HOW CAN MANAGERS OF A START-UP COMPANY SUPPORT GEN Z SUBORDINATES TO INCREASE THEIR WELLBEING AND REMAIN PRODUCTIVE

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HOW CAN MANAGERS OF A START-UP COMPANY SUPPORT GEN Z SUBORDINATES TO INCREASE THEIR WELLBEING AND REMAIN PRODUCTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This thematic paper examines the case of a start-up company to explore how organizational leaders provide supports to Gen Z employees to increase their wellbeing and remain productive. Qualitative interviews are conducted with current employees to understand what motivates them and what can be done differently. In conclusion, current Gen Z employees seek growth opportunities, freedom, and supportive organizational culture in the workplace. Therefore, the recommendation for companies should accommodate these needs by providing management training, stress program, diversity, empowerment, engagement channels.
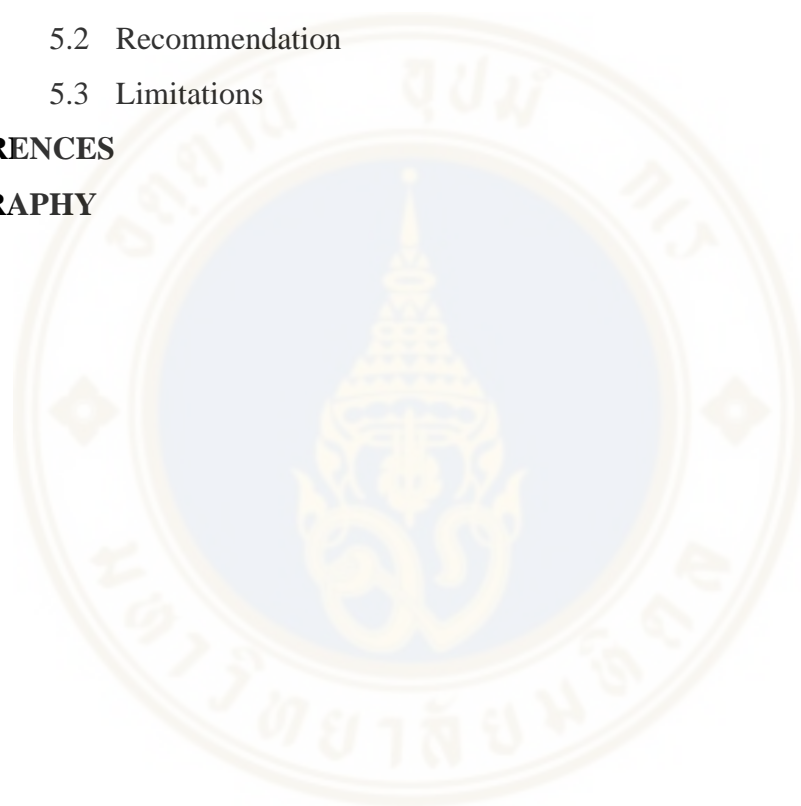
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Who is the Generation Z (Gen Z)?

A specific generation born between year 1996 and 2010, a generation after the Generation millennials and before Generation Alpha. The age range of Gen Z would be between 13-27 years old in year 2023. Identical to other generations, the values and behaviors are molded by their environment. Gen Z is the first generation to born in an era where the internet is widespread, therefore they are accustomed to global issues such as "climate doom, pandemic lockdowns, and fears of economic collapse." What is unique about Gen Z is that they are "digital native-extremely online", in which they are known to perform actives online; "working, shopping, dating, and making friends", among Gen Zs, Asians are said to use their phones up to 6 or more hours per day. Through these surrounding and behavior, Gen Z has the highest mental problem when compared with other generations leading to being pessimistic and struggles of self-stigma. According to a survey by McKinsey, 58% of the do not have their "basic social needs met" which is the greatest number among all generations (McKinsey & Company, 2023, 2).

1.2 Powerhouse of the Future

In 2019, according to data collected by US Census Bureau the total population of Gen Z is approximately 68 million in the United States which is 20% of the country's total population. In addition, Gen Z is also known for diversity, the 2019 racial and ethnic proportion of Gen Z in the United States of not white is 48% which is a huge increase since 2003 of the Millennials at 38% (Parker et al., 2020). In the same year, Gen Z shares up to 10% of the total employment rate and is projected to be at 30% in year 2030 (Oxford Economics, 2021, 5). In Thailand, there are currently about 13

million (as cited in mgronline, 2019) Gen Z which accounts to about 18% of the total population.

1.3 Struggles of Gen Z

The Gen Z workforce is currently early in their life and career and likely to be single, making them lonelier and tend to feel isolated, lack of motivation, or do not have enough financial support. Many of Gen Zs are struggling with work-life balance and feeling with exhaustion from work when compared with other generations which reflects their work efficiency (Pellegrini, 2022). According to statistics collected by Statista, the top 5 reasons US Gen Z employees quit their jobs in 2022 are because of inadequate income, being burnt out and imbalance between work and life, their job is not what they are passionate about, limited career growth, and unable to work remotely (Korhonen, 2024).

1.4 Job Trends

Organizations are facing the circumstance of job changing trend called the "Great Reshuffle". Out of all the generations in workforce, Gen Z and Millennials shows the favoring of changing jobs due to wants of relocating. In 2021, about 44% of Gen Z prefers to change jobs to relocate more than any other generations. In addition, 58% of Gen Zs are thinking of changing jobs in the years to come more than other the average of all generations (Pellegrini, 2022).

