their reported strategies for doing this implied well developed social intelligence. Vernon (1933) refers to social intelligence as the "ability to get along with people in general, social technique or ease in society, knowledge of social matters, susceptibility to stimuli from other members of a group, as well as insight into the temporary moods or underlying personality traits of strangers" (p. 44). These behaviours were variously reported in the interviews in their expectations and preferences surrounding communication styles within their relationships, as detailed in the following section.

Communication Style

The data suggests a general proclivity across the Gen Z subordinates to adapt their communication style to best suit each individual interaction, taking both the recipient and context into consideration. This is indicative of the level of social intelligence displayed by Gen Z, as the data shows they make the conscious decision to read social interactions and make the appropriate adjustments to their approach for the most effective interaction. The quotes listed below show subordinates directly acknowledging that they adapt their communication style to the individual by reading the respondent and using what they observe as a basis to respond.

"...so totally depending on adjusting the style to the person, but usually I have a message in my head, and I like to get it across" **-ANG**

"You really just got to adapt your style a little bit to their style and just find common ground so that you can both have a common goal that you might be coming at from different angles though" **-AMG**

*"...something I will always do is like adapt how I communicate with people, which some people don't like doing that, but for me it works well but it's just about making sure you manage to have smooth relationships with everyone"***-LSG**

"...so, what it really teaches you is how to sort of see how people respond to things and how they are responding to the different situations, how they respond to the different ways things are said and find a way to communicate to them in a way that gets the best response" **-LSG**

"Yea, it definitely varies depending on the situation ...So, I suppose I don't really use any one particular method of communication more than the other, I just sort of try and assess what it is the person's after and try figure out what method is best to deliver that for them." **-SEG**

"I wouldn't say I could classify myself as one or the other, I think it's tailored to the needs of what I'm dealing with." **-LAG**

"...everyone has a different way of doing things and so it is quite good to experience you know working with other people before because then you know that you have a certain way and other people have a certain way of doing things you become more tolerant of that" **-LEG**

A selection of the Gen Z sample furthered this idea of adapting their communication, to gaining a holistic understanding of the recipient in order to do so, fostering a more effective and meaningful interaction. Participant PJMG states that this begins with validating the recipient as a person, realising that there is more to them than just their job position. Participant LSG takes this notion into more detail, studying the people who he works alongside to gather a comprehensive understanding of what factors drive their response and using this to tailor the interaction to the individual.

"I sort of just use the same basic ideas which is actually studying the people that you are working with, like what's driving their response to things, like why do they act the way they act, why do they say the things they say, and what are they actually trying to achieve and when you can sort of like get a sense of that then you can understand how to best communicate with them, how to reach them, how to get the information you need from them, how to get the support you need from them. But also, how to get across what you are thinking and feeling to them" **-LSG**

"I'm not quite sure on the particular styles but like if I'm approaching somebody, I'll usually address them first, and then usually like ask how they are doing, so essentially just validate them as a person so it's not just yes you are there to do a job, but you are not just there to do a job, there is more to you." **-PJMG**

"I think that everyone learns differently. Everyone communicates differently so to be really successful in your career you need to understand how the person you are working with, whether it's a client or internal, how do they communicate" **– ANG**

"I think I probably like getting to talk like if I'm meeting someone for the first time, I enjoy getting a little to know someone a little before, just not kind of going straight into like a work conversation" **-PHG**

This set of data implies that the Gen Z subordinates not only possess a high level of social intelligence, but also self-awareness in this aspect of their competencies. They demonstrate

and acknowledge their ability to gauge the responses of others and use this as leverage in creating high quality interactions. This is an important consideration in understanding their overall expectations surrounding relational intimacy, especially for developing personable relationships with their managers and peers which is discussed further in the following section.

Personable Relationships

The Gen Z participants' comments about interaction suggested that there was a link between their level of social intelligence and expectations for personable relationships with their manager. Their accounts of interactions with managers suggested that these went beyond being strictly professional. They often had an informal, personable aspect, which was perceived by the Gen Z participants to reflect their managers authentic concern for their well-being and development, whether that be inside or outside of the workplace. While the expectations displayed by Gen Z do not completely align with the focus of the authentic leadership literature, which focuses on the leader being true to themselves, they do reflect the actions of what is deemed an authentic leader. This is encapsulated by George and Sim (2007), who describe an authentic leader as those who generate trust between themselves and the member through developing genuine connections and in turn motivating high levels of performance. The Gen Z sample, however, are asking for more than just genuine relationships, but a leader who is engaging and hands-on as well.

The following quotes demonstrate this, with a selection of the participants directly stating their preference for a manager who is interesting in developing a social aspect to their relationship. They emphasise the idea that this makes them feel valued not only as an employee but as a person and creates the impression that their managers have a genuine care for them, rather than perceiving them as just another employee.

"I think with communication, like the way you speak to someone is really important and then you probably coming back to genuineness having a genuine care for you, wanting to grow you as a person and give you opportunities, you know not just kind of treating you as another number" **-LEG**

"I personally kind of expect quiet, you know, a friendly relationship, you know, like asking how your weekend was, or how your day was. Kind of showing building that relationship rather than just it all just being about work kind of thing. It's probably something I prefer and enjoy." **-LEG**

"Probably the one's that had a bit of sense of humour and banter, the one's that actually wanted to make a bit of a relationship, rather than just kind of 'do this'" **-SOG**

"I think I value getting to the personal side of a relationship before probably kind of always ask how they are going, what's been happening and kind of enjoy that side of things" **-PHG**

*"I think someone that values you as a person inside and outside of work is hugely important like if they don't understand who I am as a person outside of work then you don't actually know who I am and to know who I am and to challenge me"***-ANG**

The researcher found data indicating a link between the Gen Z participants' interpersonal connection with their manager and their attitude towards the relationship. Gen Z subordinates who believed that they had developed meaningful leader-member relationships discussed their experiences in a more positive manner than those who did not. Examples of participants' stated desire to develop personable relationships with managers revealed the value placed on positive manager-subordinate relationships. Participants LEG and PJPG use personable relationships to conclude that their managers genuinely care for their subordinates. LEG mentions that the best managers she has had are ones who display the trait of genuineness, describing this as showing a legitimate care for their subordinates' wellbeing and interests.

"For me I think genuineness is really important in terms of generally caring and showing an interest in you as a person. The best managers I have had, had that quality about them…" **- LEG**

"I think so, yeh, and don't know if it is the same for everyone but I quite like it because it makes you feel like he cares, whoever does it, he or she cares about you. At the same time, you can still get stuff done." **-PJPG**

Further typical comments from participants, highlighting their positive attitudes towards their leader-member relationship when a personable connection was made, were as follows.

*"I think we have got a really close connection inside and outside of work. He, I think he just really understands my purpose, how career driven I am, where I want to go and how he can help influence that"***-ANG**

"I think it definitely like kind of makes the workplace quite enjoyable and like becomes like a team if everyone talks across all the channels up and down definitely makes it a bit more of a

team sort of vibe, yeh, easier to kind of work across with kind of everyone if you got the kind of interpersonal relationships there." **PHG**

"100% I think it's a mutual relationship, it's probably more of like tethers on friendship a lot of the time, like if there in trouble then even if you are below them you are going oh 'what's wrong, how can I take more?' or vice versa if I have shit going on how can they do more or support me or whatever." **-PJPG**

"Yea, it's really good. It's completely open conversations even about personal life and she talks about things… it's more like because I'm so young, trying to learn or understand potentially things like the workplace or lifestyle for like relationships and stuff like that. So, there's like quite constructive conversations around that." **-CSG**

"And its conversations not about work either, you can talk about things outside of work that are going on and they're you know, more of a friend in some circumstances, and it's quite good because you don't just have the work relationship. You know, you kind of respect them not just as your boss but as a person."-**CSG**

Whilst the majority of the sample portrayed their relationships with managers to be of a positive nature, having developed a personable aspect to the manager-subordinate relationship, two participants did not. Given that this is such a small selection of the sample, these participants serve as outliers. However, it is still significant to the findings as it highlights the potential link between personable relational development and the participants' attitude towards their relationship with their managers, and the impact this has on their interactions.

Participant PJPG provides an example of this, feeling as though his manager makes little effort to develop a deeper, more meaningful relationship with him, left feeling "more like a task than a person".

"I don't know, keeps his cards pretty close to his chest. I don't know he doesn't give much away, sometimes his body language can be erring on the side of like let's get through these questions that you have got for me quick then we'll move on. So almost makes me feel more like a task than a person which is not the greatest"-**PJMG**

Further comments made by the participant when reflecting on their experiences of the manager-subordinate interactions confirmed his pessimistic perceptions of the relationship and belief that his manager did not have an authentic concern for his wellbeing. He states that

the interactions are primarily work-related, unsure if his manager is aware of his interests outside of work.

"I also definitely feel like my peers take a bit more of an interest in day-to-day life and my life outside of work whereas managers are not sure if they would really know what I even do outside work" **-PJMG**

"I definitely know it's usually me initiating the conversation rather than the other way round unless he's got a piece of work that he needs me to do that is usually when I get communications from him…. it's, he doesn't usually go too much into personal life although I will ask him how he is doing, ask him how his interests are, sometimes the interest isn't really reciprocated that much from him, but it's a bit rough sometimes" **-PJMG**

"Always work driven basically, and there is not really much, and it's usually driven by me. That's about it…. Again, most of it by me really." **-PJMG**

This is a drastic contrast to the comments of his Gen Z colleague, participant PJPG, who portrayed an extremely positive relationship with the same manager, stating that it "tethers on friendship", as shown previously.

Although the participant describes a relationship with his manager which he finds disheartening, he conveys proficient social skills, as he highlights the importance of validating people as individuals, as well as perceiving himself as having the ability to read emotions of the recipient of conversation.

"I'm not quite sure on the particular styles but like if I'm approaching somebody, I'll usually address them first, and then usually like ask how they are doing, so essentially just validate them as a person so it's not just yes you are there to do a job, but you are not just there to do a job, there is more to you." **-PJMG**

"I think part of it is you can read the manager's emotions or the other persons emotions" **-PJMG**

"And (I) always place a big emphasis also on thanking people if they have done something that I have asked as a way I mean it's polite but also it helps encourage that activity or encourages them to do that in the future" **-PJMG**

He also illustrates a desire for genuine, personable relationships in the workplace with both his manager and peers, believing they facilitate a better understanding of one another and therefore lead more effective relationships.

"(I) definitely appreciate it when managers check in on how you are feeling in terms of pressure or emotions or things like that as well and that goes a long way."-**PJMG**

This conveys that he does not lack the skills required to form meaningful and personable relationships, but rather seems to be incompatible with his manager, who has shown he can form positive relationships with other Gen Z subordinates.

The contrasting relationships between participants PJPG and PJMG aligns with the notion within LMX of in-group and out-group exchanges. The in-group, reflective of the relationship with participant PJPG, is facilitated by high-quality exchanges, where interactions go beyond the minimum requirements of the employment contract to include a more social aspect (Liden & Graen, 1980; Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). In-turn, this group is comprised of trusted followers, to whom the leader assigns greater role obligations and physical resources (Sheer, 2015). In contrary to this, participant PMPG's relationship mirrors that of the out-group, denoted by low-quality exchanges characterised as economic or contractual exchanges which fail to go beyond the employment agreement (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Liden, Wayne & Stilwell, 1993; Myers, 2006).

Similar to participant PJMG, participant CGG demonstrated a disconnect from their manager as a consequence of a lack of a developed social aspect to their relationship, consistent with the low-quality exchanges which form the out-group relationship.

"Yea, it's pretty formal. It's a friendly one but I wouldn't say we go out of our way to chat about our weekends or anything like that. I honestly might speak to her once every couple of days, unless I've got to, you know, go to her desk for a signature of something which might happen like once a week…. So, we don't often talk. I do find it sometimes awkward, but I do feel like it might just be a personality type thing." **-CGG**

This has led to her feeling as though her manager is unapproachable and unable to support her through confrontational situations. This highlights that she is feeling a lack of engagement from her leader, who is not providing the necessary scaffolding to guide the subordinate through the ZPD. The subordinate here is showing signs of distress, not being able to gain the support she wants and needs from her manager in turbulent situations, leaving

her potential to be determined by independent problem solving, rather than developed through guidance and collaboration.

*"I should be able to talk to my manager if I'm having issues with any of the other program leads. But I can't easily do it and I guess because of the fact that I haven't got that help from her previously..."***-CGG**

*"I wouldn't say she is... well she is quite serious, and I don't think she'd ever like swear at all, so got to keep it really nice level conversation. I just think that because I have had issues, you know, just general work issues sometimes with different challenges and stuff, and I can't really quite say to her 'I'm really struggling with this', because I feel like she is not super helpful in that regard anyway. So, I kind of just always keep it real pleasant like 'everything is going well' and 'that's nice' and that is kind of it."***-CGG**

She illustrated a craving for more opportunity to be sociable within her team, however, feels that this will not be promoted by the manager.

*"so not just like all about work. Being able to say was your weekend' you know or being able to go after work and have the managers come along as well and have some drinks and stuff. We don't tend to do that in my team unfortunately but that's what I would like is more of that."***-CGG**

*"I mean, I would ideally like more informal events, so like after work drinks on a Friday for example, I'm always down for that but no one else is so I don't really ask because I know I won't get a good response. But, if she was to lead that for example, it might be a better opportunity to actually get to know her better as a person and not just like as a manager."***-CGG**

The influence of the quality and depth of the interactions between leader and subordinate are highlighted here. Subordinates who are subjects of high-quality interactions with their managers, and consequently are members of the in-group, display a much more positive outlook of their workplace experiences than those in the out-group, who are kept at a distance from their managers. The data suggest that high-quality, social exchanges facilitate an environment which allows for managers to provide scaffolding for their subordinates across the ZPD, meeting the expectations of the Gen Z sample. Those who are victim of being left in the out-group from managers do not receive the same level of support, hindering their potential to

learn, as this is limited to their individual problem-solving abilities, rather than being guided by managers towards the potential they can achieve through social construction.

Effect of Organisational Setting

Some participants noted that the industry in which the organisation operated impacted the depth to which the personability of the leader-member relationship could reach, due to the boundaries of the workplace. Participant's LEG, LSG and PJMG who stem from professional organisations in relatively highly regarded law and accounting firms all mentioned that their superior is constrained with time. Consequently, relational development often was not of priority of the manager.

"we are left to our own devices quite a bit but that's also a really good for learning, and also being quite busy he probably doesn't engage in heaps of chat about building personal relationship" **-LEG**

"it is more difficult because they are busier, and they have quite high standards, so it is I think more difficult for me to communicate with them because it is more nerve wracking." **-LSG**

*"I understand that they definitely do have constraints on their time so it's difficult for them"***-PJMG**

Participant CGG had a slightly different perspective on how the organisational setting impacts manager-subordinate interactions. As a member of a local authority, an industry which is highly process-driven, they suggest that this can result in the tone of the organisation to be strictly job-orientated, leaving less room for personable relationships to develop.

*"I guess I'm not surprised it's more serious at our organisation, it's just a bit of an adjustment I think, coming from a very different workplace before, it wasn't as serious and that was definitely more of a student job whereas this is the real world, there's quite a strong public eye on our organisation as well at all times. I'm not surprised by it."***-CGG**

Managerial resources such as time, and the constraints of organisational processes and policy, can impact the quality of interaction the subordinate receives, as well as restricting the size of the in-group, unfortunately leaving a number of subordinates in the out-group. High-quality interactions which go beyond the purely economic boundaries to include more social aspects take more time and effort to develop, meaning the manager may not physically be able to

meet the demands of providing high quality interactions to all subordinates. Therefore, the relationships can develop disproportionately, as some develop into in-group relationships and some out-group. The way these relationships develop is not random. There are three key factors which influence how managers develop their relationships with subordinates: their competency and expertise, the extent to which they can be trusted, and their readiness to take on greater responsibility (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Liden & Graen, 1980). Once developed, these relationships tend to remain stable as the subordinates consolidate their identity and role within the organisation (Sheers, 2015). Consequently, a lack of access to expertise negatively influences workplace learning, as learners are starved of the amount of guidance and support they need to progress (Billett, 1985).

4.2.2 Professional Development

Within the overarching theme of leadership style, the Gen Z subordinates expressed an expectation of managers to be supporting and driving their professional development. This links back to the idea of the subordinates' wanting managers who are genuine and engaging in their approach to leadership. Managers who initiated and engaged in informal, sociable interactions, were perceived by the Gen Z subordinates to have a genuine interest in their professional development, wanting to see their reportees reach their goals.

As mentioned earlier in Section 4.2.1, Gardner et al. (2005) suggest that one of the three characteristics of authentic followership is an emphasis from leaders on follower development. This aligns with the responses of the Gen Z sample who, when asked if professional development was important to them, overwhelmingly responded that it was something on which they placed a high value. The typical responses shown below illustrate further the subordinates' desire for an engaging leadership style from their manager, who they perceived to have a genuine interest in their development.