Many Start-ups and organizations now face the increasing number of Gen Z workers. This study aims to help enterprises and start-ups understand the culture of Gen Z so that organizations can motivate them and subsequently retain them. This paper uses **an Interior and Exterior design start-up company**, as a study case.

The study will explore the values of Gen Z, what do they look for in the workplace, and what strategies can be used to motivate them. To respond to this a qualitative interview will be used to gather insights from practical information of strategies performed by the CEO and Head of Departments as well as the satisfaction of Gen Z employees within the company with research questions below:

- Research Question 1: What motivates Gen Z employees in this start-up company? What demotivates them?

- Research Question 2: Are the current supportive strategies sufficing? What improvement(s) can be made to support Gen Z employees?

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 What factors Gen Z value

The factors Gen Z prioritize can be studied through the Self-determination theory (SDT) framework which explains how personal satisfaction in autonomy ("need to feel control"), competency ("need to feel effective"), and relatedness ("need to feel connected") can create motivation to Gen Z (Moore et al., 2020). Gen Z is a generation of diversity and movements. These younger generation of workforce has impacted both political landscape and workplace norms through their consistent stand towards transparency that concerns with acknowledgement and incentives. Therefore, to receive trust from Gen Z one must provide access to information so that they "feel in control" (Fernandez et al., 2023). The alignment of Gen Z's and their Organization's priorities can enhance their motivation. Gen Z workers prioritize motivations such as **work-life balance, salary, and job stability** (Symplicity Recruit, 2023, 5), issues like **"work fulfilling, creativity, and curiosity"** (GFK, 2023, 6) were ranked higher than other generations. Some notable issues that Gen Z also have high concerns are **living costs, job opportunities, and environment** (Deloitte, 2023, 9).

2.1.1 Factors that Motivate Gen Z:

2.1.1.1 Sense of Purpose: One of the priorities that Gen Z look for is a sense of purpose (Pellegrini, 2022). 96% of Gen Z believe that it is important that workplace make them feel "valued, included, and empowered" by making their voice heard and about 89% would likely change their job if they do not feel that way (ThoughExchange, 2023, 6). About 65% of Gen Z rather do something that has purpose while 60% and 45% wants to work on innovation and in companies that can make changes or make impact than joining NGO and non-profit organizations (S&P Global Foundation & Fairfield County's Community Foundation, 2020, 7).

2.1.1.2 Work Flexibility: It is important to understand that Gen Z looks for "flexibility" in their work more than any other groups of work force. Research has shown that 52% of Gen Z employees are willing to move to places that supports remote working. In addition, over half of the generation desire to have hybrid work. It is noticeably that companies that offer "flexibility" on LinkedIn platform receives attention from Gen Z employees (Pellegrini, 2022). In year 2023, 61% of Gen Z engage in a hybrid/remote work environment and consider it an important factor when choosing a job. 77% would consider finding new jobs if they are required to work "on-site full time" while 16% would look for new jobs immediately. 20% of Gen Z believes that hybrid working can help their work/life balance which improves their productivity due to less distraction from office noise and 54% reportedly have better mental health. In addition, hybrid work also help saves money from buying office clothes and commuting expense. (according to research by Deloitte, 2023, 15). Yet, many hybrid-workers express concerns regarding bias from superior favoring subordinates that are closer. Post-pandemic of Covid-19 resulted to more openness in hybrid education and workplace among Gen Z students and employees (Harari et al., 2023, 7).

2.1.1.3 Promoting Diversity and Inclusion: As one of the diversified and equitized generations, Gen Z believes that organizations must incorporate diversity of "gender, race, ethnicity, neurodiversity, people with disabilities and a diversity of ideas, experiences and backgrounds" (Sadeghi, 2023). Diversification in Gen Z results in an expression of individuality and do not prefer to be judged It is evident that companies with high diversity in gender and culture tends to have more profit than those who do not (Hunt et al., 2018, 3). Monster, a job finding agency has reported that up to 83% of Gen Z are interested in companies that has commitment in diversity and inclusion and that half of the generation's jobseeker would not join an organization without diversity. Moreover, more than half of Gen Z employees are currently dissatisfied in their current organization in developing a diverse and inclusive working environment (Manpower Group, 2023, 6).

2.1.1.4 Personal life: "Work-life balance can also serve as a motivation for individuals. It is one of the motivating factors that help employee's success in both professionally and personally. Work-life balance is evaluated by the Better Life Index by assessing how individuals allocate their time between work and

non-work activities, better balance of allocation increases satisfaction in both their personal lives and careers (as cited in Nieżurawska, 2023, 20-2). 84% of Gen Z says that salary is important when they chose their career, but many would cut down their salary 19% if other "non-salary" benefits suffice (ThoughExchange, 2023, 3). This trend can be seen during post-pandemic as employees weight how "worth it" their work is. According to research, 47% of employees set family before work. In addition, 53%, especially those who are "parents and women" has put prioritization toward their health and personal life before their job. (Pellegrini, 2022).