"It's quite important, quite important because I think you can a day-to-day job which I guess I'm in at the moment but in the background, I've got my own aspirations and where I want to be in say 2 years' time, and they should understand that as well where I want to be, and where I want to go." **-AMG**

"Definitely because I am, I guess like a lot of the people that are in their roles at the moment have progressed from starting at the bottom. Whereas I have just flopped myself in as the grad and I don't want to stay the grad for every you know so I do want to progress to

become, I'm an associate now and then become a manager. Like my managers are very well aware of where I want to be, where I want to grow, so that really aids that journey as well."-
AVG

"Yes, I would say hugely on professional development which I would not have those conversations with anyone other him, a mentor and a couple of other like selected people in my life that I trust with that stuff." **-ANG**

"Because quite often your line manager might be like ok this is your job and that's all they really care about, but a good line manager would be like this is your career progression, this is how I can grow you long term. So, I think having a long-term vision, understanding who you are inside and outside of work and not being afraid to challenge you"-**ANG**

"I think yeh I like to think every year you want to have kind of grown throughout the year and looking more towards your goals." **-PHG**

"It's pretty important, I think that working for someone who's not willing to push that or doesn't value me growing and learning more and developing in my career and doesn't want to push me then, and definitely working here, then going to a new role where people, or my manager was reluctant to me to do anything outside of the project we had on, I'd be pretty upset"-**CBG**

"Hugely, I mean a law firm is ultimately hierarchical and 9 times out of 10 you're in a law firm because you're the kind of personality that means you want to work your way up the chain, and to do that you need to grow as lawyer technically and grow as a lawyer in terms of your networking ability and just your general know how. So professional development is huge." **-LAG**

"He's good with development opportunities I have sort of said things I'm interested in and want to do and have been able to have the chance to get kind more involved in those particular cases or seminars and stuff like so that's something that is really good and shows that I have an interest in developing what I'm interested in, which is good"-**LEG**

"the thing that keeps coming up is that professional development, so it's more and more important to me now but it's probably something I didn't recognize a year ago."-**LSG**

The participants who mentioned that professional development was of high importance to them were subsequently asked by the researcher if they had an expectation for their manager

to be driving their development. The overwhelming response to this was an underlying expectation from these participants for managers to understand and take interest in their professional goals, and to create opportunities for these to be reached. This aligns with their expectation of having hands-on and engaging leaders, who take an interest in them as a person rather than just as an employee.

*"I would really thrive I think on a hands-on manager who like is invested in my development"***-AMG**

*"I think it's kind of like you need to know, not necessarily know but have an idea of kind of what you want and expectations and then it needs to be them as well as to whether those are realistic or kind of help to get there"***-PHG**

*"At my level as a solicitor supervision of work and good supervision of work can shape your entire career. So, by nature, so for me my line manager is "confidential' who is the partner of the team so his focus on my professional development dictates my ability to move up and my ability to be a good lawyer. So yeh, huge."***-LAG**

*"Yea, definitely"***-LEG**

*"I do expect them to that and that goes all the way back to say in more giving me nastier pieces of work even though it may take longer so I have the opportunity to learn and grow in that sense. Give me the time to go away on professional development courses. I do expect that and would push for it moving forward"***-LSG**

Participants SSG and PHG align with the typical responses conveying an expectation for managers to be supporting professional development. However, they perceive this as a two-way process, believing they as the subordinate must have a personal understanding of what they want to achieve, with the manager there to temper these goals and provide support. This attitude differs from the rest of the participants, who identified the importance of professional development but did not recognise any level of self-responsibility in achieving this.

*"I'd like to think that they have a big interest in it, but it stems from me expressing that interest too. So how could I progress my career in this area and where could she support it. I think they should have an interest in that if the person is willing to learn and grow and ask questions, I think they should take it on board and support them"***-SSG**

*"I think it's kind of like you need to know, not necessarily know but have an idea of kind of what you want and expectations and then it needs to be them as well as to whether those are realistic or kind of help to get there"***-PHG**

All Gen Z participants who worked in the law and banking industry mentioned that they place high value on professional development - not a surprising finding, given the high-performing nature of their respective industries. A further two of three from the accounting sector also highlighted the importance they place on this. While not all participants directly mentioned that they placed high value on professional development, there were no participants in the sample who had contradictory views, in that it was an element of their job which they did not contemplate.

Differing Perceptions of Professional Development

Participant CGG believed she placed importance on her professional development, however, her attitude towards it differed from the typical responses of the sample in that she felt this expectation was not reciprocated by her manager. This has left her feeling as though she is not learning and improving her skills, resulting in her lacking confidence in her ability to do the job. This participant, as illustrated in Section 4.2.1, also was not satisfied with her leader-member relationship, lacking the development of a personable aspect. When asked by the researcher if professional development was important to her, she perceived that it was, but did not feel that this was being recognised in her current position.

*"Yea I think so, I'd like to get a few more trainings under my belt. Even just one course per year, just to say I've done, and I do want to build on skills because like when you're at uni you are always up levelling yourself in different courses and I just feel like I'm kind of not learning anything as such."***-CGG**

The researcher followed this question by asking if the manager pushed and supported her professional development. She replied with a firm no and feels that she gets little direction in what areas she needs to improve and how to do so.

*"Honestly, no. I guess most of the feedback I've got from her has been 'oh, you're doing fine, you're doing good' but I don't really know what I need to improve on. I know I definitely need to improve because I'm fairly new and I don't really have a lot of confidence in what I'm doing."***-CGG**

Participant PJMG who also struggled with developing the personable aspect of the leader-member relationship, shared similar issues to participant CGG. PJMG claimed professional development to be of "absolutely enormous" importance to him.

"Huge, absolutely enormous." **-PJMG**

However, when asked if he expects managers to be driving this, he found it a complex situation, saying that he had seen it work well at other organisations, but it was difficult for his own manager to do due to time constraints, leaving him confused about what is actually considered a problem in the workplace.

> *"it's a good question, because I understand that they definitely do have constraints on their time so it's difficult for them, but it definitely makes a huge difference when managers and the people that are already in the environment reach out to you and drive that relationship because as a new person coming into a new role you don't know what you don't know so if somebody is telling you, 'reach out if you have any problems' you might not actually know what is a problem so that can make it a little bit difficult so I definitely appreciate it"*

The researcher went on to ask the participant if he feels that his manager supports his professional development, even if they are not the one necessarily driving it. While he says that he is occasionally checked up on, it is not the approach which is expected by him as a subordinate.

> *"Um, yeh like I haven't experienced really too much, um but you know from time to time they will check in and they will ask like 'do you have everything you need?' your supported but it won't be anything like 'I have heard that you are doing this, these are the…'"*

The support that Gen Z expect from their managers in regard to their professional development is synonymous with their expectation of managers to be actively engaged in scaffolding them across the ZPD. This implies that Gen Z recognise that as newcomers to an organisation they have limited capacity using only independent problem solving, and need the support of managers, who are experienced members, to progress beyond this limitation.

4.2.3 Accessibility

The Gen Z participants also demonstrated an expectation that their managers lead in a way which made them accessible. This links back and is connected to their expectations surrounding relational intimacy. Developing personable relationships, facilitated by managers

initiating informal interactions and personal disclosures, created an environment where the subordinates felt more comfortable approaching their managers. The hierarchal structure of their organisations often made approaching their manager a daunting task, but creating these relationships worked to bridge this communication barrier between subordinate and manager. This comes back to an expectation for managers to demonstrate an engaging and genuine leadership style.

Another aspect of the Gen Z participants perceiving their managers to be accessible was approachability. When speaking of what they value in a line manager, five of the participants mentioned approachability as a key managerial trait and expectation. Approachability was perceived by the participants as a manager who makes the recipient feel comfortable to initiate and engage in interactions with.

Participant AMG characterises their manager being approachable as being empathetic and understanding of their subordinate's situation. Also, knowing that their manager will take action on their behalf, when necessary, provides the confidence that they can approach them with problems, and know they will be supported.

"Approachable, very empathetic, so if I ever go to 'her' my line manager she's always happy to have a chat basically and understanding and she will action if I ask her to…" -**AMG**

Participant PJMG built on this notion, suggesting that an approachable manager is one who is a "good person", willing to invest time into their reportees.

"I think like you say its stems of that like approachable and just if you are a good person then you've got time for people out of your time. If they have got problems, you kind of invest your time into those problems and vice versa."-**PJPG**

Participant CSG perceives managers who are approachable to ease the process of developing a relationship. They believe this is because it bridges the potential intimidation of the power imbalance between leader and member.

"Yea, definitely someone who's approachable. We had a previous manager and he was real cool, like would always come and... yea once a week he would come around the team and be like 'g'day, what's going on and stuff' which was really cool because you just build the relationship and I think a few people in the team struggle with approaching higher up, so that builds the confidence for sure if your manager can break that barrier."-**CSG**

*"I really prefer someone who is like approachable. So, you know, smile round the office, like come over, and just chat, I think those are the really important things, to me anyway, just for them to come over and just chat about what's been going on."***-CSG**

However, when interacting with Gen Z's other expectations that fall under the overarching theme of leadership style (relational intimacy and professional development), it is suggested by the data that approachability reflects their desire for engaged managers. Gen Z want managers to be actively engaged in learning activities, aiding them as newcomers in navigating the workplace. This is a crucial part of workplace learning, as it is a collaborative process through which the subordinate is reliant on the manager to induct them into the social system of the organisation. Without managers engaging their subordinates, their learning potential is limited, as they do not receive the assistance or scaffolding required to extend their knowledge.

4.3 Uncertainty

Uncertainty is generally defined as "a state in which individuals lack confidence in their ability to predict the outcomes of an event, an issue, an interaction, a relationship, or a particular behaviour" (Afifi, 2009, p. 973). While most participants did not directly mention they were often feeling uncertain in the workplace, their expectations of managers to set clear expectations, and display proactiveness and immediacy, signified that they placed the onus on managers to demystify the organisational norms, policies and procedures to reduce uncertainty. Sunnafrank (1986) points out that across communicative behaviour theories it is often assumed that "individuals attempt to increase predictability or reduce uncertainty about their relationships with others" (p. 3). The data therefore suggests that they rely heavily on the manager-subordinate interactions as a facilitator to make sense of the workplace and to learn what are the expected outcomes to specific tasks, interactions and situations. Brashers (2001) identifies social support as a psychological management tool to uncertainty, providing psychological support to the person effected by providing a secure relationship, making support available without the fear of stimulation or rejection and in turn reducing social uncertainty. Gen Z's managerial expectations align with such uncertainty management processes, with managers acting as suppliers and assessors of information, partners in information collections, and information buffers, doing so directly and indirectly (Brashers, 2001). Participant's PJMG and LAG suggested that uncertainty felt by Gen Z subordinates led them to face an internal struggle between when to approach managers with issues, and

when to take initiative. They both add that when new to the organisation "you don't know what you don't know", often making it difficult for Gen Z employees to identify what a problem is, when managerial support should be sought, and when initiative should be taken to solve the problem by themselves.

"I definitely find that to be a difficult spot especially when I started, sometimes you don't know what you don't know. If your manager's waiting for you to reach out because you have identified that somethings wrong like I might have missed a million things where I probably should have asked for help on them, but I just didn't and I wasn't to know"-**PJMG**

"...because as a new person coming into a new role you don't know what you don't know so if somebody is telling you, 'reach out if you have any problems', you might not actually know what is a problem so that can make it a little bit difficult"-**PJMG**

"if something is wrong you know I'm supposed to come to them with it, but sometimes it can be a little unclear about what is the extent of that where is I don't want to be the person that is overbearing and comes to them with everything. But I don't also want to be the person that is struggling because they are not getting enough input because they are not asking the right questions. They are expected to be asked even though they don't know that there expecting to be asked"-**PJMG**

"I think when you first start you don't know what you don't know, so you don't know the right questions to ask, um you don't even know where to start and so ultimately the communication isn't going to be as good."-**LAG**

As newcomers to the organisation, and often the industry, it is natural for Gen Z to feel a level of uncertainty surrounding the organisational practices and norms. Drawing upon the theory of legitimate peripheral participation, as they observe and interact with their manager and the wider sociocultural environment, they will become an experienced member, fully participating within the organisation. To facilitate this transformation, the data implies that Gen Z looks to managers to actively guide them through the learning process and ZPD. The subordinates therefore expect managers to provide support in the form of scaffolding for them to ease their levels of uncertainty. Two expectations were observed in the data which suggest this, those of clear expectations being set by managers, and for managers to be proactive in their approach to leadership.

A selection of the Gen Z participants demonstrated a desire for managers to set clear expectations. This implies that the subordinates are seeking a sense of predictability of outcome in relation to tasks and interactions. Given their relative lack of experience in their roles, they may often feel uncertain about the organisational process and norms which they are expected to follow, as well as what the expected outcomes look like. Managers setting and communicating clear expectations leaves little room for ambiguity, instilling confidence in the subordinates that they are doing things correctly. This set of quotes illustrates that the subordinates perceived that having clear expectations set by managers fostered a cohesive understanding of instructions, performance, deadlines and actions.

*"I mean clear communication of expectations is one thing, and also that those expectations are reasonable because I have definitely had not so great experiences where the manager might not necessarily have understood the amount of work that would have been required and so then if I can't meet those expectations but part of it was that I probably wouldn't have been able to anyway, I feel terrible, you feel awful about it."***-PJMG**

*"I think communication skills in terms of understanding time frames and expectations, so you get given a job… So, I think understanding what's expected of you and being able, if someone gives you a task saying, ok what is the timeframe for this. If I don't have all the answers, who can I go to for support?"***-ANG**

*"I think direct, clear and just making it really clear what is expected of me and dates, not being vague or anything."***-CBG**

*"What do I value most, I value clear expectations, expectations about my work, about how they expect me to perform, what they want me to do, when they want me to do it. I feel I function really well under like a rules-based system so it's do this, don't do that, if I haven't got it right, tell me I haven't got it right and tell me how you expect me to change it. I don't expect someone to do it for me, but if you can tell me what you want me to do, I'll happily do it. So, to me that's a good leader and that's what I want from a line manager."***-LAG**

A further three Gen Z participants made comments regarding their expectation of managers to provide clarity in their expectations and instruction.

"Yeh, just clarity, if the instruction is really clear and brief and precise, like exactly what I need to know when that really helps especially because I am new if someone tells me to do

something I'm like cool, but I have to figure out what's the process… so it's really, really good when your manager's is just like ok, this is what you need to do, and I'm like sweet"-**AVG**

"…I think like I said before for me it about clear communication and expectations so even though they are busy, sometimes they don't have the time to give you all the answers I expect them to give me enough time to tell me what to do and l go away and do it."-**LAG**

"Then communication just being really clear with what is expected you know what the work you actually need to do is"-**LEG**

"Yea, like good information but then also happy to expand, or if you've got questions, answer and take times to explain things a bit more"-**SOG**

"As long as they're just nice, that's my main thing, and clear with what they want."-**SOG**

"I do like it because I feel like she is straight up with me. Also, it is quite clear cut and there's no 'airy fairy' trying to keep me happy or trying to make sure that you know, it's just straight to the point and it's good and yea it doesn't really need to be."-**CBG**

This desire for clarity of managerial expectations is indicative of Gen Z's lack of experience in their industry, feeling a higher level of uncertainty in what are the correct behaviours to demonstrate towards completing a task, what is an ideal outcome, and how the manager will react to alternative scenarios. Seeking clear expectations from a manager therefore may act as information-seeking behaviour from the subordinate, in an attempt to increase predictability by reducing ambiguity. If the subordinate has a clear idea of how to approach a set task to reach a desired outcome, there is little room for ambiguity to exist. However, uncertainty management theory challenges the assumption that uncertainty primarily leads individuals to seek information, highlighting a range of alternative responses (Afifi, 2009). It is therefore important to note that such information-seeking behaviour was not a mutually exclusive response from the subordinates, but rather worked in conjunction with gaining social support through proactiveness from managers, which is discussed in further detail in Section 4.3.2.

It must be noted that the literature points out that reducing uncertainty is only one of an indefinite number of alternative behavioural responses. While it may seem logical for individuals to mitigate uncertainty in relation to decision-making, under differing circumstances it can enable people to remain hopeful or optimistic about performing tasks (Brashers, 2001). Individuals' behavioural and psychological responses to uncertainty is

dependent on their appraisals of, and emotional reaction to, the situation at hand (Kramer, 1999). The data provided from the Gen Z sample indicates that they conveyed a negative emotional response to uncertainty around organisational activity, perceiving uncertainty as a potential threat. This signifies that it acts as a cause of anxiety, precluding effective decision making from taking place (Kramer, 1999). Furthermore, they may perceive that their uncertainty signifies to managers a level of incompetence in their ability to complete tasks or make effective decisions, leading to a possible harm to their position within the organisation.

An interesting statement made by participant LSG demonstrates that that they can find themselves reluctant to approach superiors, due to fear of their reaction and uncertainty about the result of the interaction. This aligns with the notion that the Gen Z subordinates place the onus on managers to demystify the workplace and create a sense of predictability of behaviours and interactions.

"In terms of say I screwed something up I'll also be like more nervous about going to the older colleague about it mainly because they have more experience, you are worried that they are sort of less understanding and they high standards for you whereas the younger colleague tends to, there sort of all older than me, by just a couple of years, they have been in my position recently and are more understanding of the mistakes I guess, less harsh about them" – **LSG**

Gen Z's expectation of managers to set clear expectations is coherent with the concept of scaffolding. It seems subordinates desire these expectations to be set as a form of support in their learning process. Given that they are generally newcomers to their organisation and have minimal experience in their roles, the expectations set by the managers act as scaffold, letting them know exactly what they need to do in any given situation and what the desired outcome may be. As they become more proficient within their roles and assume their identity as a fully participating member of the organisation, they will situate themselves and understand the underlying rules and norms within the organisation and the managers will be able to remove the scaffold, gradually providing less support.

4.3.2 Proactiveness

Building upon the previous section, Gen Z participants reported expecting their managers to be proactive. They experienced anxiety caused by initiating interactions with superiors in uncertain circumstances. This also demonstrated their reliance on social support from

managers as an uncertainty management tool, furthering the notion of the onus they place on managers to provide a sense of predictability in the workplace.

Participant PJMG, PJPG, LSG and CSG discuss this proactiveness in the sense of managers regularly checking in on their subordinates, making sure they are feeling competent in their ability to complete work and exhibiting a level of on-going support which they do not have to search for. PJMG points out that in his experience, both personally and from what he has observed, subordinates can find themselves in an array of uncertainty, which the manager is oblivious to as they initiated the interactions with their subordinates. He goes on to mention that having the onus placed on the subordinate to approach their superior is not an effective strategy, as "circumstances make that a little difficult". Belonging to a professional service firm in the accounting sector, the organisational setting is identified by PJMG as a potential contributing factor to a lack of proactive communication from managers. This is because they work in a high-pressure industry where time, especially for top management, is scarce. Participant LSG who also works in a highly professional environment in the legal industry mentions that those informal check-ins initiated by management would be beneficial if they happened more regularly. As mentioned in Section 4.3.1, he found that organisational circumstances and negative attitudes towards predicted outcomes would often leave him hesitant to approach superiors as issues arose. Both industries also have highly hierarchical structures, adding a potential barrier for subordinates to approach managers, as communication may be limited compared to that in other industries with a more horizontal structure.

"Probably just the proactiveness and I have discussed with a couple of like younger employees around here and I'm not sure whether it is just due to us being a professional service firm the management is quite busy it's not really high on their priority list but is definitely goes a long way when you have a superior reach out to you ask actually how you are doing. Or sometimes I have experienced around here you will see people that aren't doing very well and its only until their very visually not doing very well that then the manager or the partner will actually check in on them" – **PJMG**

"I think sometimes the baby gets thrown out with the bath water, um where sometimes you might not actually be going swimmingly, and the onus is definitely on you to reach out. Sometimes circumstances make that a little difficult." -**PJMG**

"When I think of a mentor or a manager that is supposed to be looking out for you think their supposed to be a bit proactive about it, it doesn't mean they are checking in on you all the time but at least every now and again so I definitely find that to be a difficult spot especially when I started, sometimes you don't know what you don't know"- **PJMG**

Aligning with PJMG, participants PJPG, LSG and CSG discuss this sense of proactiveness from managers in terms of informal manager-subordinate interactions. This involves managers initiating informal check-ins with subordinates, providing them with the opportunity to discuss any uncertainties they may have, without the added pressure or fear of approaching a superior.

"I think I quite enjoy it when they kind of initiate like an out of context catch-up or an out of context 'how are you going?' And stuff I think that's kind of especially in a professional environment when everyone has got their own sheet of armour going on if someone then goes oh mate, I just saw that you've or blah blah blah, are you all good? Or vice versa what's going on? I think or shall we go for a beer, just shit like that I think makes a big difference."- **PJPG**

"I think part of that sort of leadership or manager role is making the time to go around and check in on people or see how they are doing and that is probably something that could be done more often so that more of those informal conversations happen."- **LSG**

"So, you know, smile round the office, like come over, and just chat, I think those are the really important things, to me anyway, just for them to come over and just chat about what's been going on. "- **CSG**

Participant CGG mentions that having friendly relationships with team members relieves the pressure of asking them questions, creating a more open channel of communication where more casual, informal dialogue initiates conversation between the members. These relationships are consistent with those which comprise the in-group, facilitated by high-quality, social interactions between leader and subordinate. She indicates that the development of a personable relationship mitigates the uncertainty felt when approaching the manager with questions, stating that "she never feels like I'm being dumb or anything". This demonstrates that she has a sense of predictability about the reaction of her manager, with no fear that she is going to be ridiculed or perceived as incompetent for asking questions.

"That's why I really enjoy having friendly relationships with people in my team so then I feel like it's easier to be like 'oh, how was your weekend, by the way I've got a question for you about something', it's just a nice segue in, rather than... yea there's less pressure on asking a question."-**CGG**

"I have a really good relationship with her so I can just ask her ten questions and I won't feel like I'm being dumb or anything, so she's been really good."-**CGG**

The comments made by these participants suggests that the development of personable leader-member relationships, especially when driven by superiors, may help to break down communication barriers perceived by Gen Z in relation to the power imbalance between manager and subordinate. Participant CSG identified this power imbalance as an issue for new employees, placing the responsibility on the manager to create those interactions and develop relationships in order to 'bridge the gap' between leader and member.

"Yea because I'd say like that majority it's their responsibility to do that because they are higher up, rather than someone who is new going and building those because they're... unless they're like super confident in just doing that, they probably won't and then that bridge will never be gapped." -**CSG**

Further comments from participants indicated that the development of personable relationships helped to break down communication barriers, mitigating Gen Z's uncertainty in the response of managers. Participant PHG, LEG and CSG mention that the casual nature of the relationships helps to build confidence in interacting with superiors, especially when managers initiate these casual interactions.

"probably like the partners and stuff, I think we are quite lucky here it's, it's quite casual, it's probably as in when I first started, we found them so scary, but now it's just like you kind of talk to them just as another manager as such and probably the same when you are kind of working with CFO's whatever it's definitely a lot more casual than what I kind of expected when I first started... I think you kind of get more confident to talk and not kind of be scared and have kind of as normal a conversation as you can."-**PHG**

"We had a previous manager, and he was real cool, like would always come and... yea once a week he would come around the team and be like 'g'day, what's going on and stuff' which was really cool because you just build the relationship and I think a few people in the team

struggle with approaching higher up, so that builds the confidence for sure if your manager can break that barrier." – **CSG**

*"I think probably part of it is just confidence, not like having that confidence yet but also but it's probably creating an environment where it is safe to ask those questions or have those conversations and I think that probably comes back to creating that kind of more informal environment, less hierarchy so you feel really comfortable to have a chat with them." -***LEG**

This illustrates that the expectations of subordinates are not mutually exclusive, but rather are intricately connected. The expectation that managers demonstrate proactiveness in initiating manager-subordinate interactions, shares a close link with the genuine and engaging leadership style discussed in Section 4.2 - in particular the expectation of relational intimacy. This relationship exists as it is not only an expectation of Gen Z to have the opportunity to develop personable relationships with their managers, but also for managers to drive this relationship in a proactive manner, creating predictability in the relationship and opening an effective channel of communication. The indicative attitudes displayed by the sample towards approaching their managers in situations underlined by uncertainty seemed to be dictated by the depth of their social relationship with their superior, suggesting a correlation between the depth of personable relationships and perceived anxiety arising through uncertainty. This also highlights the hands-on approach Gen Z expect managers to take towards providing scaffolding to guide them through the ZPD. Gen Z are reluctant to seek this guidance and support, preferring managers to be proactive and engaging in their learning throughout the learning process.

4.4 Feedback

When the researcher questioned the sample on their experiences of receiving feedback, two expectations were identified. The first expectation was for managers to provide feedback in a constructive manner, linking back to their expectation of managers to support and drive their professional development and workplace learning. Their perceptions of this were for managers to find a balance of affirmation versus criticism, allowing them to correct their errors while also being praised for their successes. This also shares a connection to the uncertainty felt by subordinates, as Gen Z's relative lack of experience leaves them uncertain that they are following the correct procedures or demonstrating accepted behaviours in their workplace. The second expectation was for on-going reviews from their managers, shifting

away from traditional practice of annual reviews. Once again, given their lack of experience, this enables them to constantly learn and progress in their roles within the organisation.

4.4.1 Affirmation vs Criticism

The Gen Z sample indicated a desire for managers to provide them with criticism and constructive feedback in order to improve their performance. Participant AMG points out that this desire extends from the expectation of managers to be completely honest and open with their subordinates:

*"100%, I expect them to tell me the honest truth in my work performance and in return I will tell them what I think as well." -***AMG**

Further comments from ANG, LSG, PHG and CSG add to this idea, implying that this openness and honesty expected from management is necessary for the professional development of the employee. This once again highlights the interconnectivity of the Gen Z samples expectations, illustrating how their expectations surrounding feedback enable their expectations around professional development to be met.

*"I wouldn't mind a bit more; I'm not going to lie. Humans have a way of being quite nice and that is definitely a good thing for sure, but like I said I am very career driven, I'm very focused so like sometimes a little more feedback wouldn't hurt. But quite often most people know what they need to work on as well you just need to admit it to yourself probably the first thing. I get heaps of feedback, but you can always have more"-***ANG**

"So, within our team there's not really any catch ups about where you're at currently because it's more up to you. Which I don't necessarily 100% agree with because it's kind of annoying, you're a bit in the dark but I think, myself I'm quite hard on myself and want to like do quite well."- **CSG**

*"I think partners in a law firm have high expectations, they are very experienced, they are very knowledgeable and they are very straight up with you, and I have had managers like that in the past and actually it has taught me that probably the way to deal with it is if someone gives you honest feedback even if it comes across quite blunt and harsh you sort of just take it on the chin and what you look for in that, you don't take it personally, what you look for is the actual message, they may not have delivered it the best way" -***LSG**

"Probably yeh just that constructive kind of, sometimes I feel like they just, like not everyone does everything well sometimes I think they just focus on oh no it's like good, its fine kind of things. Probably having the mix of you did this, but you could do this, but it would be better is probably what, I feel like most people kind of would look for." – **PHG**

A number of participants further this notion that Gen Z subordinates' welcome criticism from their managers in order to improve their performance. However, they note that they expect this criticism to be constructive and justified, coming with an explanation as to what they have done wrong and how they can rectify their actions or make changes for future improvement. Such comments from the participants suggests that Gen Z subordinates have little tolerance for unwarranted criticism, potentially arising from their expectation of managers to display an authentic care for their subordinates and drive their personal and professional development. Unnecessary or unwarranted negative feedback can be perceived by the sample as managers taking a dislike to the individual, or increased uncertainty in their ability to complete their work to standard, leaving them demotivated and hesitant or anxious about taking the initiative, as indicated by participants CGG, PJMG and LEG.

"Yeh definitely if there is work wrong, I would want to hear them, and I think it would be important to hear it, and then also what needed to happen to fix it, you know. Or like some steps you could take to improve" –**LEG**

"if I haven't got it right, tell me I haven't got it right and tell me how you expect me to change it." – **LAG**

"Probably yeh just that constructive kind of, sometimes I feel like they just, like not everyone does everything well sometimes I think they just focus on oh no it's like good, its fine kind of things. Probably having the mix of you did this, but you could do this, but it would be better is probably what, I feel like most people kind of would look for." – **PHG**

"everyone's different at giving feedback but I think good feedback really comes from explaining the reasons why so when people give you feedback, if they don't explain why you should be doing this way rather than the way you have done it, um that's when it is not helpful. I have had that before and that's just, when you have to ask the why after you have just been told you have done it wrong that's annoying. So, I think that's one way that feedback could be improved, but for the most part people tend to do that." **-LSG**

"I'm not sure. I think maybe she could be better with the negatives; I feel like maybe if people are doing something wrong, they often don't know because she's sort of just like 'oh yea, whatever, it'll be sweet'.

So, yea, I guess for me, if I'm doing something real wrong, I guess I'd want to know and be put on a path to get better at it or something. I'm not sure if that's a strong point there." - **SOG**

"Honestly, no. I guess most of the feedback I've got from her has been 'oh, you're doing fine, you're doing good' but I don't really know what I need to improve on." – **CGG**

The sample indicated that negative feedback alone could leave them feeling like they are incompetent, and this therefore must be balanced with positive affirmation from managers, which currently is often not being provided. Participant's CGG, LEG, LSG, PJMG, and SOG note that a 'no news is good news' approach is currently taken by their managers, leaving subordinates uncertain if their work is meeting performance expectations. This aligns with the literature which suggests that Gen Z crave recognition (Kubatova, 2016; Mihelich, 2013) and managers' ignorance of this expectation can lead to subordinates feeling frustrated and demotivated (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). This links back to the samples' managerial expectations regarding uncertainty, specifically the expectation that managers be proactive in their approach to the manager-subordinate interactions. Managers taking a stand-off, rather than proactive approach, to providing positive reaffirmation that subordinates are succeeding in their role, has shown to have negative implications for some of the sample in their attitude towards their ability. They also have a negative appraisal of the uncertainty they feel towards completing tasks, as they perceive the outcome will be negative if they take initiative, as a result of not being provided feedback that they are approaching the task correctly. This more proactive approach from managers in providing positive feedback works in combination with the subordinates' expectation of on-going reviews, discussed further in Section 4.4.2.

"Yea, so we've previously had this issue where we don't often get a lot of feedback, formally or informally, like if you are doing a good job, you just have no idea. So, I've really struggled with that over the last" - **CGG**

"I would prefer to get more especially when you have done good work, sometimes I struggle because I don't get told 'that's a really good letter you have written' or that you have done a good job. I haven't never really ever heard that kind of feedback, so sometimes I think not

hearing means you are doing a good job because if you weren't you would get told, but I think communicating that positive feedback just as important" **– LEG**

"Unfortunately, most feedback at this level does tend to be the things you've done wrong and things you need to do better. Um, which I guess is like expected, essentially, they are saying if you are not getting feedback, it is probably a good thing. But it is what it is, feedback tends to be informal it will be like 'well done' on this or 'you could have done this better' or 'sort your shit out' or like really well done on this." **– LSG**

"Yea and I think probably more it's a 'no news is good news' sort of thing. Like unless it's like a real good report, I guess because I'm new and I've done something harder, I'll get a comment on that. But normally it's like an if there's no feedback then it's good. It's more if there's comments and what not it means I've missed a few things or forgot to finish off a sentence or whatever" **– SOG**

I definitely want to get the constructive criticism of this is how you can improve because I want to grow, I want to that but if that is all I'm getting um, then all of a sudden it can make be doubt am I actually good at my job because. I haven't had anyone say I'm not doing a good job. I must remember I struggled with this a bit in my first year and your manager would say well if your managers aren't saying you are doing a bad job the probably doing ok but I don't really think that this effective communication." **-PJMG**

"She only told me that once I talked to her and said, 'I'm having this issue', she said 'oh yes, you should be doing more of this. That's what he wants' and I'm like 'well, why didn't you tell me', to help me out." **-CGG**

4.4.2 On-going Reviews

A selection of the Gen Z participants demonstrates a preference for frequent, on-going feedback from managers. This includes constant on-time reviews of their performance and regular, informal check-ins from managers.

"I like to be able to check-in multiple times, rather than just go for days without talking about something or to someone. Regular check-ins are helpful." **-CGG**

"But yea, I think there is different things we are doing which haven't been done previously, so now we are having one-on-one catchups, it's once a month which comes around incredibly quickly, I'm finding that really beneficial and that's just going through my workload and working out what's a priority. So, continuing to do that is really good" **-CBG**

"for me more frequently would be more beneficial so like I said at the start like I would really thrive I think on a hands-on manager who like is invested in my development so it's probably a little bit irregular at the moment but pros and cons so there's good with the bad, I guess." **-AMG**

The data therefore suggest that the Gen Z sample prefer shifting away from the traditional performance feedback practice of annual performance reviews, towards a more on-going process which enables feedback to be applied to tasks while they are still relevant. Participant LSG, PHG, AMG, PJMG and PJPG make direct comments on this, insisting that the feedback process would be more constructive if it was delivered frequently throughout the process, rather than one review at the end when it is too late to apply it to the task. This once again links back to the expectation for managers to reduce uncertainty as they provide constant reaffirmation throughout the process, mitigating the anxiety felt by subordinates that they are doing something wrong. This is expected in the circumstances of Gen Z who are relatively new to the workplace and their role, meaning they have less experience and therefore need more guidance in approaching tasks.

"it's probably the informal review where you really grow because that's where people can really, it's the sort of day-to-day feedback that you get that actually helps you make those adjustments" **-LSG**

"Sometimes they often just sort of come at the end of the project when it's too late rather than more ongoing constructive feedback could have made the process a bit better?" – **PHG**

"I think sometimes what happens is you do the job which takes say could take a month, and at the end of it you catch on your feedback but throughout the time you could be doing pretty poorly and the only way you would know is because your work isn't getting done or when it gets reviewed it gets marked pretty averagely. Um, and I guess just like an informal kind of feedback every few days just like being hey I've reviewed a few of your things this is just like a general theme and should we have a 10 minute catch up just to say looks this is a common theme for you or like you doing this really well. I think that could be something that people could find useful maybe." **-PJPG**

"if you have a week on a job just pulling you aside for literally just 5 minutes, just saying there are 3 points I want you to work on or look these are 2 things you have done really well kind of show other people this, something like that. Like those 5 minutes in one week, I think it just makes quite a big change." **-PJPG**

"Probably definitely more the day to day because that effects how I do my work like on the technical level and that so that definitely improves my performance"-**PJMG**

"Yes, that's like yeh definitely. Because that is like learning as you go rather than just saying at a point in time you did well."-**AMG**

"Probably the first one just like the more frequent because it's kind of I think with the annual stuff coming through Its kind of hard to think back on a whole year. Um, and actually get some value from that sometimes it's kind of gets a bit high level and not that specific." **-PHG**

This strong preference for frequent, informal feedback was not reflective of the whole sample. A selection of participants demonstrated that they find value in the more traditional performance reviews. However, they identify that these reviews help to appraise performance in a different way and work in conjunction with informal, on-going reviews.

"I think a bit of both. Like every six months before you get any feedback can be a long time but in saying that although you may not be getting feedback from your manager, you're getting feedback from other people that you've done work for."-CBG

Participant AVG points out that in formal reviews the subordinate is "forced to talk about it", ensuring that the conversation is happening in an environment where they may be more comfortable raising any issues or receiving negative comments.

"I guess when it is formal you are forced to like talk about it, which is quite good because some of it can be quite confronting because it can be an awkward conversation to have, not that when someone's telling you to do something, another way is like confrontational and that, sometimes receiving feedback can be quite awkward so in a formal situation I guess it's a little bit easier to receive"-**AVG**

Participants PHG and PJMG suggest that such performance reviews provide a more comprehensive appraisal, taking a broader approach rather than focusing on task-specific issues.

"I think it's quite good because it is kind of like sums it up, you kind of so probably get some kind of feedback as you are working through a job. Like that was, if you were doing like a work path thing they are called, that's good, that's not good can you update this, there is that kind of like informal task they feedback, but overall feedback I think it is quite good at the end of the job you can kind of look at it as a whole. So yeh I think it works well"-**PHG**

"The more high-level review is helpful, but it is helpful for different things, it's helpful for how do I address my work and like workload in general and what kind of way should I be looking at my tasks, looking to go about them. So, it's a little bit different for each of those." **- PJMG**

Gen Z's preference for feedback being provided in on-going reviews can be connected to their need for managers to provide scaffolding to guide them towards proficiency (i.e., through the ZPD). On-going reviews are a tool used for this, providing consistent support that is relevant to the task at hand. More traditional, on-going reviews are not as suited to this style of learning as they assess work over an extended period of time, so the feedback is not able to be utilised by the learner while it is immediately relevant.