"I used to think of my work as part of my identity. Now I think of my work as something I do, but not necessarily as a core part of myself." – Information worker in the energy industry, Australia (Pellegrini, 2022)

2.1.1.5 Compassionate and Ethical Leader: Gen Z workforce seeks certain traits and values in organization leaders and put into consideration when seeking jobs. Empathy was ranked as the second most desirable trait they would like to see from their superior in an organization. Gen Z employees believe that leaders must posses' empathy by focusing on supportive strategies such as giving respect and show them that you care them personally rather than just productivity and results makes them feel more valued (Dunlop & Deloitte, 2023). When engaging with Gen Z employees it is important that leaders show interest in their personal feelings and be supportive, as well as keep in mind that female employees tend to have more empathy (Moscrip, 2019, 28). It is important for leaders consistently concern on "Environmental, Social, and corporate governance" as it is some of many priorities Gen Z employees look for paralleled with "inclusion and social justice" and would stand-up against what they deemed "unfair, unjust, or unethical (Merriman, 2022). Leaders that impose liberal, social, and ethical practice tend to keep hold of gen z employees (Gonzalez, as cited in Crowder, 2023). Sustainability and Ethical values are what 75% of Gen Z gives importance to and look for (according to Baker Retailing Center & Wharton, University of Pennsylvania, 2021,) and what seems to be one of the factors that keep them at the workplace. It is mentioned that "…ethical practices will likely retain Gen Z employees and attract new employees" - Gonzalez (as cited in Crowder, 2023).

2.1.1.6 Mental Health support: According to U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, Gen Z is currently facing a situation called "youth mental

health crisis" due to the impact of "global health pandemic" and for being a "digital native generation" (Fernandez et al., 2023). Around 57% of Gen Z believes that employers provide mental health support and 80% takes in consideration when selecting employers. Whilst, one of the most favorable mental support tools provided by employees is vacation time/ paid time off, 46% reported that they often have stress and anxiety throughout the day making them feel "exhausted" and "struggle" to perform. However, only 1 out of 3 employees offer "access to mental health services", "counseling/therapy" while 1 out of 4 Gen Z employees use these services (Deloitte, 2023, 22). 66% of Gen Z look for organizations that implements mental health and wellness culture.

2.1.2 Strategies to support Gen Z employees and earn engagement

Some companies have implemented strategies while researches have provided informative studies for organizations to make adjustments that cope with the changing workforce landscape.

2.1.2.1 Create channels for "two-way communication" with subordinates: Leaders and managers should encourage discussion and idea sharing, provide opportunities for open discussions on feedbacks and "future outlook" to make sure that they feel empowered, thus creating contribution to the organization (Fernandez et al., 2023).

"Employees will have more control in 2030 in terms of their work arrangements and decision-making processes. Self-management and self-managed teams will be the norm, not the exception as they are today," says Karl Treacher, Group CEO of The Culture Institute of Australia, (The CEO Magazine, 2023)

2.1.2.2 Establishing an opportunity for employee bonding in parallel of emphasizing "autonomy": Up to 10% of Gen Z suffers from "social isolation" (Deloitte, 2023, 17). Through digital social platform and the digital age, Gen Z is one of most connected generation. However, "[t]he more connected a generation is, the more lonely it is." according to NYU Stern Professor, social psychologist, and author Johnathan Haidt. Gen Z tends to become lonelier and have worse health when compared to other generations (Cigna, 2018, 2). Therefore, offering a hybrid working environment in parallel with opportunities for "in-person" interactions is an essential approach, as it positively influences the "overall work experience" among Gen Z individuals as well as with other generations. Implementing buddy pairing is a valuable strategy to enhance

collaboration across age cohorts. (according to the Hybrid Ways of Working 2022 Global Report, n.d.), it is reported that employees that eat lunch with colleagues are less lonely (Poswolsky, 2022). One strategy to use when there is a recruit to increase connection among colleagues is through "onboarding experience.", 80% of new employees reported that experiencing onboarding, in return, continues their positive perception of their organizations, as well as have clear perspective of their roles in the organization and strong commitment in job. An example mentioned in "Gen Z Employees Are Feeling Disconnected. Here's How Employers Can Help" is called "Late Nite Art", a strategy used by well-known companies such as Headspace, Southwest Airlines, and Accenture where organizations provide "risk-taking, deep conversations, and collaborative problem solving" with the incorporation of arts and music (Poswolsky, 2022).

2.1.2.3 Enhancing Employee Engagement and Purpose: Setting up meetings to set expectations and emphasize the true importance of their jobs and their contribution to the organization to make them see the objective of their contribution. This empower them to steer their career paths as it creates rooms and opportunities to show individual capabilities and improvements that can create greater impact to the organization and encourage personal ambition rather than just the "financial" interests, however being open to discussions about salaries (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

2.1.2.4 Stress Management Programs: One way for organization leader can tackle this problem is by establishing "stress management and resilience program". It is said that up to 76% of employers have invested in mental health programs in their organizations, while 71% invested in "mindfulness and medication programs". Organization leaders must build up mental health support culture by implementation in their policies that can be seen through "benefits plan" that covers financial support for mental health services which can range from regular therapy sessions, emotional fitness classes, and providing health feedbacks. Some other support might be offered from employers such as offering inflation adjusted-competitive compensation, personal mental supports and health supports that extends to their family members, as well as knowledge sharing among employees, or having a four day work week program instead of normal five working days or "Do Not Disturb hours" to avoid "burnout and exhaustions" (Poswolsky, 2022)

2.1.2.5 Diversity and Equality culture as priorities: Organizational leaders should consider establishing "throughout all levels of the organization" to attract Gen Z employees. To show commitment leaders must assess and set Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals plan. One example is Accenture's "Truly Human" initiative which provides employees the space to "comfortability" expresses their interests and identity freely. One other important value hold by Gen Zs is "equity and gender parity". It is important for employers to monitor pay gap and wage transparency to eliminate inconsistency. In addition to pay gap, it is important for organizations to promote equality in career growth in every individual. Lastly, leaders should be aware of traditions and important aspects across various cultures as well as encouraging employees to experience different cultures to "increase their appreciation and respect for different ways of living" (Sadeghi, 2023).