4.5 Integrating Preferences

There were a number of preferences repeatedly mentioned by the Gen Z participants. These traits were not specific to an overarching theme, but rather were woven through the expectations held by the subordinates. The first preference was for managers' interactions with their subordinates to be characterised by honesty, trust, and openness. The second preference was for communication to by face-to-face when possible. The final preference was for immediacy to be shown by managers.

4.5.1 Valued Managerial Traits

Each of the expectations held by the Gen Z participants were facilitated by a number of managerial traits which were valued by the subordinates when interacting with their superiors. These were revealed to be honesty, trust, and openness, aligning with their desire for genuine and engaging leadership. This aligns with the work of Walumbwa et al. (2008), focusing on the overlap between ethical and authentic leadership theory, and drawing upon Trevino (2000), they express that such leaders possess attributes of honesty, fairness, integrity, and openness. A number of participants spoke of these managerial traits as an expectation they have within leader-subordinate interactions.

"100%, I expect them to tell me the honest truth in my work performance and in return I will tell them what I think as well." **-AMG**

"To have a trust and be honest with each other you really need to understand, you don't need to be mates outside work I'm not saying that, but just understand who I am and where I'm going in my career." **-ANG**

*"Yeh, 100%, being honest is super important in my world aye."***-ANG**

*"Yeah, just honesty. Honesty is a big one."***-CSG**

*"I expect them to be truthful and honest in the first instance"***-SEG**

*"I think trust, no. 1 for me is to have mutual trust… My expectation is to be trusted"***-SSG**

*"I just expect to be treated the way I treat them, respect, honest. How you treat people generally yeh."***-LSG**

When managers met these expectations, subordinates had noticeably more positive perceptions of their leader-subordinate relationship. Participant ANG proposes that the trust within their relationship with their manager results in them feeling safe interacting with them. Participants CSG and AVG both state that they feel lucky to have managers who possess such traits, perhaps suggesting that they perceive it a rare attribute.

"Good, yeh, really good, she is really open and honest, um and she will tell me if I need to pick up my game, she is really good at communicating that kind of stuff. I don't feel intimidated by her" **-AVG**

*"I'm definitely very lucky in the fact that I have got a really open, and kind manager"***-AVG**

*"I feel a lot safer with my manager when I communicate with him that I trust him a hell of a lot more."***-ANG**

*"Just how good it was, just the conversations and the honesty that you can have about things was really cool."***-CSG**

*"I'm quite lucky how I've got a really good team leader and it's just honest conversations."***-CSG**

Consistent with the work of Walumbwa et al. (2008) and Trevino (2000), Participant LSG highlighted the expectation he has for managers to display integrity, in terms of their actions matching the expectations which they set both for themselves and others.

*"But actually, yeh apart from that it is actually that integrity, that sort of saying, making sure that they are doing what they are saying."***-LSG**

As managers are perceived as more knowledgeable and therefore take on the role of inducting the subordinates into the social structure of the organisation, the traits outlined here are important for effective workplace learning to take place. This is because poor leader-member

relationships, characterised by low quality interactions, can result in a reluctance from managers to provide quality mentoring and support (Billett, 1995). An organisational climate with engaging and genuine managers encourages learners to seek and access coaching, consequently strengthening learning outcomes.

The Gen Z sample also displayed a preference for face-to-face communication, a tool used by them in the development of more personable relationships and high-quality interactions. This is because it enables them to read and respond to body language and social cues, and for some people was based on a perception that the differences between body language they observed were linked to generational differences. The following quotes range from indicating interest in reading others and using this a basis to respond, through to evidence that they were using body language as a tool to work through generations.

*"I think part of it is you can read the manager's emotions or the other persons emotions"-***PJMG**

*"Yeah, being able to talk face-to-face is just the easiest way, so you can kind of, you know, respond to people's body language and stuff."-***CSG**

*"Yea, I definitely prefer face-to-face"-***CSG**

*"Yeah, I think on the phone we 'ruin everything' *said jokingly* and face-to-face it's really easy to tailor your behaviour to how the other person is acting because you can kind of work out whether they're confused or just being a dick because we're councils…."-***SOG**

A selection of participants mentioned that digital forms of communication, especially email, can make it difficult to judge the tone of the conversation and fully engage the recipient, an interesting finding given their immersion in the digital world when growing up. Three of the participants mentioned that information can easily be misconstrued through digital communication. This further adds to idea that their preference for face-to-face communication is to create high quality, engaging interactions with the participant.

*"I think work just some in terms of work it doesn't have that much of an impact like you could do it through the computer, you could do whatever, you probably can't read the room as well but you can get as much out of the info wise you get all that out, whereas if you are trying to get something out of someone or really try to engage them face-to-face is I find probably the most important part."-***PJPG**

"You are able to actually able to build rapport and communicate properly, you can, when you going back and forth via say like email or instant message in an office workspace you can't sort judge the tone that someone is communicating in, you can't make an assessment as to where they are and what they are saying, whereas when you communicating in person you can actually see them, but also you can take it further. If you are communicating by email or something it's really hard to go more in depth and have the sort of secondary and tertiary discussions about thing, because you are limited." **-LSG**

*"Face-to-face, phone calls, I much prefer those over emails. Emails can get passive."***-AMG**

*"I definitely like person to person, um or yeh just talking on the phone verse emailing is my preferred, just a bit more easy to have an open conversation and feel like sometimes things get miscommunicated in email and different ones, whereas you on the phone or in person it's quite obvious."***-PHG**

*"I think emails can be hard because they can be interpreted incorrectly or with the wrong"***- ANG**

*"but now I definitely like face-to-face because I also think, not much in our generation but the generation above, you get an email and it will be really blunt and really straight up and it's kind of confusing, you think 'oh god, this person is really not impressed'. But then when you actually talk to them... you know they just send direct emails. So, yea I would prefer to interact face-to-face."***-CBG**

However, one member of the sample, whilst feeling comfortable communicating face-to-face, expressed a preference towards digital communication channels, as this allowed time for thoughts to be pondered on and expressed fully once articulated. No other participants preferred this, leaving this person as an outlier to the data set.

*"I think I the digital because I think I prefer if there is something like I need to think about and say would rather put that in an email or something when you've got the chance to talk about go over it. Then sometimes during a face to face you don't have the chance like think about things as much as what you are going to say."***-LEG**

Gen Z's preference for face-to-face communication is a logical finding as it aligns with their desire for a hands-on, engaging approach to leadership from their managers. Face-to-face communication facilitates high-quality interactions, which lead to the development of personable leader-member relationships. This lays down the foundations for managers to

provide support for their subordinates, in the form of scaffolding, as they guide them through the ZPD.

4.5.3 Immediacy

Immediacy in the context of this study draws upon Mehrabian (1971), who introduced the concept of approach-avoidance theory. This construct explains that an individual's behaviour and communication reflect their attitude towards a person or situation, as they willingly interact with those who appeal to them and avoid those they dislike. This, in-turn, affects the psychological and physical closeness perceived by the recipient. The Gen Z participants illustrated how they used the verbal and non-verbal immediacy shown by managers to gauge situations, especially when there was a level of uncertainty and anxiety.

Participants AVG, CSG and PJMG highlight immediacy from managers in the form of body language. Participants AVG and CSG suggest that managers can tend to display body language around the office which is uninviting, implying that they sit higher up in the hierarchy and are unapproachable. PJMG's comment aligns with this notion - because his superior's body language makes him seem distanced and uninterested in the interaction, he feels "more like a task than a person".

"There are some managers that kind of prance around like they are a little bit more entitled than others" -**AVG**

"I feel like that's what we default to if you're like, you know, walking round and you see another manager and they kind of just look at you and like glance rather than smile, you think 'oh, they're higher up'" – **CSG**

"(he) keeps his cards pretty close to his chest. I don't know he doesn't give much away, sometimes his body language can be erring on the side of like let's get through these questions that you have got for me quick then we'll move on. So almost makes me feel more like a task than a person which is not the greatest." -**PJMG**

Participants CSG and PJMG discuss this sense of immediacy in terms of managers initiating manager-subordinate interactions through informal check-ins. This conveys that the manager has an interest in building a relationship and interacting with their subordinate, positively reinforcing their perceived psychological and physical closeness. CSG mentions that the power imbalance between superior and reportees can often make approaching interactions a

daunting task for subordinates. Therefore, a manager taking the initiative to initiate interactions is an effective tool in influencing their perceived immediacy.

> *"I definitely appreciate it when managers check in on how you are feeling in terms of pressure or emotions or things like that as well and that goes a long way."*-**PJMG**

"I really prefer someone who is like approachable. So, you know, smile round the office, like come over, and just chat, I think those are the really important things, to me anyway, just for them to come over and just chat about what's been going on."-**CSG**

"Yea, definitely someone who's approachable. We had a previous manager and he was real cool, like would always come and... yea once a week he would come around the team and be like 'g'day, what's going on and stuff' which was really cool because you just build the relationship and I think a few people in the team struggle with approaching higher up, so that builds the confidence for sure if your manager can break that barrier."-**CSG**

Participant AMG builds on this, noting that her manager's willingness to engage in conversation and act upon this, when necessary, makes her feel approachable, leading to more open communication.

> *"Approachable, very empathetic, so if I ever go to 'her' my line manager she's always happy to have a chat basically and understanding and she will action if I ask her to…"* **-AMG**

This set of data implies how the behaviours of managers impact the immediacy felt by the Gen Z sample. Positive behaviours such as welcoming body language, a willingness to communicate, and initiating informal interactions create a perception of psychological and physical closeness for subordinates. This is important in the manager-subordinate relationships as it enables more effective communication, with subordinates more willing to approach managers in times of need, rather than being left feeling uncertain.

4.6 Summary

The findings presented in this chapter provide valuable insights into the complex and interrelated expectations and preferences of the Gen Z participants' regarding their interactions with managers. These expectations fit into three overarching themes of leadership style, uncertainty, and feedback. Overall, these participants desired a leader who creates a fair and equitable workplace and provides a high level of support, facilitated by an engaging and genuine leadership style. The themes revealed in this chapter suggest Gen Z's expectations shape how they experience and make sense of the workplace. This is because

the degree to which these expectations are being met by managers, in conjunction with comparisons with their Gen Z peers' experiences, influence their interpretations of their reality. The next chapter provides the findings revealed by the analysis of data from Gen Z's managers.

Chapter Five: Manager Findings

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted individually with the five line-managers of the 15 participating Gen Z subordinates. This sample consists of a single manager from each of the organisations chosen to participate in this study.

The interviews explored these managers' observations and experiences when communicating with Gen Z subordinates, with the purpose of acquiring a holistic understanding of the values informing expectations, and the subsequent behaviour of both manager and subordinate.

The thematic coding of the data produced two overarching themes: Leadership Style and Communication Style. The data then embraced three subthemes consolidating each overarching theme, illustrating the managers perceptions of their Gen Z subordinates expectations.

This chapter follows a similar structure to its predecessor, the Gen Z findings. Firstly, defining each overarching theme, before outlining and interpreting each subtheme, then discussing how they interact to form the overall findings. The first key theme, leadership style, consists of mentorship, expected managerial traits, and rationale. The second key theme, communication style, referred to face-to-face communication and relational intimacy. The is presented visually in Table 4.

Table 4: Thematic Analysis of Manager Sample Describing Expectations of Leader-Member Interaction

Overarching Theme 1: Leadership Style			Overarching Theme 2: Communication Style	
Subtheme 1.1: Mentorship	Subtheme 1.2: Personable Relationships	Subtheme 1.3: Expected Managerial Traits	Subtheme 2.1: Face-to-face Communication	Subtheme 2.2: Rationale/Clarity

Individuality

However, while these overarching themes were identified to be running through the data, it is important to point out the emphasis managers placed on being sensitive towards the individuality of their subordinates, rather than generalising when discussing the generational cohort. Comments were consistently made by the managers, highlighting a conscious effort to not generalise in their statements. This demonstrates a hesitation from managers in categorising their employees, indicating that they are concerned with treating all employees from different demographics equally.

I don't know, I wouldn't want to generalise. I don't think of other Gen Z people as a group, I think of them as individuals."-**SAM**

"I wouldn't know if it's a generational thing"-**SAM**

"I wouldn't know if it's a generational thing or it's just a specific thing"-**SAM**

"This is just making great big rash generalisations really."-**CJM**

"But again, it's not a generation thing"-**PIM**

"Look I don't think it's any different to any other generations"-**PIM**

It was also explicitly stated by three of the five managers that the perceive themselves to approach interactions with Gen Z subordinates the same way they would with employees of other generations. This demonstrates a hesitation from managers to give to place too much emphasis on generational groupings, ensuring they are creating a fair and equal culture.

"that's a difficult question because I just talk to them really like I talk to everybody else, if you know what I mean."-**AJM**

"I just go up and talk to them just as the same as I will just go up to the staff and talk to them"-**PIM**

Further comments made by the managers illustrated how their observations of their Gen Z subordinates were not based on the perspective of generational groupings. Rather, they believed the expectations and behaviours they observed to be typical of the subordinates age and experience level or stemmed from individual personality traits.

"Again, it's not a generation thing it's um each personality" **-PIM**

*"But it is quite contextual and depends on the personality style"***-PIM**

"a lot of it is just driven by her own individual character, you know. And I don't see necessarily that its age related." **-CJM**

*"I think it's down to personality type, not necessarily to age group."***-CJM**

*"I think a factor of it is age but it's also personality type as well."***-CJM**

*"And again, it's down to the individual… it's just down to what she's like and what her character is."***-CJM**

*"I just think it's personality"***-SAM**

*"No, I just think it's personality"***-SAM**

"It's a bit of a person-by-person thing as opposed to a generation thing, I think." **-AJM**

Given that managers were commenting on another group, rather than self-reflecting as the Gen Z sample was, a tension arose within the data between their professional obligations and the aim of the research. The overarching themes found within the data, along with the emphasis on treating employees from all generations equally, imply that on one hand they felt obliged to treat all employees the same. However, they are also aware of the need to respond to the individuality of employees, whether that be based upon their personality, or on the generational characteristics which they possess. Without the researcher asking the direct question, it became clear that to some extent the managers were undertaking managerial identity work, as a responsible, egalitarian boss, not wanting to put too much emphasis on generational grouping. This is an important consideration for managers, as it is crucial for them to meet the differing needs of generations as they enter the workforce, while also creating a fair and equitable culture within their organisation.

5.2 Leadership Style

The managers indicated a number of expectations they have observed their Gen Z subordinates to hold about leadership style. These were in relation to (a) mentorship, (b) relational intimacy, and (c) managerial traits. These expectations indicate that managers perceive their Gen Z subordinates to be seeking relationships characterised by processes like

mentoring, open discussion, and casual socialising which led to personal knowledge, mutual understanding and support, a sense of belonging, and a bright future that is on the near horizon. Managers have been observed to take a more circumspect position regarding workplace learning and progression of the subordinates. They believe the skills deficits that Gen Z arrive with need to be rectified and that their expectations do not align with their current capabilities. Gen Z's expectations must then be tempered, needing experience and patience from the subordinates until they achieve independence.

5.2.1 Mentorship

Comments made by the managers suggest that they had observed their Gen Z employees to have an expectation that their managers provide mentorship which went beyond simply giving instruction and allocating workloads. This included activities such as driving professional development, the informal transmission of knowledge, to actively aid them in navigating the many challenges encountered in the workplace and provide the necessary support to gain proficiency using cultural tools. When the researcher asked the manager if they perceived their Gen Z subordinates to expect them to act as a mentor, the typical responses conveyed that they have observed this, as shown below.

Absolutely, yeh." **-LAM**

*"I think that, well going on my limited experience, I think they expect to be respected but they also expect to be mentored reasonably closely."***-CJM**

*Quite a lot, yea."***-CJM**

*"Yes, and it does come down to that sort of coaching relationship as well…"***-PIM**

*"Yeh"***-AJM**

*"It's more around that professional development than day to day tasks."***-AJM**

Participant CJM made an interesting comment, pointing out that compared to previous generational cohorts, Gen Z appear to be entering the workplace with a relative lack of experience. Therefore, she has to remind herself of her subordinates' youth and inexperience, and the extra support that is required as a consequence. Here, the manager has not only observed an expectation for mentorship to be provided but has identified a potential reason as to why.

"Whereas previously, you know I think some young people that have come through have had more breadth of experience before they've landed on the doorstep here." **-CJM**

"I do have to keep reminding myself how young she is and how relatively inexperienced she is in the role. So, I have to be reminded all the time of what she doesn't know so that I can give her extra support with that and I'm trying to encourage her to tell me what she doesn't know and what she needs focused mentoring on." **-CJM**

As part of providing mentorship to subordinates, participants LAM and AJM have found themselves having to temper the expectations of their Gen Z subordinates in regard to their career development. Participant LAM observes that Gen Z are somewhat unrealistic in their expectations of the pace of their development, requiring the delicate task of tempering these expectations without dampening their enthusiasm. The participant states that "on the one hand they want to be the boss tomorrow, on the other hand they need you around". He goes on to express the influence he believes social media has had on formulating the expectations of Gen Z, indicating that they expect things to happen more instantly than previous generational cohorts.

"I think, look, it's absolutely their generation in terms of they want this now, rather than some of the older generations where we expect hard work to get to that" **-LAM**

"...because they kind of need that immediacy of the supervisor. On the one hand they want to be the boss tomorrow, on the other hand they need you around and sometimes when I'm not around the are little panicky because I am not there so it's nice to phone in and say I'm over all this just keep calm and carry on." **-LAM**

I think through their generation, social media they are exposed to, they just want things a little bit more quickly, and you have to temper that. I don't think you try and dull it down at all because that enthusiasm is really good, but at the same time you have to be careful to say, what, there is a time you need to get here, and you have got to earn your stripes effectively which doesn't work well with Gen Z sometimes. But you do have to earn your stripes." **-LAM**

"Again, you just have to temper that with what is the reality of the commercial world, what is the reality of moving into a recession." **-LAM**

"They are young, enthusiastic, want to go places, they want everything today as opposed to working through a process." **-AJM**

These quotes highlight a tension running through the data between Gen Z participants' expectation (as observed by their managers) of a fast-paced career progression, and the relatively high amount of guidance, instruction, and support they need from managers on a day-to-day basis.

Participant LAM adds that while Gen Z may possess unrealistic career expectations, they generally respond well to critiques from their superior if the conversation is honest and rational. This expectation from Gen Z for honest and rationalised feedback from managers is discussed in further detail in Sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3.

"Actually, generally really well, I think there's this huge expectation from Gen Z but if they have the honest conversation and there is some logic in it, and they get it they respond really well. An example is, you know, we are coming into a recession, perhaps depression, law firms do ok, but it is not going to be as good a time as we've had previously, and our salary expectations have to be muted in that respect and they kind of understand that. If you just go to them and say well look, we are not paying you any more they wouldn't understand it."-
LAM

So, its understanding they are a different generation, but being pretty honest about what the reality is. I think if you combine those two it works very well."-**LAM**

This finding reveals the managers have observed their Gen Z subordinates to have an expectation for them to influence, guide, and give direction, fulfilling the role of a mentor. Given that workplace learning is situated within the sociocultural environment and artefacts of the organisation (Guile & Griffiths, 2001; Hager, 2013), and Gen Z are newcomers to the organisation, they look to managers as more experienced members to support and guide them. This is consistent with the focus of the ZPD, as emphasis is not on learning as a process to acquire new skills or competencies, but rather the long-term development of the learner and their cognitive abilities (Verenikina, 2003).

Approaches to Mentorship

Whilst there was agreement across the manager sample regarding their observations of their Gen Z subordinates' expectation of mentorship, there were some discrepancies in their approach to fulfilling this role. This disparity was in regard to their approach to meeting this expectation, specifically the intensity which they thought was both necessary and viable, given their available resources.

Participant LAM discussed the need to take a more hands-on approach with his Gen Z subordinates, giving two reasons for this approach. One is the seemingly obvious, that they are juniors within the roles. The second is that he perceives Gen Z to need more immediacy from their manager than previous generations. While he also states that there are some subordinates from older generations who lack confidence and need just as much support as Gen Z, overall, he believes that the latest generational cohort need more support than their predecessors. He referred to this often, as shown below:

"I'm a little bit more hands on with the Z, for 2 reasons. One, they are different generation, and require this immediacy and 2 they are junior. So, I have to be more hands on so more supervision, more checking up on them, more face-to-face meetings."-**LAM**

"I think it's both, it's both professional development, when you come in as a junior lawyer you need mentoring, but also the Gen Y needing a little bit more attention. Sorry Gen Z, needing more attention."-**LAM**

"Yeh, absolutely but there are some individuals within other generations who lack confidence so they will need as much hands on as perhaps a Gen Z."-**LAM**

Although his stance is to be more hands-on with Gen Z, he also states that his role as a mentor is to set his subordinates on the right track before taking a step back and letting them figure things out on their own.

"No, definitely more of a mentor to get them on the right track and then sit back and let them figure it out. I think you have to start them off on the right track, and then work your way back from there."-**LAM**

"Yeh, I mean what I'll tend to do more is track a piece of work so they can see what I've done and then I can send out at the same time which is really good for the younger generation. I don't tend to do it so much with the older guys because they are mostly there."-**LAM**

Participant CJM's approach was similar to that of LAM, recognising that a hands-on approach, focused primarily on giving instruction, is most effective with her Gen Z subordinate. However, rather than attributing this to a generational trait, she observes that it is due to Gen Z being in the early stages of their respective careers, lacking the necessary experience to work to their own.

"It varies depending on what we're doing at the moment. She (my current subordinate) is in such an early stage in her career development, it really is about giving instruction. We haven't quite got to the point that she knows enough that I can just gently coach her."-**CJM**

"I'm always keeping an eye on that for when she gets to the point, with that aspect of her job, that she is confident enough that I can then say, 'what would you do, what are some ideas that you'd test?'"-**CJM**

So, I'm figuring out as I go along but I realise a lot of instruction is needed."-**CJM**

"Yes, I've always, like I say, I've got to be careful to remember her age and level of experience inside the office and outside the office. But I'm always mindful to give her her place as far as her competencies go and aspects that I haven't got that competency in, so I'm always happy to be guided by her where I don't know what I'm talking about. So, it's give and take and it's a respectful relationship, so I feel like it works well."-**CJM**

"Probably, yea, I think just their ability with the use of different computer packages and their ability to learn quickly but that's tempered by other things that they haven't got so much in experience in, which might be kind of life experience really. Whereas previously, you know I think some young people that have come through have had more breadth of experience before they've landed on the doorstep here." **-CJM**

Participants PIM, AJM and SAM proposed a different approach to mentorship when it came to their relationships with Gen Z subordinates. These managers preferred to step back in their approach, giving their subordinates the opportunity to first figure things out for themselves and providing them with support only as needed. SAM mentioned that in her role "we just don't have the time to be too hands on" and that perhaps she would "to begin with be more hands on… but then step back". She proceeded to mention that it was on a case-by-case basis based upon "where people are in their learning".

"I think in this role we just don't have the time to be too hands on. I probably would maybe to begin with be more hands-on and will give examples or sort of help to do something but then step back. So, I don't think it's about the generation, I think it's just about where people are in their learning."-**SAM**

Participant PIM stated that "I personally like getting them to figure things out on their own", providing on-going support when "they are clearly struggling". She mentions twice that this

is however, "not a generation thing", but rather an expectation which is consistent throughout her team.

*"I personally like getting them to figure things out on their own, rather than actively mentoring them unless they are clearly struggling then that's when you do need to actually step in and go we need to take you through each thing, step by step but again it's not a generation thing, but personally I do like to see people try on their own to see if they can actually click and actually understand what is going on or if their note then I provide the help thereon."***-PIM**

*"Again, it's not a generation thing but a lot of the times those who actually can just work their way through the procedures and understand what it is actually asking of them I won't need to instruct them specifically much other than obviously then going back through their work, if I do see anything I then coming back to the instruction thing I wouldn't really instruct them how to fix it, I'd ask them what is going on here and get them to figure out what is actually going on and then hopefully come back to the right sort of approach and complete in the right manner"***- PIM**

Similar to participant PIM, participant AJM expects her subordinates to figure things out for themselves before seeking guidance, using the range of tools made available to them within their organisation. This is an expectation she has of all subordinates, not just those belonging to Gen Z.

*"I let them figure things out for themselves, there is a large number of tools available, and my expectation is that they use them but that's across, not just a generational thing it's across all my team. Um, and I'm always available if they need anything. So, there is other, because if I tell them the answer all the time they are not going to learn."***-AJM**

Overall, the data was consistent in that all managers perceived some form of mentorship was an expectation of their Gen Z subordinates. However, their approach to fulfilling this expectation was split into two different styles, one being more hands-on, and the other stepping back and intervening when necessary. Participants LAM and CJM, who both implied they take a more hands-on approach to mentorship, believed that there were generational traits which impacted their decision to take this approach. In contrary, participants PIM, SAM and CJM who had a more passive style of mentorship, all suggested that their approach was based on their subordinate's skill level, rather than influenced by any generational differences they brought to the work force. The disparity in the intensity of

mentorship that the managers believe Gen Z expects suggest a discrepancy between the managers' perceptions of what Gen Z need, and what Gen Z want from their superiors. Gen Z are perceived to want managers' support to guide them towards becoming independent, fulfilling the identity of being fully participating members of the organisation, whereas managers expect them to be independent until support is needed.

Figure 2: What Generation Z Want vs What Managers Think They Need
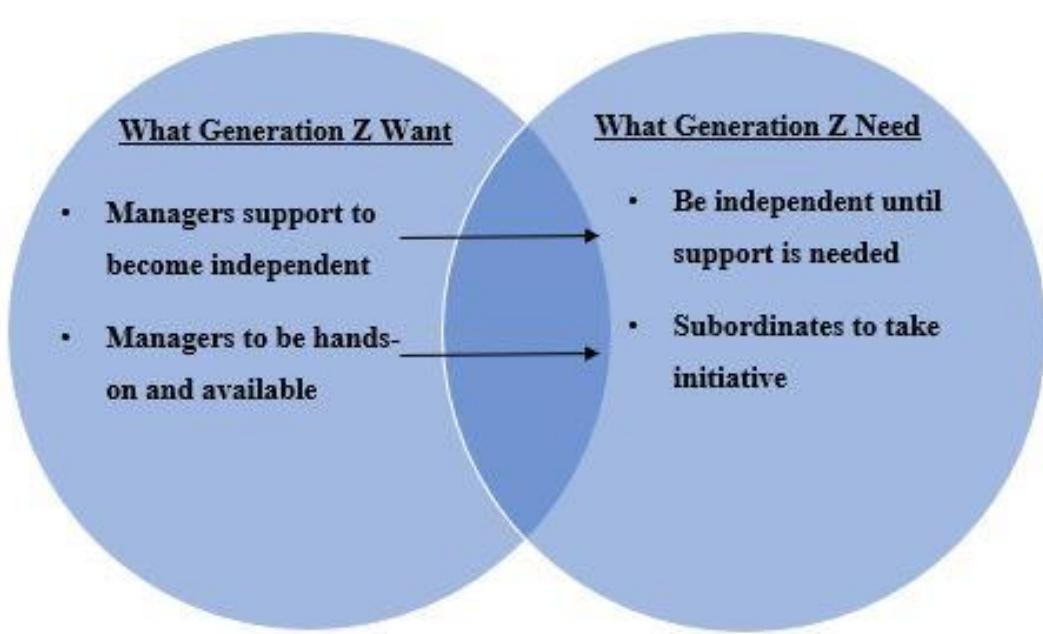
Consequently, Gen Z expect this high level of support, wanting managers who are available and will provide a hands-on approach to leadership, whereas managers want Gen Z to take initiative. These disparities in perceptions to workplace learning are related to the concept of scaffolding and can be visualised in terms of climbing a tower. Gen Z want the scaffolding to be an elevator, where managers carry them up to the top by providing a substantial amount of support, whereas managers feel Gen Z need to walk up the steps in order to experience the climb and learn along the way. Another contributing factor to this could be that managers have limited time and feel that Gen Z's expectations in the amount of support they desire is unrealistic.

5.2.2 Relational Intimacy

The expectation held by Gen Z subordinates of developing personable relationships with their superiors was consistent throughout both sets of data, as comments made by managers

demonstrated that they also recognised this expectation. Participant LAM, when asked if he perceives his Gen Z subordinates to value personable relationships, responded, "yeah they do, they are really interested in that", noting that this is often in informal settings where the power imbalance between superior and subordinate is not as prevalent. He later adds that "they want to work with others", embracing collaboration and teamwork, regardless of their attachment to social media. Participant SAM's comments are consistent with this finding, expressing that "they want friends and want to have positive relationships".

"Yeh, they do, they are really interested in that, and partners are typically busy, also pretty bad at joining in these functions, so they really value you being there, just your presence sometimes is enough and other times they just want to have a yarn to you."-**LAM**

"Yes, that's very much what it's about, I think. Often in our survey one of the complaints we get is partners aren't involved as much as they should be in different social functions of the firm, and they really value you being there. Because it's great to be able to chat to a partner when it is not about work and to be able to chat and not feel like there is a power imbalance."-**LAM**

"yeh they think they do; they work well in teams. I think because they want the hands on, they want to work with others, they seem to me despite this social, digital platform that they are all sort of attached to"-**LAM**

I think they want friends and want to have positive relationships; they want to have a working environment that's positive and fulfilling. I think they want to get on with people, so I think that's what anyone would kind of want really. -**SAM**

Participant LAM compares his Gen Z subordinates to previous cohorts, stating they are "more willing to be open with managers", perhaps a part of their desire to create these deeper level relationships with managers which go beyond solely being work-centric.

I think unlike some of the generations before they are more willing to be open with managers, a little bit more heart on the sleeve sort of stuff, whereas previous generations not so much it was just the way they grew up, so I think they will be a lot more open with managers." -**LAM**

Participants PIM and CJM both make further comments which support Gen Z's expectation of developing personable relationships with their superiors, identifying their perceived level of social intelligence through their ability to communicate competently with a diverse range of demographics. Participant CJM notes that she finds it easy to communicate informally

with her Gen Z subordinate, regardless of the age difference, frequently having casual conversations about their personal lives. This perspective is consistent with the comments of Participant PIM who mentions that she has observed them to be able to approach interactions with those of all ages, adapting their communication to best suit the participant, a trait which they enter the workforce already possessing.

*"Yes, I find it very easy to chat to her. We can talk about what we did in the weekends, I can talk to her about her horse, her family and if she's gone to buy something nice at lunchtime and girl talk. So, yea, very easy but I've got the advantage of having four children around that age as well, so I don't find it difficult at all. And she seems to find it easy to respond back to me."***-CJM**

*"Pretty good, pretty good. Pretty sophisticated, pretty worldly-wise socially yea… I think it helps them because they can relate well to people, I think it's to their advantage."***-CJM**

*"They know to approach, like people of different ages and how they would prefer to actually communicate… they will switch between what's the best mode in terms of talking to different people, so I do think they come equipped to being able to communicate effectively"***-PIM**

In response to this expectation, Participants AJM and PIM attempt to strip the traditional hierarchal structure away from their leader-subordinate relationship, fostering a more collaborative environment. This involves creating a culture where the manager is not primarily someone just there to give instruction and watch from afar, but rather to be more like a peer who is a part of the collaborative learning process. Participant PIM further comments that the relationship can take a mother-child type dynamic at times, ensuring the subordinates feel comfortable raising any concerns they have with her.

"You know, it's quite collaborative, it's certainly not line manager – subordinate type relationship. I operate as a team, and everyone's free to give their opinions and so it's quite interactive." **-AJM**

*"Sure, um we are obviously physically in a very open space it's not like we are closed off, and they are very approachable, and I like to think that I am approachable to them as well. Um, I try not to come across as a sort of a senior staff so much, more just look in the same team we need to actually make sure this job gets done, it's not just them doing the work and I just come in at the last piece. "***-PIM**

"I would like to think that I don't have that also on the other hand obviously I'm a mother and they do see that and then they will treat me that way not sort of isolating me but almost as a sort of mother figure sometimes"-**PIM**

According to the theories of legitimate peripheral participation and the ZPD, learning is situated within the social interactions of the learner and wider sociocultural environment. Developing personable relationships and fostering a collaborative culture is therefore beneficial to the subordinate's development as it provides an ideal climate for learning. This is consistent with Gen Z's expectation of mentorship and relationships that allow manager and subordinate to establish a deeper understanding of one another so mentoring can be tailored to meet both the personal and professional needs of the subordinate.

5.2.3 Expected Managerial Traits

There were a number of managerial traits identified by the sample which Gen Z expected their managers to have within the leader-member relationship. Two of the five managers mentioned that they found their Gen Z subordinates to place high value on their availability. This reinforces the idea that Gen Z expect a high level of support and scaffolding activities from managers, including being available and allocating large amounts of their time to the subordinate's development. However, this expectation is not always perceived as realistic by the manager, who are considering their time, the business, and fairness to other workers.

"I think she values me being available."-**SAM**

"Researcher: so, you think your availability is something they value quite highly?

Participant: I think so yeh."-**LAM**

Participants SAM and CJM both perceived that their Gen Z subordinates expected to be included, respected, and valued by their managers, regardless of their relative lack of experience within their respective roles. This aligns with the managers perceptions that Gen Z do not accept authority for what it is, but rather question the traditional hierarchal structure within the workplace, as discussed in more detail in Section 5.3.2. Gen Z want relationships facilitated by open discussion which encourage the acquirement of knowledge, shared understanding, and support from their managers.

So, yea, I think she wants to be included, and developed, and valued, and have people available. And I think she wants to be seen as capable and independent"-**SAM**

"So, she expects to be respected and deserves to be respected"-**CJM**

I think she values being included, particularly in a developmental way."-**SAM**

"I think that, well going on my limited experience, I think they expect to be respected" **-CJM**

Participants CJM, LAM and PIM all said that they perceived their Gen Z subordinates to value their managers being honest in their communication. Participant LAM added that they also expect rationale and explanation behind decisions. Similar to this, participant CJM noted that they value clarity.

"I think they value honesty, and clarity, and integrity"-**CJM**

"I think honesty first up, I think they value explanation, if they query something, they don't just want a yes and no they want it explained. I think they value immediacy in terms of quick response. I think they are the 3 major ones."-**LAM**

"I think preference will be chats to be honest."-**PIM**

This data indicates that Gen Z expect managers to communicate with them in a genuine and engaging manner, providing the whole truth surrounding decision making, and not keeping information from them, regardless of where they sit in the organisational hierarchy. Valuing being included, with explanation and rationale, and being communicated with honestly, coincide to create this perceived communication expectation by their managers. This could be a consequence of their youth age and inexperience, along with their inquisitive nature, as they attempt to gather a comprehensive understanding and make sense of the workplace, and the reasons behind the current processes and policies within their respective organisations. This also illustrates how they are seeking high-quality interactions with their managers. These processes, connections and experiences work together to define their sense of belonging to the organisation (Fuller et al., 2005).

5.3 Communication Style

The managers also perceived their Gen Z subordinates to hold a number of expectations surrounding their communication style within the leader-member relationship. These were face-to-face communication, rationale/clarity, and feedback.

5.3.1 Face-to-face Communication

Gen Z were perceived by four of the five participants to respond best to face-to-face communication in leader-member interactions. This aligns with the data provided by the Gen Z sample, who displayed a proclivity for face-to-face communication over digital mediums, regardless of the cohort's attachment to technology. Participant SAM mentions that in her experience, this is because the information is immediate, not having to wait upon responses, allowing them to instantly put it to use.