2.1.3 Conclusion

From the literature review, the author has concluded that Gen Z, born between 1996 and 2010, values transparency, sustainability, diversity, flexibility, and openness to change in the workplace and seeks to work in organizations that align with their values. Post-pandemic, this generation of workforce prioritize work-life balance and mental health support, and prefers hybrid working environments. Gen Z employees desire ethical and empathetic leadership that emphasizes inclusion and social justice. Leaders should prioritize organizational culture of diversity and equality by providing individual growth support and cultural understanding. Empathy and support from leaders are important for engaging Gen Z effectively, particularly considering the heightened importance of mental health and personal well-being. Organizations must foster two-way communication, provide autonomy, prioritize equality, practicality, job security, and career progression, thus providing mental health issues. These are the important values and strategies to keep in mind that can help retaining and increase commitment of Gen Z employees at the organization.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Primary Data Collection Method

This study examines the case study of a start-up company. It explores what motivates current Gen Z employees and what can be done differently to support them. The Primary Data will be collected through qualitative research methodology with in-depth interviews (McDaniel & Gates, 2016).

3.2 Interview Method

The study will use the semi-structured interview method as the primary means of gathering data. This form of interview gives flexibility for the interviewer to use open-ended questions that follows the idea of the research to deeply investigate into the subject.

3.3 Sample Selection

Participants for the interview in this research will be conducted on current and former staff which are divided into three distinct groups according to their levels. The first group are the executives of the Company who are in-charge of policies and supports, 2 managers, and 6 Operating Staffs.

Table 3.1   Interviewee Information

No.	Gender		Position	Age
1	M	Executive	CEO	33
2	F	Executive	COO	34
3	F	Business	Lead Commercial	28
4	F	Business	Growth Analyst	22
5	M	Technology	Lead Software Engineer	26
6	M	Technology	Software Engineer	21
7	M	Technology	Software Engineer	23
8	F	Product	UI/UX Designer	21

3.4 Interview Questions

The interviewer will provide Open-ended questions to explore the real-life experiences of managers and Gen Z workers in a start-up organization, focusing on their values, challenges, motivation, and supportive strategies. Open-ended questions give the interviewer opportunities to freely explore the perspectives of the interviewee and in addition provide an openly environment.

Table 3.2 List of Questions for Managers

Factors to Investigate	For Managers
Expectations	• What is important to you when considering potential employees? • Are you satisfied with how they work? (please give examples of what makes you satisfied/not satisfied with employees) • Have your expectations changed during your work at the organization?
Motivation	• What are some motivation practices have you implemented for your subordinates in this organization • Do you keep track of your subordinate's engagement at work? Do you motivate them?

Table 3.2 List of Questions for Managers (Cont.)

Factors to Investigate	For Managers
Challenges	• What is most challenging for your subordinates? • Is there a given space/channel for expression on those challenges? • How do you personally manage your challenges • How have you helped your subordinates when they are overwhelmed/stressful at work?
Supported Strategies	• What are the current supports given to the subordinates? Do you feel that their needs and struggles are met in a timely manner? • Can you give one example of the support strategy? • What changes would you like to see in organizational practices to accommodate your subordinate's needs and preferences? • Do you think having balance between work and personal life makes your subordinate productive? • How do you feel about having hybrid work? • Do you currently provide mental health supports? Do you think it is necessary? • Do provide any career advancement opportunities at the organization

Table 3.3 List of Questions for Gen Z Employees

Factors to Investigate	For Gen Z Employees
Expectations	• What is important to you when considering potential employers? • How do you feel about your work? Are you satisfied? • Have your expectations changed during your work at the organization?

Table 3.3 List of Questions for Gen Z Employees (Cont.)

Factors to Investigate	For Gen Z Employees
Motivation	• What makes you join this organization? • What motivates you to stay engaged and committed to your work on a day-to-day basis? • How do you see the future of your career?
Challenges	• What do you find most challenging at the organization? • Is there a given space/channel for expression on those challenges? • How do you personally manage your challenges • What might be the reasons that can make you leave the company? • Have you ever felt overwhelmed/stressful at work?
Support Strategies	• What are the current supports given to and are they efficient? Do you feel that the needs and struggles are met? • Can you give one example when you felt supported? • Are you satisfied with the current supports provided? Are your needs resolved in a timely manner? • What changes would you like to see in organizational practices to accommodate your needs and preferences? • Do you think having balance between work and personal life makes you productive? • How do you feel about having hybrid work? • Do you think mental health supports may help your stress? Is it necessary currently? • Do you see any career advancement opportunities at the organization

3.5 Develop Probing Techniques

Proving techniques will be used in the interviewing process to cover information from respondents as much as possible. Using a two-way communication, the interview would start with open-ended questions to initiate discussion, followed by using "probing techniques" which will enable the interviewer the use of follow-up questions. This approach helps interviewers further gather essential data to investigate deeper into the respondent's experiences and perspectives. The interview will end with closing questions to validate data between interviewer and interviewee.

3.6 Conducting the Interview

The interview will be conducted in a form of face-to-face interactive conversation so that the interviewer can simultaneously observe the body language, facial expression, and gesture of the interviewee. Each interviewee will individually interview to keep all responses confidential. The interview will be conducted at the workplace of the interviewee as they are familiar with the location. However, option for phone interview can arranged upon request. Each interview will take approximately 30-40 minutes that covers the introduction and probing questioning.

3.7 Research Framework

The research framework will show how data are collected by the in-depth interview to find the important values, underlying challenges, motivating factors, and effective support strategies of Gen Z in a start-up organization. The use of qualitative research will be used to find out these data for this research. The research will investigate whether the values and supports provided by the top-management passes through the organizational culture effectively. The research will investigate the perspective of the top-management position on the values and supportive strategies they pass down and on the contrary, the research will investigate whether the lower-level Gen Z employees recognizes those values and support, and in return are satisfied with their job and stay productive and stay at the business. And what necessary changes, if any, can be made to help the organization and its staff.
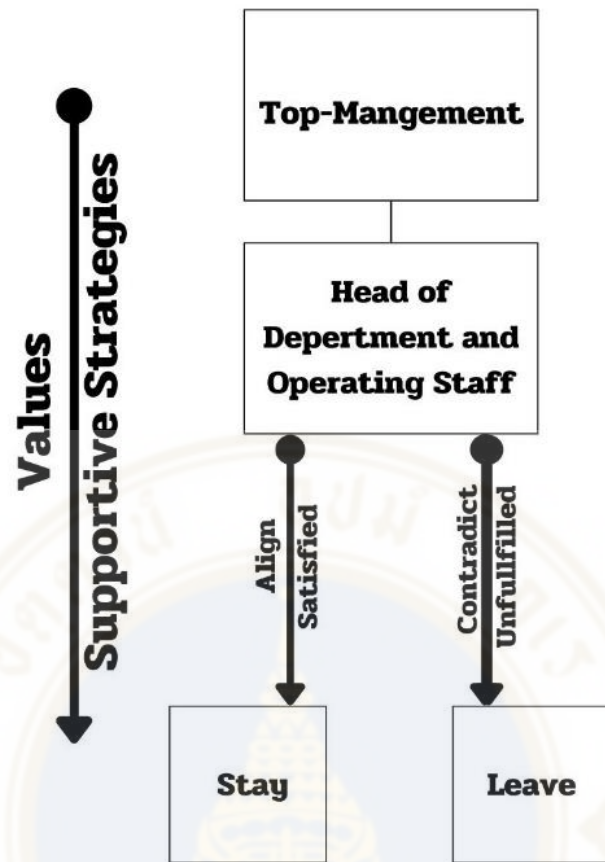
Figure 3.1 Research Framework

CHAPTER IV
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This research examines perspectives from managers and employees of a start-up company, highlighting aspects such as skill growth, supportive culture, and career advancement. Implementations of strategies and factors that can make changes to themselves and the company.

4.1 Expectations of managers and employees

For employment expectations, both managers believe that potential employees should have the **"heart" and "hunger"** as well as showing the **"passion and ambition"** in creating actual output. In addition, being a start-up company, the business is at its early stage, potential employees must have growth mindset and possesses required specific technical skills.

The CEO is satisfied with how the current set of employees are performing stated **"he is happy with everyone, knowing what they need to achieve and what is the goal, so micro-management is not required".**

However, even though they do not need supervised at all time in working, the COO pointed out that **"due to the phase of the business is in its early stage, it is unstructured, making the employees working structure unorganized". The organization and employee** lack implementation of proper milestone which causes progress to be vague and unclear on what are their current progress toward the goal. Therefore, to get the results, COO implemented certain **"framework and measure metrics or indicators"** to evaluate the progress of each project.

When compared with the views of employees we can see certain alignments with the views of the managers. When considering a potential employer, the employees said they consider about skill growth, work freedom, and salary. They feel that the current

work uses knowledge skill and feel that at the current position they have opportunity to upskill themselves due to career advancement.

Currently all 6 employees are "satisfied" about their work and 2 of them mentioned that it is better than expected, stating that they **"got to do new things"** and **"got to think by ourselves and given a lot of freedom"** even though they did not receive high salary when compared to other company, they believe the current salary they received still sufficed. As most of the employees are first jobbers, 4 employees agreed that adapting to the company's culture is not difficult as one of the employees stated that **"it was easy to adapt the [company's] culture"** and they get to think of and learn new things. They believe that the company offer them certain amount of freedom to manage their priorities as the culture is more result oriented as everyone have different comfortable working time as mentioned by an employee that "people have different focus time".

During the interview on how they search for companies, 4 employees prioritize **"Growth"** opportunities. As one employee from the Technology department stated that the **"work must help me grow in knowledge and experience",** while 1 employee pointed out that the company should have **"motivate energy in the work culture",** and another one mentioned that the criteria is how **"Prestige of the company"** is. As mentioned before, that these are first jobbers they would want to build their resume along the way.