> *"I actually think face-to-face they will respond better"*-**LAM**

> *"...she responds well to face-to-face, to groups and also in the digital medium as well. So, across the board."*-**CJM**

> *"I would think, this might just be my bias, I would kind of think verbal communication works well because it's quick and then she's got information to go away and do something rather than wait around. She is quite action orientated."*-**SAM**

> *"...they are good with face-to-face chats, especially if it is a complex matter."*-**PIM**

However, Participants LAM and PIM have noticed that this does not translate into interactions which take place with individuals outside of their organisation. Participant LAM states that at times "they would prefer to be the keyboard warrior", often hesitant to phone up clients, especially when the interaction is of a confrontational nature. He describes this as a generational trait, with previous generations more willing to pick up the phone rather than sending an email, being "more attuned to face-to-face and confrontation. The participant put this down to Gen Z having a lack of experience in face-to-face confrontation, having the ability to deal with such situations through digital mediums growing up.

> *"There's one area that I find the Gen Z really lack, they would prefer to be, when we are talking with other lawyers or other clients or even with people we are seeing, they would prefer to be the keyboard warrior and send an email rather than phone them up. And what we often say is look phone up somebody, cut a deal. It's pretty simple but they have some concern about doing that, they would prefer to be the keyboard warrior."*-**LAM**

> *"Um, employees who belong to other generations will pick up the phone. They'll call somebody else, they cut a deal, they get it. They are not necessarily afraid of who's on the other side, they still have anxious moments in going into a setting like an Employment Court or High Court but otherwise they are more attuned to face to face and confrontation."*-**LAM**

"But the second part of generation I mean they have moved away from this face-to-face stuff because they could sit in a room and text each other or Facebook each other, or Instagram each other. Tik Tok is their entertainment rather than going to the pub and having a drink, so it's that sort of thing"-**LAM**

Similar to participant LAM, participant PIM has observed her Gen Z subordinates to be hesitant to engage in interactions over the phone, even though she perceives them to be competent in communicating face-to-face.

but I think the younger generation do maybe struggle to actually hold not even face to face but just pick up the phone that is the biggest thing I have actually noticed. A lot of the people they will struggle to just pick up the phone and talk to the client if you're not actually in the same space. Um whereas if you actually get them to talk to the client when you are out on site in a client's office, they will be absolutely fine with that, but it's just the struggle to actually being able pick up, which is quite odd but that's what I have noticed."-**PIM**

"Once they are there its fine, it's just when they are not actually in front of the clients there then, that's when the preferred mode of communication of sort of comes straight in which is interesting"-**PIM**

Her reasoning for this aligns with participant PIM, in perceiving Gen Z to have a lack of experience in making phone calls to people, having grown up using instant messaging as their primary tool of communicating with peers. However, she notes that while they don't come into the workforce necessarily equipped with the tools to communicate via phone calls, they are able to adjust over time.

"I think there just not used to actually talking on the phone, it is just what you are actually comfortable with, I think before when we obviously didn't have iPhones and the only thing we had was you either call them on your mobile or the text… but because they have actually grown up with the technology that's available they then really to see the need to actually talk to anybody on the phone and then suddenly they are having to do that here which obviously puts them in an uncomfortable position until they get used to it, and once they get used to it they will be fine."-**PIM**

This set of data suggests that the prevalence of technology in Gen Z's upbringing has somewhat influenced their way of communicating compared to previous generational cohorts. They seem to be hesitant in approaching confrontational or new interactions face-to-

face or via phone call, being more comfortable with the safety-net that digital mediums allow, as responses to not have to be instant and time can be taken to consider their response. Approaching these interactions may therefore be a daunting task for Gen Z and something they have to acclimate to quickly when they join the workforce.

5.3.2 Rationale/Clarity

As mentioned in the previous section by participant LAM, managers perceive Gen Z to respond best to communication which is clear and rationalised.

*"Actually, generally really well, I think there's this huge expectation from Gen Z but if they have the honest conversation and there is some logic in it, and they get it they respond really well."***-LAM**

*"Yea, that I've got to be really clear and concise with my feedback and follow that up with facts and logic as well."***-CJM**

*"As I said before, clear and logical, with a good rationale to back it up."***-CJM**

"I think I just have to adjust for the fact that someone might not have a lot of experience, so you want to make sure that you're explaining your rationale behind stuff or having a two-way discussion." **-SAM**

This expectation ran throughout the data in multiple facets, identified by three of the five managers. Participants LAM and CJM both recognised that their Gen Z subordinates valued rationale behind their managers' decisions, wanting the reasoning behind answers explained to them and not just accepting things because someone senior to them has said it.

*"I think honesty first up, I think they value explanation, if they query something, they don't just want a yes and no they want it explained… I think they are the 3 major ones."***-LAM**

"I think they value honesty, and clarity, and integrity, so they won't just accept something because you say so, they need to know the why's and the rationale behind it." **-CJM**

*So, I think that comes with all the question asking that she does, she doesn't just accept authority and I don't expect to just press authority onto her, I like to explain to her why something is done the way it is or how the relationship might work, or whatever it is. So, yea I guess, yea, she expects instructions to be clear, to be logical, I think she probably gets a bit frustrated when they're not."***-CJM**

Participant CJM notes that explaining her rationale behind decisions is necessary for Gen Z, more so than previous cohorts, as they enter the workforce knowledgeable on a wide range of subjects. This stems from the current accessibility of information online enabling them to constantly extend their breadth of knowledge with ease, a tool which they are well equipped to utilise, given their proficiency with technology.

"you've got to always be logical as well because you are questioned and often they do know more than what I do on a wide variety of subjects because often they are very well read. They spend hours on reddit, and god only knows what all else, so, they are well read and quite well... have a higher level of knowledge than me in some quite current things that are going on." **-CJM**

"I think that means they have a little bit of knowledge on a whole lot of stuff and not necessarily an in-depth knowledge on actual focused areas." **-CJM**

"So, I never, I never *said abrasively* assume that I know more or know better." **-CJM**

Participant AJM's perception of her Gen Z subordinates coincides with this, mentioning that she perceives them as coming into the workforce "quite educated" and that "there's just so much information available to them". They therefore are naturally inquisitive, seeking the why behind information they receive.

"The world is so global, they know so much, they are so aware of everything that is around them" **-AJM**

"I think they come in quite educated. Yeh, I do. Definitely" **-AJM**

"Exposure to everything, they know so much. Um yeh they are inquisitive. And if think of my son and some of the things that he comes out with, it's like oh my god, where did you learn that?" **-AJM**

"There's just so much information available to them" **-AJM**

The expectation observed and identified by managers of their Gen Z subordinates - for communication from their superiors to be explained and rationalised, implies that they do not just accept authority for what it is. They do not take answers at face value just because they have come from a superior, but rather, display an inquisitive nature, with a desire to extend their knowledge and question if what they are been told is best practice. This could be a product of their immersion in the digital world, having always had a forum to share their

perspectives and a world of information so readily available for them to explore, as mentioned by participants AJM and CJM. This rationale and explanation also acts as a scaffolding tool to facilitate workplace learning, as it works to create mutual understanding between the manager and subordinate.

5.4 Summary

The findings presented in this chapter reveal Gen Z's managers observations of their interactions their subordinates, as well as the expectations they hold. They show that while many of their observed expectations align with those demonstrated by the Gen Z participants, there is a discrepancy between the support Gen Z want and what managers believe they need. They have differing perceptions of scaffolding and how this should be provided, with managers having to consider their time and fairness to subordinates. Managers' interpretations of Gen Z's expectations fit into two overarching themes - leadership style and communication style. The following chapter provides a full discussion and synthesis of the findings of this chapter and those of Chapter Four, in relation to the extant literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

From studying the experiences of line managers and their Gen Z subordinates through the lens of manager-subordinate exchange relationships, a number of expectations surrounding the form of this communication were identified and discussed in Chapter Four and Five. The findings illustrated how the communication expectations of Gen Z, identified by both the Gen Z and line manager samples, worked in combination to facilitate workplace learning.

6.2 Manager-subordinate Interactions

This research sought to explore expectations about the interactions between line managers and their Gen Z subordinates, and in doing so it would be naive to ignore the literature surrounding the leader-member exchange theory. LMX focuses on the exchange between manager and subordinate, as well as the dyadic relationship and job roles that emerge as a result of these interactions over time (Bauer & Green, 1996; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne, 1997). This theory, however, has come under scrutiny from scholars, claiming there is a lack of clear definition as to what constitutes LMX and its components, and the antecedents of low- or high-quality relationships, measurement procedures and instruments are flawed and inconsistent in meaning throughout the literature, and endogeneity exists in modelling techniques (Gottfredson, 2020; Schriesheim, Castro & Cogliser, 1999; Sheer, 2015; Van Breukelen et al., 2006).

Although the LMX has faced damning critique due to its fundamental conceptual issues, the aspect of low- and high-quality interactions can be drawn upon and applied to the expectations identified within the leader-subordinate working relationships that were the focus of this study. The idea that there is a spectrum of quality across manager-subordinate relationships fits well with this research. The organisations in this study were highly hierarchical and the Gen Z subordinates were within 2 years of arriving in the organisation, and in their first permanent roles in their chosen career. This meant their direct superiors were still playing a significant role in defining their role-taking behaviour and role development trajectory (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen, 1976). Learning to take roles and role development are ambiguous and informal processes. Consequently, the quality of communication between manager-subordinate is important (Erdogan & Bauer, 2001; Graen, 1976). Quality also varies as a consequence of resource constraints of managers (e.g., time

and equipment) with the result that the manager only forms close relationships with a selection of their subordinates (Sheer, 2015).

The working relationship between manager and subordinate can be categorised across a spectrum defined by two contrasting groups based on the quality of the interpersonal interactions, high-quality and low-quality. The perceived quality of interactions correlated to the level of satisfaction felt by the subordinates. Those who were satisfied reported interactions encompassing honesty, inclusiveness, respect, genuineness, and informal communication. Those who were not reported having only formal communication with their managers and observed other subordinates to be receiving preferential treatment, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Characteristics of Manager-Subordinate Interaction Quality

Characteristics of High-Quality Interactions	Characteristics of Low-Quality Interactions
• Honest • Informal/Social Communication • Open Communication • Inclusive • Respectful • Genuineness	• Formal • Closed communication • Preferential Treatment

This parallels LMX theory, as inclusive professional relationships are facilitated by high-quality interactions, comprised of trusted followers who in-turn receive more open communication, resources, and are delegated more responsibilities by their manager than those who are subject to low quality interactions which often do not exceed the minimum terms set out by the employment contract (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Mueller & Lee, 2002; Sheer, 2015). According to LMX theory this means the experiences and role-taking process of the subordinates are often dictated by the quality of relationship developed with their superior (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden et al., 1997; Loi, Chain & Lam, 2014). This was the experience of the Gen Z subordinates in this study. As revealed in Chapter 4, those who reported expectations of rich and supportive mentor relationships with their manager, felt they were coming to grips with their role, and their role development trajectory was being supported. The data confirmed that the Gen Z participants were seeking to become informally connected as well as respected members of the organisation and broader profession. As discussed in Section 4.2, the subordinates expected to engage in interactions characterised by informal interaction and personable disclosures, for managers to display a genuine care and

interest in their professional development, and to be approachable and available. They displayed a preference for this communication to be characterised by what they perceived to be honest, open clarity and inclusive engagement. They wanted to be respected and included both formally and informally by their managers, without details been kept from them, regardless of their youth or lack of experience. These preferences and expectations of the communication between manager and subordinate are consistent with the characterisation of high-quality interactions, where the interaction goes beyond its economic purpose to serve a more sociable function.

The line managers' data suggest they were aware of Gen Z subordinates' expectations. There was a high level of consistency between Gen Z's expressed expectations of their managers leadership style and the managers observations about these expectations. Findings in Section 5.2 confirmed that managers knew they were expected to act as mentors, to develop personable relationships that went beyond the economic interaction, and for them to display managerial traits which embodied high quality interactions: honesty, openness, and inclusiveness and respect. They reported trying to satisfy these expectations to the extent they judged to be reasonable. This synergy aligns with the conceptions of high LMXs, which are characterised by mutual trust, liking, respect and support (Graen, 2003; Liden & Maslyn, 1998).

Of particular interest is the finding that while the managers identified their Gen Z subordinates' expectations, they failed to recognise the relational consequences of differential interactional quality across direct reports and how this reinforced a sense of selective favouritism.

As demonstrated in Section 4.2.1, those who had developed relationships with their managers characterised by personal disclosure and a social aspect had a more positive perception of their relationship and experiences, believing that managers genuinely cared for their personal and professional wellbeing. They felt they were moving into a privileged inner circle. Those whose relationships experienced only formal communication felt that their expectations of their managers were unfulfilled, so felt uncared for. The contrasting relationships between Gen Z colleagues PJMG and PJPG illustrated the consequences of preferential treatment. Perceptions of such treatment created tension, which complicated not only the manager-subordinate relationship, but the peer-to-peer relationship. These tensions were largely outcome orientated. The data do not suggest that subordinates want to be treated exactly the

same, but that they expect their individuality to be recognised, and to be given equal access to career development outcomes as those who developed more sociable relationships with their manager. When comparison with other Gen Z colleagues suggested these expectations would not be met, they felt disgruntled with the relationship with their manager. The formality of interactions with superiors acted as an indicator of the level of sociability within the relationships for the Gen Z subordinates, mediating the orientation toward and perceptions of the relationships. Interestingly, the findings showed that those who were dissatisfied with their manager-subordinate relationships did not report taking any action or change their behaviours to correct their perceptions of others receiving preferential treatment. This could be the focus for further research.

The subordinates who reported feeling their expectations were not entirely met also conveyed a sense of uncertainty within their roles. This aligns with the literature which suggests that the quality of manager-subordinate interactions play a pivotal part in the role-taking process and development activities (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen, 1976; Major et al., 1995; Loi et al., 2014) as the line managers are responsible for the orientation and socialisation of Gen Z as newcomers to the organisation (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). In contrast, subordinates who are subject to high-quality relationships perceive their superiors as credible sources of information, increasing their sense of control in ambiguous environments (Hwang et al., 2021) and therefore illustrated a higher sense of certainty within their roles. A study by Loi, Chan and Lam (2014) reinforced this, proposing that employee organisational identification exhibited a favourable association with LMX quality, and organisational identification facilitated the relationship between LMX and job satisfaction. The findings of Loi, Cham and Lam's (2014) study show how important it is to create organisational identity based on the quality of the leader–subordinate relationship. Employees anticipate their requirements for uncertainty-reduction and self-enhancement to be met by assessing the quality of interactions, and therefore develop their identification with the organisation.

This highlights the importance of consistently high-quality interactions between line managers and their subordinates. As newcomers to the organisation, Gen Z arrive with expectations about what constitutes a quality superior-subordinate relationship, but also a level of uncertainty. In this Masters study, the analysis suggested it is crucial for the communication with managers to create a sense of predictability and inclusiveness within the work environment, as well as facilitating Gen Z's role development. The findings suggest that the degree to which Gen Z newcomers' expectations are satisfied in these regards is

largely determined by comparisons with their Gen Z peers. The important contribution of comparisons to how Gen Z participants' made sense of their experience was highlighted by this study.

6.3 Becoming a competent professional: Integrating the Concept of Zone of Proximal Development

As explained in the literature review in Chapter Two, Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to the gap which exists between an individual's current capabilities and level of development as determined by independent problem-solving ability and their potential for further development that can be realised through assistance from a more capable peer or mentor (Vygotsky, 1978). ZPD was originally designed to conceptualise children's cognitive learning and growth at school. This is now being used as a framework for analysing the link between development and educational interventions, including in apprentice style activities (Allal & Ducrey, 2000). This Masters study found that when the Gen Z participants entered their workplace, there was a gap between their current state, coming straight from education, and what they aspire to and perceive they were capable of with their manager's assistance. This corresponds to the gap, conceptualised by Vygotsky as the ZPD, which they had to move across.

The learner's sociocultural environment is important in fostering the quality of their critical thinking, shaping the way they interpret the support from their peer or mentor (Marginson & Dang, 2016; Schunk, 2004; Smagorinsky, 2009; Verenikina, 2003). Vygotsky perceived the social interaction between peers and mentors as not only promoting cognitive development, but profoundly shaping and even transforming the way the learner thinks (Cole & Wertsch, 1996). He used the ZPD to emphasise how language, forms of discourse, and other semiotic systems mediate higher mental activities like thinking, reasoning, and remembering; all functions which are developed and shaped by the individual's social worlds (Tappen, 1998; Werstch & Rogoff, 1984).

The data showed that the Gen Z participants' expectations about their manager-subordinate working relationship were shaped by their wider sociocultural environment. This finding about the role of expectations is significant. Specifically, it is significant because the ZPD has primarily been described in terms of the gap between current capability and potential, without mentioning any role for expectations.

Expectations of Relationship

As explained in the findings in Chapters Four and Five, the participants' expectations addressed the manner in which managers communicate with their subordinates, their style of leadership, and role that they play in their subordinates' professional development. These expectations give expression to the support that the Gen Z participants considered necessary to navigate the ZPD and thus reach their potential. Together, they highlight how the Gen Z participants placed the onus on their managers to take the initiative for their Gen Z subordinates' organisational learning and transformation from newcomer to fully participating member of the organisation. This is mirrored in Gen Z's expectation that their managers will be proactive in their approach to leadership (Section 4.3.2), an expectation that places the responsibility on managers to initiate interactions, particularly of an informal nature, as a form of social support. Gen Z participants expected their managers to create an open channel of communication and ease uncertainty generated by the power imbalance between manager and newcomer by reducing the sense of the hierarchical gap.

The subordinates desire to develop personable relationships with their managers was evident throughout the data. They wanted their managers to engage in high-quality interactions that went beyond their functional economic value by adding an informal, social dimension. From the perspective of the subordinate, developing these relationships was perceived to allow more effective communication to take place, creating an environment which enabled scaffolding to be provided by their managers.

What was also significant was that those who failed to foster such relationships with their managers received less support, so were hindered in their ability to realise their potential. Not surprisingly, those who felt hindered by the lesser quality of their relationships compared to their peers reported lower job satisfaction. This suggests the Gen Z participants view of the development of these relationships was both transactional, comparative and potentially competitive. In contrast, the findings relating to the managers view of Gen Z suggest they weren't buying into this view, but rather were thinking more about their time, the business, and fairness to other workers.