4.2 Motivation Factors

The managers believes that mutual agreements make the employees feel motivated. Due to hybrid working environment, the staffs have agreed to attend the office twice a week on Tuesday and Wednesday as well as having lunch and occasionally dinner together as stated by the CEO that **"we had agreed upon the working days and eat together".** The CEO believe that this practice does not only make them see the progress of employee's work, but also creates bonding between colleagues. However, to get better results, there must be structure implementation to make working remotely efficient while they are away from office the rest of the week as mentioned by the COO that **"they are currently delivering but at minimum, they need proper guidance and**

framework to understand what they need to do, but I understanding that they [employees] are mostly first jobbers". Most importantly, is giving trust to each member to produce results. But it is necessary to keep track of employee's engagements, the COO stated that **"it does not matter where they want to work, but every work must be documented"** so there are weekly meetings called "Townhall" that involves every member to create small reports that shows their progress in which everyone can also provide feedbacks or point out alternative solutions to that progress. As the managers believe that every progress should be documented for lookbacks and references.

What makes employees join this organization is due to personal bond, the sense of goal, and growth opportunities. In the interview, 3 employees felt that having good teams with helping-hand and can-do attitude makes them still want to engage in their work. Good attitude among team members helps them get along as they understand the thinking and feeling of one another as stated by an employee that **"everyone is willing to help"** and **"colleague help update each other through 'knowledge sharing' session"**.

In addition, what drives employees at the company is the goal they mutually want to achieve is solving the **"pain-point of consumers"** and wanting to grow together with the company and see its accomplishment, mentioned by one of the Software Developer that **"they do not just want to develop something, but they want to see [their] product that really works"** while 2 employees say they **"want to grow with the business and see how far can we go"**. While one employee pointed out that in which employee believe that the company provides opportunities for them to grow as they can think of new products and present to weekly meetings. In addition, one employee mentioned **"having good team leader that is hard working sets examples"** which makes the employee feel motivated and want to do the same.

4.3 Navigating the Challenges

During the interview, the CEO mentioned that **"the nature of start-up that is rapidly changing so everyone must keep up and there is not a lot of time to think".** The challenges seen by the CEO is the ability of subordinates to adapt to new situations as the pace of start-ups is quite fast and there is limited time so there are a lot of things from many aspects to think about. The CEO added that, therefore **"many of**

the problems require the subordinates to decide what actions should be done and should there be any obstacles there is room for discussion" to resolve the situation. Even though they are producing satisfactory results, but mostly just follow the routine work and only wait for work assignment. What should be done is participate in finding solutions to make the business grow. Each employee can feel free to have a discussion with the managers at any time to help resolve unhandled difficulties. Current opportunities for employees to speak one-on-one regularly can help create space for each individual employee to share their problems, thoughts and innovate.

The CEO mentioned that it is important to correctly **"prioritize work, if they [subordinates] feel stressful or overwhelmed",** they are **"advised to step away from the work and take vacations".** The managers understand that there are not enough staffs at hand due to certain factors which can affect the efficiency and that currently the company lacks strategies and business analytics to create visual motivation.

When reflecting on the challenges faced by employees we may see variation among individuals. Most employees believe that the challenges they face at the company are more work-related stress rather than personal issues, since they have to manage and prioritize the tasks themselves. Of the 6 employees, 2 are worried of not finishing the work by the deadline. While 2 employees mentioned that they can be indecisive when contacting people due to lack of experience as mentioned that they **"are scared of making decision"** and **"feel uneasy when talking to customer".** 2 employees who were assigned as team leader felt the stress of being lack of management skills, lack of trust in other team members, and maintaining emotional detachment to prevent bias as stated that "**I do not have experience in management"** and **"due to organizational scale, must not be emotional and personal"**. However, each employee can seek colleagues as everyone is willing to help, as well as seek opportunities to voice their problems at weekly "Townhall" meetings. To manage certain challenges on a personal level, all employees try to manage by accepting to the majority decision to maintain straight-forward communication about problems, and managing time effectively mentioned by an employee that **"un-resolved problems can be put into meetings to avoid slow work and wrong decision"**. However, 1 employee pointed out that what [she] felt challenging was **"make the managers believe in implementing new things or ideas"** which makes them feel demotivated.

Lastly, most employees point out certain reasons that would make them decide to leave the company: 4 employees mentioned the inability to utilize skills effectively due to work alignment issues as one expresses that **"if the work assigned was not as agreed"**, 1 employee mentioned he **"would leave if the company's management style changes"**, and 1 employee cited personal goals such as seeking higher wages or career advancement, mentioning, **"It is about the personal goal of obtaining higher wages and working in a prestigious firm."**

4.4 Support strategies

The managers think that firstly, employees must have a working culture and have passion in what they are doing. However, there are certain measures that may help them in producing results such as framework as well as sales and financial goal. The framework should help employee grow, create passion, learn how to prioritize each activity. The managers wish to see growth in every employee and have success along with the company as mentioned by the **CEO "wanting to see everyone learn and continue to grow, having passion in what they do"** so they would refrain from doing micro-management, but rather give them space and opportunities to try to think of solutions on their own with proper guidance from the managers. The CEO and COO both believe that providing and encouraging work-life balance for employee will make them happier, thus be more productive as it gives them space to organize themselves and not mix personal issues and work together such as they can fix their personal issues first, then work on their project later. This makes the employee have a clear mind when they are doing work making in increase the quality of the work. As mentioned by the COO that **"work-life balance is encouraged, with good work-life balance it will make employees happy and become productive"**.