The concept of scaffolding, introduced by Wood et al., (1976), provides a useful framework to capture this development process, outlining the specific instructional techniques used to provide support to the learner as they progressed through the ZPD (Davis & Miyake, 2004; Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Wood et al. (1976) propose that as students gain proficiency,

they internalise these techniques and ideas, which they apply to future problem solving, reducing the need for assistance and eventually allowing the scaffold to be eliminated (Wass, Harland & Mercer, 2011; Yelland & Masters, 2005).

Differing Perceptions

The observations managers shared in this study showed that they understood the support expected by Gen Z but could not always provide it. This is a significant finding. The study found a discrepancy between the level of support and intensity of mentorship the managers were prepared to offer their Gen Z subordinates and what Gen Z expected. Gen Z's expectations of hands-on mentorship, the development of personable relationships, on-going feedback, clear expectations, managers availability, and for managers to be proactive in providing an engaging and genuine leadership style were not seen to be practical in many instances by the managers.

While managers identified the expectation of their subordinates to provide hands-on mentorship, they preferred to take a more passive approach than that expected by Gen Z. This was not solely due to managers' resource constraints in terms of the time available to invest in each subordinate. The managers were also undertaking managerial identity work to maintain their sense of being egalitarian leaders who created a fair and equal culture where one subordinate is not privileged over another. The managers demonstrated an understanding of the importance of recognising the individuality of their workers but found it equally important to create a fair and equal playing field where preferential treatment was mitigated.

This study revealed that the Gen Z subordinates sought support from managers to guide them towards becoming independent, fully participating members of their organisation, whereas their managers expected them to be independent until support was needed. This difference was important because it created a tension between the expectations each party held of the other party in the relationship. This disparity in expectations about workplace learning confirms that mentoring and support (i.e., scaffolding), were viewed differently by the Gen Z subordinates and their managers. This can be visualised as the movement up a tower, from current capabilities to realisation of potential at the top. The Gen Z participants wanted the scaffolding to be an elevator with managers transporting them up to the top by providing a substantial amount of support, whereas managers felt Gen Z needed to walk up the steps in order to experience the climb and learn along the way. In essence, the significant finding here is that both managers and their Gen Z subordinates recognised that newcomers needed to

move from current capabilities through to realisation of their potential but had different views of how the movement through the ZPD should be achieved. Here lies a significant tension in relation to expectations about the learning process of the new Gen Z worker.

Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Not only does this study examine Gen Z's expectations of interactions with their managers' experiences as they accommodate them in the workplace, it also shines light on what might be called incidental which occurs as newcomers learn the ropes. It examines these interactions between these workers and their managers within the wider sociocultural environment and explores how they facilitate workplace learning, and identity and role development as Gen Z transform from newcomer to a fully-fledged professional.

The social process and professional development expectations held by Gen Z which facilitate their journey through the ZPD reveals how their learning is distributed across their social interactions in multiple ways. Through social engagement, in the form of personable disclosures, mentorship, and feedback, initiated by their leader, particularly those with engaging leadership styles, learning through the ZPD is scaffolded (Lave & Wenger, 1991; O"Donell & Tobbell, 2007; Wood et al., 1976), and the Gen Z subordinate's potential is realised. The movement from newcomer to fully participating member of their organisation is reliant on the quality of relationships with managers, as well as comparison of their own experiences with those of their peers.

6.4 Extending the Adapted 3-P Model

As discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two, the 3-P model of learning, proposed by Biggs (1999) and Tynjala's (2013) adapted 3-P model, provides a holistic conceptualisation of the learning process, addressing both its complexity and the interconnectivity of the components of the learning process – presage, process, and product. While these three elements apply to organisational learning, both models are not specific to a group and so do not fully explain newcomers' workplace learning as they seek to become competent professionals. This is because Biggs (1999) addresses school learning and Tynjala (2013) looks at organisational learning. While Tynjala (2013) considers the sociocultural context, neither consider the informal and distinctive features of on-the-job learning (Eruat, 2004; Tynjala, 2013) or expectations.

When all the findings on Gen Z's expectations about interaction with their managers and their actual reported experiences were examined together and compared with the themes in

Tynjala's (2013) model, a useful degree of synergy was identified. This prompted the researcher to adapt this 3-P model of learning to capture the career development and entry of Gen Z. To fully conceptualise Gen Z's journey from newcomer to fully-fledged professionals, the model was extended to include in an integrated fashion the concepts of ZPD, LPP, and LMX. This new adapted model is more comprehensive and pertinent to a particular group, specifically Gen Z graduates as newcomers to their organisations. Significantly, a more complex layer is added. This layer captures the role of Gen Z's expectations, of their managers, a dimension that is missing from both Biggs (1999) and Tynjala's (2013) models, and how they compare their observations of their peers' experiences with their own to make sense of the quality of their own experiences.

6.4.1 The Model

This section discusses the model that emerged from this Masters study, which constitutes the overall contribution to the literature on Gen Z and their expectations, as they learn how to reach their potential. As the reader will see, while there are similarities with the adapted 3-P model, this modified version goes beyond this, adding another layer of complexity through the consideration of how Gen Z's expectations, and how they make sense of these experiences, shape the learning process. The proposed model contributes a conceptual framework which is able to be applied specifically to Gen Z and their journey from newcomer towards becoming competent in their chosen profession. This model can be seen in Figure 3 and Appendix 5.

Figure 3: Generation Z 3-P Model
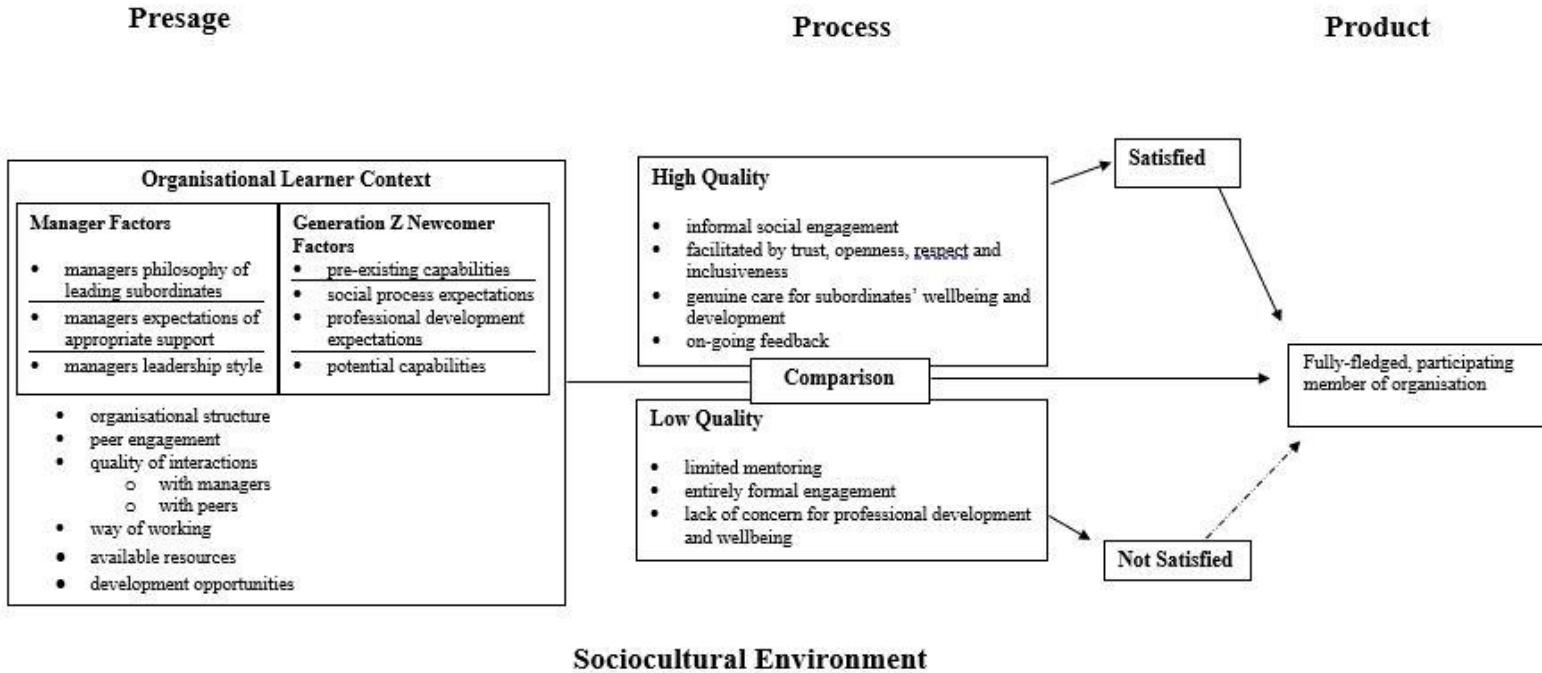
Presage

The presage component of the adapted model is comprised of three factors, the first being the 'organisational learner context'. This refers to the environment in which the organisation operates, and the learner is subject to, also capturing organisational factors which are not specific to the learning process.

Within the organisational learner context are the manager factors and Gen Z newcomer factors. The manager factors include their philosophy of leading subordinates, expectations of appropriate support, and leadership style. The Gen Z factors reflect the ZPD, comprising of their pre-existing capabilities, social process and professional development expectations, and potential capabilities. Incorporating both the manager and Gen Z factors illustrates the collaborative nature of organisational learning, as it is embedded within their relationships.

While the presage component of the model is similar to Tynjala (2013), it differs in that the learner factors are situated within the organisational context. While Tynjala's (2013) model illustrates the interconnectivity between learner factors and the learning context, they are exclusive from one another. The model presented in this thesis demonstrates how the learner factors are embedded within, and shaped by, the learning context. This is because the organisational context defines the constraints of the learning which can take place.

Process

The process component refers to the Gen Z subordinates' perceptions of the quality of their interactions with managers. High quality interactions in this research were defined by informal social engagement, a genuine care for the subordinates' wellbeing and development, on-going feedback, and were facilitated by trust, openness, respect and inclusiveness. Low quality interactions consist of limited mentorship, entirely formal engagement, and a lack of concern for the subordinate's professional development and wellbeing. Gen Z's perceptions of the quality of their interactions are shaped by two elements. The first is their social process and professional development expectations and whether these are being met or not. The second is the comparison of their own experiences with their peers, determining if they are receiving the same level of attention and support from their manager as their fellow Gen Z colleagues.

In this model, Gen Z's view of what constitutes a quality interaction with their managers is described in terms not unlike LMX, as the quality of exchanges are determined by a number of defining characteristics. However, in this study, Gen Z's perceptions of the quality of their interactions were also influenced by environmental factors. These are whether their social process and professional development expectations are being met, and comparisons with the support and interactions of their peers with their managers.

Product

The perceived quality of their interactions correlates to the level of job satisfaction felt by the subordinates. The findings illustrated that those who believe themselves to have high quality interactions with their managers had a much more positive perception of their experiences than those who were subject to low quality interactions. The desired end product of the learning process is Gen Z becoming fully-fledged, participating members of their organisation. To achieve this, the model proposes that reaching their potential capabilities is determined by both their pre-existing capabilities, and the level of support they receive from managers and more knowledgeable peers.

Model Summary

The structure of the model embodies the theoretical basis of LPP, as it conceptualises Gen Z's transformation from newcomers to experienced members of their organisation through the induction into the social system (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It illustrates how learning for the Gen Z participants was socially distributed, where the subordinates' experiences are

shaped by their interactions with their managers, peers, and the wider sociocultural environment (O'Donnell & Tobbell, 2007). This aligns with the work of Brown et al. (2015), who suggest that individuals who appear to be discussing their job are actually co-creating meaning of their multiple social, group, professional, and organisational identities. The manager factors and Gen Z factors sit adjacent to one another in the model, illustrating the interconnectivity of the two, as these factors together shape their interactions and potential learning outcomes. These sit within the organisational learner context in which they must operate and define the boundaries of learning and interactions. Whether the Gen Z subordinates perceive interactions to be of high or low quality is then based on their interactions with their peers. They compare their own interactions with their managers with those of their peers, to make sense of their experiences. Facilitating this whole process is the wider sociocultural environment, as this shapes the way they interpret the interactions they have, and support they receive, from their peers and managers. The product component of the model represents the desired outcome of the LPP, that the subordinates becoming fully-fledged members of their organisations.

Integrated through the model are aspects of the ZPD. Gen Z enter the organisation with pre-existing capabilities and potential capabilities they can realise with support from their managers and more knowledgeable peers. The gap between their current and potential state is represented by the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). Similar to the LPP this concept is underpinned by the role of social construction in facilitating thinking and learning (Cole & Wertsch, 1996).

6.5 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter discussed and synthesised the findings of Chapters Four and Five and interprets them in relation to the extant literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Gen Z's interactions with their managers and peers, their expectations of these interactions, and how they make sense of their experiences and the learning process, are revealed. It argues that these elements facilitate Gen Z's transformation from newcomer towards their desired outcome of being a fully-fledged professional. In doing so, it suggests that the concepts of the LMX, ZPD, and LPP can be applied or modified to conceptualise Gen Z's experiences of interacting with their manager, their expectations of their dyadic relationships with their managers, the managers observations of these expectations, and the way these shape their process of going from newcomer to fully-fledged professional. It also presents the emergent conceptual framework which explains how the Gen Z participants in this study made sense of their experiences and their journey from newcomer towards being fully-fledged professionals, in this case in

banking, accounting and law, and local authorities. Both this model, which integrates and extends the 3-P model of learning, and the way in which it is grounded in empirical data that captures both Gen Z and their managers' observations and experiences, represent original contributions to the literature and have significant implications for practice.

The next chapter will talk about these contributions, the limitations of the research and proposes opportunities for further research.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has presented the findings of a Masters study which sought to explore Gen Z subordinates' expectations of their dyadic relationships with their managers, and managers observations of these. More specifically, it focused on how these expectations informed the sensemaking, behaviours, and relationships of both Gen Z and their managers. The aim of the research was to answer two questions:

1. What are Generation Z's expectations of workplace interactions with their line-managers in knowledge-based sectors, and how do these expectations inform behaviour?

2. How do these expectations compare to the assumptions, experiences and observations of Generation Z's managers and how do these inform their interaction with Generation Z subordinates?

This final chapter will address this study's contributions, its limitations, and proposes opportunities for further research.

7.1.1 Summary of the Findings

The analysis produced a finely nuanced model that represents how the Gen Z subordinates' expectations, and their managers' observations of these, shaped manager-subordinate interactions and, subsequently, Gen Z participants' workplace experiences. The sense made of these experiences was found to be a key factor in their induction into the world of professional work, and their journey from newcomer towards becoming a fully participating member of the organisation. This finding was considered significant because it revealed the interconnectivity of expectations and interactions, and how this connectivity shaped Gen Z's perceptions and experiences of the support (i.e., scaffolding) received from managers during their learning. This led to the major contribution of this study which shows how expectations and learning are mutually constitutive in a socially distributed manner (i.e., across managers, learners and their peers). This is captured in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Mutually Constitutive Nature of Expectation and Learning
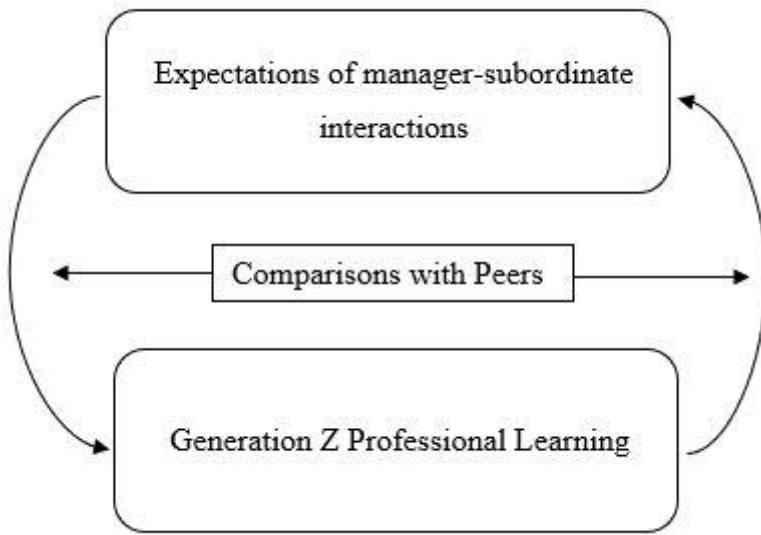
7.2 Theoretical Contributions

7.2.1 Manager-Subordinate interaction

The first contribution this study makes to the literature is showing how expectations and comparisons shape the interactions between managers and subordinates. The findings of this research have significance for LMX theory in that they show how Gen Z's expectations impact on their interactions with their managers to produce different experiences. These different experiences and the sense made of them created a spectrum of perceived interactional quality from high to low quality. Similar to what might be predicted by LMX theory, the Gen Z subordinates attached a number of defining characteristics to determine the quality of their interactions, however, the findings revealed that this did not paint the full picture.

In the case of the Gen Z subordinates, the quality of their interactions was not only determined by the specific characteristics which they assigned to each end of the spectrum. Their perceptions were shaped by two interrelated factors, (1) their expectations of managers, and (2) the comparison they made between their own experiences and the experiences of their Gen Z peers.

A number of social process and professional development expectations were held by the subordinates, and the degree to which these were met by managers influenced their perception of the quality of manager-subordinate interactions. These included the degree of

sociability in their relationships, the amount of support they received, and the emphasis placed on their professional development, all to be facilitated by a genuine and engaging leadership style. This means that Gen Z's judgements of the quality of interactions were subjective and could not be constrained to a set number of defining characteristics, as while the subordinates shared a common set of expectations, they have different interpretations of what it means for managers to meet these expectations.

The subordinates perceived quality of their interactions was also determined by their comparisons of their own experiences with those of their Gen Z peers. While they did not expect to be treated exactly the same as their colleagues, but rather wanted their individuality to be recognised, they did want the same level of attention, support and opportunity. The experiences of their peers therefore influenced their expectations and was used as a tool to make sense of their own experiences, illustrating the connection between expectations and comparisons. Their expectations are continually shaped through their interactions with their peers and the organisational context.