In addition to supportive strategies, the COO think that it is important to acknowledge what things the employee is interested in and what do they need mentioning that **"career advancement is provided, but we must know what they specially interested in, do they want to grow. A Town hall (weekly update meeting) is provided for everyone to show their capabilities"**. In addition, the CEO mentioned that if they can produce quality results there will be opportunities to have advancement

in their career which comes with more responsibility **"producing substantially will give them opportunities to earn more responsibilities".** The COO **"also hopes this help create ownership and induce others to do the same"** as responsibility should also be in parallel with the sense of ownership and create a culture that transfer to other colleagues that makes them want to grow and have advancement as well.

The CEO and COO thinks that it is currently unnecessary to provide metal health supports, but should be a possible support option in the future as the company grows the COO mentioned that **"it is necessary but not at the moment, but as the company grows and have international customers, may be required to support working shifts".**

An employee stresses that the company is still quite small therefore supportive culture is by default. However, he expressed worries whether this can still be maintained as the company grows and the size of the team expands. In the interview, 4 of the employees felt satisfied with the current supports provided by the managers and the company. In addition, 4 of them felt that their needs and struggles related to work are met in a timely manner as actions are discussed and solutions are taken instantly which leads to delivering higher quality works as mentioned by an employee from the business section that **"if there is a problem everything is taken care of. For example, there were problems of team members coming late for meetings therefore the CEO made soft talk on behalf of the team leaders and got an instant fix."** Another strategy that most employees felt they have space for speaking their thoughts and feelings is having **"one on one"** session regularly where managers sit down with each individual employee to discuss. However, 2 employees expressed that if the problem is caused by external factors they would **"let it be"** and accept **"it is what it is."**

Majority of the employees believes that mental health support is necessary but not now since there is still good, one employee that **"there is good vibe and culture"** in the company. But 1 employee expresses stress issues such as **"pressure of having to be success, being accepted by others, or doubting about the quality of their own work".** However, another employee hopes in the future to have evaluation that goes beyond work related issues such as **"financial status and stress assessment".**

Most employees believe that good work-life balance will make them more productive and think that the company offers enough, as it is not about splitting work

and life equally, but how each employee proportionated it as mentioned by a software developer that **"freedom helps enjoy coming to office. [Work-life] balance is not 50/50 but how it blends".** While most employee say that they like to be alone and believe themselves to be introverts, 2 expresses that they would prefer to have more office days since they believe that it helps problem resolve faster and create more bonding, as one mentioned **"work freedom helps me manage life, but I want to come to office as working hybrid sometimes create communication lag"**. In addition, 1 employee express that having **"work-at-home makes them look forward on coming to the office"** as they **"felt joyful".**

Lastly, most of them feel career advancement as they can feel the opportunities given by managers on assigning new tasks and leadership role. An example given by an employee who was promoted up the organization from an ordinary staff member to become supervisor **"promoted from a program developer to a team leader, and help create career path for others in the tech team".**

4.5 Summary

The research findings highlight perspectives from both managers and employees within the organization. Managers emphasize the importance of hiring individuals with passion, ambition, and technical skills, while also implementing frameworks and metrics for progress evaluation. Employees shows the alignment in terms of valuing opportunities for skill growth, work freedom, and organization culture. Implementations like hybrid work creates life-balance in parallel with regular meetings can maintain staff bonding and progress tracking. Challenges are met in a timely manner; however, current supportive culture is questioned as the company expands. Mental health support is seen as unnecessary for now, but employees stress its potential importance as the company grows. Lastly, employees are likely to leave the company if they feel the need to grow and goals are not met.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

In this paper, the research questions focus on investigating the factors that motivates Gen Z employees and what are the challenges they face and how are they resolved in their workplace. The research investigates through two perspectives, 2 from the managerial level and 6 from the operation level who are currently working at a start-up company.

In conclusion, we can see that both the managers and the employees believe that work-life balance is essential which may help increase work productivity. Both parties believe that personal growth is important in the organization, where the managers provide opportunities for employees to freely think about the project without micro-management and the employees think that they have the freedom and opportunities to think and accelerate in job position in the company. In addition, strategies provided by managers is reciprocal to the needs of the employees such as providing framework and indicators through weekly "townhall" meeting to resolve employees' worry of not finishing by deadline, as well as providing regular "one-on-one" session to adhere to employee challenges and problems. One thing that both parties also share the same view is that stress supports is currently not needed despite that employees saying that they have stress.

However, despite the common perspective that both parties share, we can see that some employees who had been promoted lacks managing skills which causes them stress. In addition, the employee would like to have more of guidance on prioritization to get arrange on the importance of each assignment.

Lastly, despite the satisfaction of employees at the company, the company must be aware that these are first jobbers and gen z workforce. There is a possibility that they would still leave the company other than reason of work unalignment and dissatisfaction

with the management is about seeking higher wages and career advancement and experiencing new things.