The degree to which Gen Z members feel that their expectations are being met informs their behaviours, the learning process, and their initiation into the organisation.

7.2.2 Journeying Towards Professional Competence and Career Goals

The concept of ZPD Vygotsky (1978), as previously mentioned, describes the gap between current and potential capabilities, and while it recognises learning as a socially distributed process, it does not consider how expectations inform these interactions. This study extends the notion of the ZPD by capturing the role of expectations in shaping the learning process.

Gen Z newcomers enter the workplace with pre-existing capabilities, a desire to realise their potential and, in doing so, become fully-fledged in their chosen profession. To achieve this aim they rely on the support of their managers and more knowledgeable peers, to scaffold (Wood et al., 1976). them through this 'zone'. This study showed that this process of realising potential is facilitated by the willingness of managers to meet the expectations held by their Gen Z subordinates. The study found that when there was a discrepancy between the expectations of how much support the learner desired, and what the managers were willing to provide, this has a negative influence on the learner's perceptions of the relationship and their ability to reach their potential.

While the ZPD is underpinned by the notion that the learners wider sociocultural environment shapes their cognitive development, and the way in which they interpret the support they receive, it does not consider how this also shapes their expectations.

7.2.3 Significance of the Emergent Conceptual Model

This Masters study has extended the existing versions of the 3-P model of learning (Biggs, 1999; Tynjala, 2013) by integrating the idea of LPP. It does this by capturing the journey of the Gen Z subordinate shifting from newcomer towards a fully-fledged professional. This is a process which involves not only obvious features listed in the existing 3-P models, but also incorporates potential capabilities, Gen Z's expectations, their managers observations of these expectations, and comparisons of their own experiences with those of their peers.

The model parallels the idea from LMX theory that quality of manager-subordinate interactions is on spectrum, which goes from high to low quality (Graen, 2003; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). However, it extends this concept, illustrating how the subordinates' perceived quality of interactions is determined by the degree to which their expectations are being met, and through the comparisons of their own experiences with those of their Gen Z peers. It is also influenced by the difference in perceptions between managers and subordinates in the intensity of scaffolding provided to guide them through the ZPD. Gen Z expected managers to take a hands-on approach to scaffolding with a high level of support, whereas managers felt it was best if they used their initiative, and support was given where necessary. When these expectations misaligned, it led to the subordinates' expectations being left unmet and perceiving their interactions to be of low quality. This demonstrates how sensemaking for the Gen Z participants was socially distributed, as their perceptions were shaped by their interactions with peers, managers, and the wider sociocultural environment

Overall, the model captures how Gen Z's interactions within the workplace shape their behaviours, and how they make sense of their experiences, both of which inform their initiation into the workplace and journey from newcomer to fully fledged participant

7.3 Practical Contribution

As discussed previously, the conceptual model generated from the findings of this study captured the Gen Z subordinates' journey from newcomer towards their desired outcome of becoming fully-fledged members of their organisation. From a practical perspective, managers will be able to apply this model to create a seamless transition for these subordinates. Managers must first understand how what is called 'the manager factors' in the

model - their philosophy of leadership, expectations of appropriate support, and leadership style - align with their Gen Z subordinates' social process and professional development expectations. With Gen Z being the latest cohort to join the workforce, it is essential for managers to develop an understanding of what this cohort's expectations are, and how they can adapt their own factors to meet these.

The model highlights the different paths which lead towards becoming a fully-fledged professional, as determined by Gen Z's perceptions of their experiences. The findings revealed that there was a discrepancy between the level of scaffolding which Gen Z expected to receive throughout this process, and the amount and type of support managers were willing to give. This resulted in Gen Z's expectations to some degree being left unmet, and thus perceiving their interactions with managers to be of low quality, leaving them dissatisfied with their relationships. To reduce ambiguity, managers need to temper the expectations of Gen Z by having a transparent conversation as to what is realistic given the available resources.

Managers must also be aware of how comparisons influence the social dynamic in the workplace, and the importance of treating people fairly to mitigate this. The model illustrates how Gen Z make sense of their experiences by comparing their own with their peers. If Gen Z observe other subordinates to be receiving preferential treatment, this leads to them perceiving their interactions with managers to be of low quality. Managers must ensure that they are creating a fair and equitable environment, while still tending to the needs of individual subordinates.

7.4 Limitations

An interpretative, qualitative approach was selected for this research as the objective was to look in depth at the expectations and experiences of Gen Z workers and managers' observations of these. This was something which had previously been overlooked by the literature and had not been explored in depth before. However, this qualitative approach raises the question of generalisability. While insightful, the emergent model and the findings that underpin it are inevitably limited in their generalisability, a criticism often levelled at exploratory qualitative research. However, the model, by integrating key concepts from the extant literature, provides an excellent framework for extending current theory. It could be used as a framework for future confirmatory studies with larger and more heterogenous

samples. Additionally, it could be used to stimulate more in-depth discussions between managers and their Gen Z subordinates.

Contributing to the limited generalisability of this study is that the sample was restricted to participants from banking, law, accounting and local authorities. If participants from a wider range of professional sectors could have been found, then this would have allowed insights to be made about induction into professional work in general. However, finding managers who could be paired with Gen Z subordinates proved extremely difficult during the pandemic we are currently facing.

This study was further constrained by the unexpected withdrawal of a second bank after data analysis was well underway. This meant there was uneven representation from each industry. With only one manager from banking, industry comparisons were difficult. The time restricted nature of a Masters thesis and COVID lockdowns, made finding a replacement impossible.

7.5 Future Research

This research has highlighted the importance of expectations, explaining Gen Z's integration into the professional workforce – specifically, the way they journey from newcomer towards fully-fledged professionals in law, banking, and local authorities. In doing so, firstly, it reveals opportunities to extend the concept of ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) by applying it to a specific cohort. Secondly, it highlights the role of expectations in the LPP (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Thirdly, it demonstrates the different perceptions of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976) between manager and subordinate. Finally, all of these contribute to the variable quality of workplace interactions. These contributions need further verification with larger samples which are more broadly representative.

Moreover, the conceptual model which emerged from the analysis of Gen Z's and managers' accounts of their workplace experiences provides a valuable framework for guiding this future confirmatory research with a larger sample. Finally, there is an opportunity to explore whether the same pattern of learning could be applied to other professional and non-professional groups within different industries.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Generation Z Interview Question Guide

- I am interested in your professional career to this point. What roles have you had prior to your current employment?
    - e.g., How many roles, types of roles, time in these roles?
- How did these roles prepare you for your current one?
    - What did they teach you about working with others?
- In which roles did you work closely with a line manager?
    - How did your past experiences prepare you for working with your current line manager or superior?
- What do you value most in a line manager?
- How do you expect them to interact with you?
- How would you describe **your personal communication** skills?
    - How are you most comfortable communicating one-on-one?
        - Digitally
        - Face-to-face
        - Varies? (i.e., depends on circumstances)
- To what extent does the **age of the person** who you are communicating with affect how you communicate?
- How would you describe **the relationship** you have with the superior who you directly report to – your line manager or supervisor?
    - I would like to focus on communication. How would you describe the way you and your line manager communicate with each other?
    - How do you expect your manager to communicate with you?
        - How have you formed these expectations?
    - What do you value about how you and your line manager communicate?
    - What do you not value so much about how you and your line manager communicate?
    - How does the way in which you communicate with your manager differ from the way in which you communicate with other colleagues?
    - How do you think your line manager feels about the way you communicate with her/him?

- To what extent do you think you think you meet their expectations?
- Do you receive feedback on the effectiveness of your communication with your manager?
  - What could do you think you could do to improve the way you communicate with your line manager?
  - What could they do to improve the way they communicate?
- Tell me about how you get the **information or instruction** needed so you know enough to do your job.
  - Does the amount and type of information or instruction meet your expectations?
  - How does the information your line manager shares and the instruction they give match your preferable channel for receiving such communication?
  - How could it be improved?
- Tell me about how you receive **feedback** on your performance from your manager.
  - Does the amount and type meet your expectations?
  - How does your line manager's feedback match your preferable channel for receiving feedback?
    - Would the way you communicate be different if they were a similar **age** to you?
  - How could the feedback be improved?
- Tell me about the **informal communication** you have with your line manager.
  - What opportunities do you get to talk casually or in other words chat with you line manager?
  - How would you describe this communication?
  - To what extent does it meet your expectations about how you want to engage informally in the workplace with line managers?
  - Would communication be different if they were a similar **age** as you? Why?
- **Disagreement** is a normal part of communication. What form does communication take when you and your line manager have a disagreement?
  - To what extent do disagreements get resolved in the way you would like?
  - Would disagreements be resolved differently if your line manager was a similar **age** as you? Why do you say that?
- Is there anything which has surprised you about communication in the workplace?
  - How did this differ from your expectations?

- Overall, how do you consider **generational differences** influence the way people communicate in your workplace?
    - How do these differences **impact** on the quality of your workplace communication?
        - With your line manager?
        - With people at the same level as you?

Appendix 2 – Manager Interview Question Guide

- Please describe for me the relationships you have with your current Generation Z subordinates.
    - What words come to mind when describing these relationships?
    - How do these descriptors influence the way you approach interactions with Generation Z subordinates?
- Explain to me what it is like communicating with Generation Z employees.
    - What factors shape this communication?
    - What do you think Generation Z value when communicating in the workplace?
    - What type of communication do your Generation Z subordinates respond best to?
        - Why do you think this is the case?
    - How does this differ from communicating with employees who belong to other generations?
- To what extent do you take a different communication approach with Generation Z than previous workers?
    - What factors shape your decision on how you choose to work with Gen Z? (Lack of experience, high level of digital competence, general confidence level ….)
    - To what extent do you actively instruct them?
        - Do you take a hands-on approach, perhaps acting even act as a mentor, or step back and let them figure things out for themselves?
        - How does this differ from other generations when they had the same level of experience?
- At times you will need to provide information or instruction to subordinates. How do Gen Z employees respond to this sort of communication?
    - How does it differ from how workers of different generations respond?
    - Why do you think is?
- Describe how Generation Z subordinates respond to **feedback from you?**
    - How does this differ from other generations?
    - What have your learnt about giving them feedback?
- How do Gen Z workers **give you feedback**?
    - How does this differ from other generations?
    - How do you account for these differences (or similarities)?
- Tell me about the **informal communication** you have with your Gen Z subordinates.

- o What opportunities do you get to talk casually or in other words chat with workers from this cohort?
- o How would you describe this communication?
- o To what extent does it meet your expectations about how you want to engage informally in the workplace with workers generally?
- How do Generation Z subordinates respond when there is a disagreement between you and them? Are there some common patterns?
  - o How does this differ from previous generations?
  - o How do you account for these differences (or similarities)?
  - o What have your learnt about giving them feedback?
- To what extent do you think Generation Z's have a common set of expectations about how to communicate with superiors?
  - o What leads you to think this?
  - o In your experience, what types of communication do Gen Z subordinates respond most positively to?
- How do their interpersonal skills compare to previous generational cohorts?
  - o How do their skills influence their ability or willingness to **work collaboratively or in teams**?
  - o How do their skills shape their **one-to-one communication** with you?
  - o How much value do you think Generation Z employees place on interpersonal relationships in the workplace?
- How have you seen self-education using online technology impact on Generation Z employees' performance in your organisation?
  - o How do you think growing up fully immersed in a digital world has influenced their ability to problem solve and process information?

Appendix 3 – Human Ethics Committee Approval Letter

UC
UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Rebecca Robinson
Telephone: +64 03 369 4588, Extn 94588
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Ref: HEC 2020/65

31 August 2020

Jake Jensen
Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Jake

The Human Ethics Committee advises that your research proposal "Experiences, Values and Expectations - Understanding Manager-Gen Z Communication" has been considered and approved.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 18th August 2020.

Best wishes for your project.

Yours sincerely

Dr Dean Sutherland
Chair
University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee

Appendix 4: Information Sheet for Interview Participants
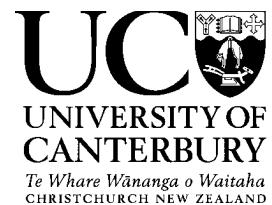
Department: Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship (MME)
Telephone: +64 3 369 3655 Ext. 93655 (Administrator for MME

Department)

Email: jake.jensen@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Date : September 2020

HEC Ref: HEC 2020/65

Information Sheet for Interviewees

My name is Jake Jensen and I am currently completing a Master of Commerce at the
University of Canterbury. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a study that focuses on
Generation Z employees' expectations about communication with their manager and
comparing this with their manager's expectations of the same communication. This study
will use the working definition of Generation Z as those born between 1995 and 2010
with a focus on employees who hold under or post graduate degrees. The analysis will
explore the generational-specific values and experiences that are associated with
communication between both managers and Gen Z subordinates, with the purpose of
acquiring a holistic understanding of how these inform expectations and subsequent
behaviour. This research will result in the development of an empirically based
conceptual framework that can then be applied to the day-to-day operations of
organisations to foster empathetic and productive engagement between managers and
their Generation Z staff.

You have been approached to take part in this study because you have been identified as
either belonging to Generation Z or you are a manager of Generation Z employees and are
currently working in a knowledge-based role in your respective organisation.

Participation in this Masters research project is entirely voluntary. If you choose to take part then you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview. Interviews are preferred to take place in person and the site where the interview is conducted will be negotiated between the participant and researchers. Taking into account your need for confidentiality, a secure, private meeting room will be sourced either at your place of employment, the university campus or an external location. If for any reason interviews cannot take place in person, they will be conducted online via Zoom. It will be ensured that the meeting room is completely private and does not enable you as the participant to be identified.

With your consent, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed to allow analysis of the information you provide. Each interview is estimated to take between 45-90 minutes. Following the interview, you may receive an email requesting a short telephone conversation to clarify or elaborate on the discussion we had in the interview. A copy of the transcript will then be provided for your review and approve before it is incorporated into the analysis. This provides the opportunity for you to amend any inaccuracies, remove information you do not want included in the analysis, and to ask any further questions you may have.

I am committed to ensuring that your identity and that of your company is protected and that any potential for commercial risk in the discussion of managers, subordinates or commercially sensitive information is mitigated. In the interview, I will ask that you refer to people in your organisation by position rather than name and not use your company's name. I will ensure I use a code or a pseudonym rather than your actual name to identify any data you supply and, similarly, your organisation will be assigned a pseudonym or code when transcribing the interview.

Digital copies of audio recordings and transcripts will be uploaded to the University of Canterbury server as soon as practical as a password protected file and deleted off any other devices to prevent unauthorised access. Transcription will occur in a way that ensures the tape cannot be overhead (e.g., using headphones). Only the researcher his supervisors will have access to the transcript and the data it contains. If a third party (e.g., a professional transcription agency) does transcription of the interviews the transcriber will be vetted to ensure they understand the need for confidentiality. They will be required to follow the same data protection protocol and to sign a confidentiality agreement. Any

physical copies of the transcription will be kept in a locked cabinet in a secure room on the University Campus, only the researcher will have access to this cabinet.

The sensitive nature of employment relationships between a manager and their staff is recognized and steps will be put in place to ensure any risks associated for either part are mitigated. Both managers and their staff must both agree to participate. The data provided by one party will not be referred to or discussed in any way with the other party. The time or location of interviews will not be disclosed. These will take place in a professional space where they cannot be observed or overlooked. If interviews take place online using a digital platform like Zoom then participants will need a code to enter the call.

Not only is your participation voluntary but you have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. You may ask for your raw data (i.e., the audiotape and transcript) to be returned to you or destroyed at any point. If you withdraw once the analysis has commenced, I will remove any findings relating specifically to your data.

The analysis of raw data starts immediately after the transcript is approved. This means that it will become increasingly difficult to remove the influence of your data on the results if you withdraw from your study at any time after you approve the transcript.

A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library. In addition, the results of the project may be published in journals or books or form part of a research presentation. Regardless of how the findings are disseminated, you can be assured that your identity will not be made public without your prior consent. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, a code or pseudonym will be used when referring to data from your interview or your organisation. Data will only be accessible by the research team and hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet on the University campus which will be located in a room only accessible with an authorized I.D card. Digital copies will be stored on a password protected file on a laptop which is also password protected and will be kept in a locked room. Data will be destroyed when five years after the publication data has elapsed.

A summary of the findings of this research will be provided to all participants from the research unless indicated that they would not like to receive this.

If you experience distress while completing taking part in this interview, you should request to stop the interview at once and ask the researcher for referrals, or get in touch with one of the community support services below:

- Lifeline New Zealand offers free phone-based counselling and support and can be contacted at 0800 543 354

- The New Zealand Association of Counsellors provides a counsellor search tool which enables you to find counselling services and is accessible at http://www.nzac.org.nz

- Free call or text 1737 any time for access to support from a trained counsellor

- Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand helplines at https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/in-crisis/helplines/

The project is being carried out as a requirement of a Master of Commerce by Jake Jensen under the supervision of Professor Colleen Mills, who can be contacted at colleen.mills@canterbury.ac.nz. She will be pleased to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about participation in the project.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any unresolved complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

If you agree to participate in the study, you are asked to complete the consent form and return this to the researcher before the interview commences, either at the interview or digitally.

Appendix 5 – Generation Z 3-P Model

Product

Process

Presage

Socicultural Environment

Fully-fledged, participating member of organisation

Satisfied

Not Satisfied

High Quality
- informal social engagement
- facilitated by trust, openness, respect and inclusiveness
- genuine care for subordinates' wellbeing and development
- on-going feedback

Low Quality
- limited mentoring
- entirely formal engagement
- lack of concern for professional development and wellbeing

Comparison

Organisational Learner Context

Manager Factors
- managers philosophy of leading subordinates
- managers expectations of appropriate support
- managers leadership style

Generation Z Newcomer Factors
- pre-existing capabilities
- social process expectations
- professional development expectations
- potential capabilities

- organisational structure
- peer engagement
- quality of interactions
  o with managers
  o with peers
- way of working
- available resources
- development opportunities