The findings are consolidated within the research summary, illustrated in Figure 5.1 below:
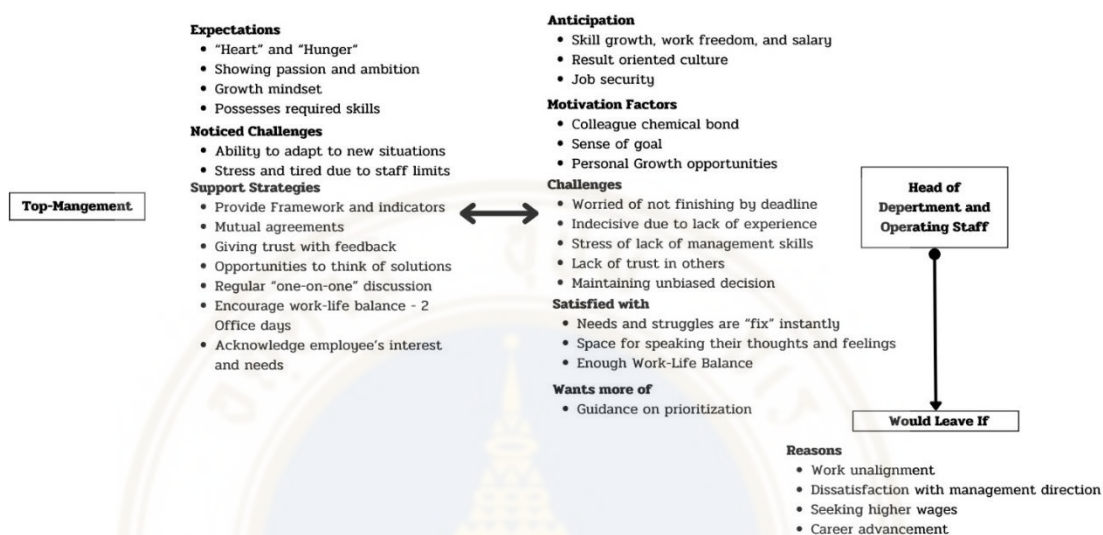
Figure 5.1 Research Findings

When comparing the qualitative research findings with the literature review, it is observed that many of the factors identified in both research share similarities.

The similarities observed on factors that motivates Gen Z between source reviews and case study interviews can be identified in 2 categories: Sense of Purpose and Workplace flexibility. One of the priorities that Gen Z look for in workplace is the "feeling of importance" and think that what they do should "serve a purpose". This can be seen in the case study that the managers implementing framework and evaluation measurement to provide the visual to the employees of what their goal is, where they are, and what impact will that have on the company. However, one interesting aspect that the case study interview identified is about personal growth. Several employees said that one of the factors they seek in companies is opportunity to grow in which the current company sufficiently offer. Secondly, preferring work flexibility and work-life balance can be seen in both sources. Case study's employees, like other Gen Z, believe that providing hybrid workplace can make them more productive as it can help them prioritize their personal and work issues. According to the current practice at the

company, employees are required to work at the office two days per week. Interestingly, many employees increasingly look forward coming to office and some felt joy coming to office and meet their colleagues.

Some similar Support Strategies observed between literature review and qualitative research can be seen in 3 categories: private and weekly meeting, provide framework and indicators, and practicing bonding in a hybrid workplace. The first strategy that can be seen in the qualitative interview is about two-way communications. The company offers two-way communications through "one on one" talk session between the employees and the Chief Operating Officer as well as weekly "Townhall" meeting where each employee shows their progress, bring up difficulties for help, as well as chances to input their ideas on the direction and other aspects of the company to form a mutual goal and commitment. In addition, managers implement framework and evaluation criteria to keep track the employees for work progress. The framework and evaluation allow managers to provide freedom to employees in work-life balance and refrain from micro-management and become more result oriented. Lastly, weekly dining and boardgames play induce bonding between colleagues which makes some employees look forward on coming to the office. However, one aspect to point out is compassionate leadership, it is identified in the qualitative research that managers are aware of the difficulties of the employees and provide an approachable culture. Lastly, what we can learn from in the interview with Gen Z employees, the company must listen to the employees, but also be prepared that even though the company provide sufficient support to employee, their curiosity to explore new experiences and wanting to grow can make them leave the company. Employer should be realistic that people do not stay forever.

5.2 Recommendation

Here are solutions that adheres to the challenges and wants of the employees:

The Chief Operations Officer should implement programs to provide "people management" training and "soft -skill" training for employees who has been promoted to managerial level that lacks managerial skills. Such as an I.T. employee who felt stress

of not knowing how to manage and trust his subordinate. As well as another one how have difficulty not being biased.

- Provide clear milestones and long-term goal in addition to weekly "townhall" so that employees can foresee and anticipate upcoming deadline and to help guide on which work is needed first.

- Proactive Stress Management Preparation. Even though mental health program is seen unnecessary by the organization members now, it is important to have a proper Stress management program ready for potential stressors.

Provide business outing and "onboarding experience" that provide activities for employees to work together in a non-work activity that may involve arts and music to create acquaint among employees like other companies such as Headspace, Southwest Airline and Accenture.

5.3 Limitations

- Many interviewees are new to the workforce that lack prior job experiences, which limit their ability to provide insightful examples or express their desires clearly.

- Most interviewees are from the tech department may result in a limited diversity of perspectives during interviews which may create bias in the sampling.

- The restricted sample size may not correctly represent the broader population of Gen Z employees.

- Given that many employees are new to the workforce and relatively young, their preferences and attitudes may evolve over time, potentially differing from those at the time of the research.

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