

How Poor Managerial Behaviours Impact the Motivation and Wellbeing Of
Gen Z and Millennial Employees in Comparison to Gen X in Ireland

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In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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Abstract

This dissertation investigates as to how poor managerial behaviours impact the motivation and wellbeing of generation z and millennial employees in comparison to generation x in Ireland. It first explores literature regarding negative managerial practices and behaviours and how they have can have a negative impact on employees on an international level. The research conducted regarding the Irish context was then compared back to the literature, where the researcher carried out an in-depth study.

The researcher conducted their study through an online google forms survey where they were able to gather first hand experiences from those who are working in Ireland or who have worked in Ireland.

Using a mixed method approach, the researcher used quantitative data analysis using IBM SPSS and qualitative data analysis through identifying themes.

Using the data, the researcher was then able to compare their findings in the Irish context to a more international conversation in relation to managerial behaviours and the impacts on gen z, millennial, and gen x employees.

The researcher concluded with their findings and recommendations for future studies in relation to this topic.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background on the topic and the justification of the research

This dissertation aims to explore as to how poor managerial behaviours effect the motivation and wellbeing of gen z and millennial employees in comparison to gen x in Ireland. This research will look at the personal experiences of participants across all three generational groups and will compare gen z, millennial, and gen x employees that are working in Ireland or who have previously worked in Ireland. The overall objective seeks to explore the attitudes of poor managerial behaviours and how this has impacted employees in the Irish workplace between these three generational groups, specifically comparing younger generations, such as gen z and millennial employees, to gen x, the generation above them. There is very little scholarly research on this topic in the Irish context, to which the researcher believed that there was a significant gap to be researched and explored.

Using a google forms survey to collect data, the researcher used a mixed method approach to analyse both qualitative and quantitative data. When the data was collected, the researcher analysed the quantitative data through IBM SPSS and the qualitative data through a thematic analysis approach. Doing so, the researcher was able to find the impacts of poor managerial behaviours on motivation and wellbeing, whether employees believed that managers treat employees differently based on age, if employees believed that managers had been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team, and the current attitudes to work among employees in Ireland. From this, the researcher was able to conclude whether there were any similarities or differences between gen-z, millennial, and gen-x employees.

Major Findings

The findings and analysis section explores what the researcher has found from analysing the data. In terms of motivation and wellbeing, there was no significant difference between specific generations and the impact of poor managerial behaviours on their motivation and wellbeing, but rather there was a link between motivation and wellbeing and the sector of employment. Additionally, there was no link between the belief that managers had been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team and generation, but again there was a link between this and sector of employment. In relation to whether respondents believed managers treat employees differently based on age, there was a clear indication that gen-z and millennial respondents agreed that those younger are treated more unfairly. Lastly, in terms of the skills and traits that are valued, it was found that gen-z and millennial employees value a manager who expresses empathy, compassion and encourages career growth, whereas gen-x value managers who respect and value their employees as well as show their appreciation for their efforts in the workplace.

While there is very little research regarding the impacts of poor managerial behaviours in the Irish context, the researcher read and reviewed a variety of secondary data to get an understanding of the arguments in relation to generation and the attitudes to poor management practices on a universal level. The relationship between a lack of employee productivity and a lack of efficient managerial practices has been argued by many scholars to which greatly aided this research. Allen, 2019 (a) argues that there is a definite link between inefficient and negative managerial behaviours and practices and a high turnover of staff. Additionally, the researcher explored research regarding all three generations and further explored management in the Irish workplace. This gave the researcher a vital understanding of the overall attitudes and assumptions and what to expect from the findings after the research was conducted.

Implications and Significance

While students in the past have written dissertations regarding generations in employment in the Irish context, there is very little scholarly research. This dissertation's research could potentially aid the investigation and research into this topic further. With the exploration of how poor and negative managerial behaviours impact the motivation and wellbeing of gen-z and millennial employees in comparison to gen x, this could give way for further research in the future. For example, in this study, the researcher found that motivation and wellbeing were impacted more negatively in specific industries, there is space for the research to be done on specific sectors in Ireland.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Literature regarding as to how poor managerial behaviours affect the motivation and wellbeing of employees

In terms of the most insightful and most helpful literature to aid the researcher in exploring this topic, there are a variety of arguments and opinions from scholars who back up the argument of how employee motivation is as a direct result of poor leadership qualities. It is without a doubt that there has been a variety of research done on managerial behaviours and practices on a global scale and how this affects employee motivation and performance. While this dissertation's research focuses in on gen z, millennial, and gen x employees in Ireland specifically, there is very little research on this topic regarding Ireland and to do with specific generations. However, managerial behaviours and how they affect employees is quite a universal topic, so it is still beneficial to read and consider a variety of work. This literature review will first focus on how managerial behaviours affect employee motivation, and then will delve into literature regarding generation z, millennials, and generation x, and what they expect from job roles. Additionally, despite the significant lack of research and literature in the Irish context, it will attempt to explore issues relating to poor managerial behaviours through other areas such as workplace bullying and employee intimidation in Ireland.

What is Good and Bad Management?

It would be useful before delving in to this literature review, to discuss as to what are poor managerial behaviours. More specifically, what is considered 'bad' and 'good' management? 'Bad' or what can also be described as ineffective management, is typically a variety of negative managerial traits. These can include micromanaging, poor communication, a lack of trust for employees, poor listening skills, favouriting certain employees, disorganisation, a lack of empathy and putting too much pressure on employees. 'Good' or effective management usually refers to a manager with efficient and positive managerial traits. A 'good' manager will strive to achieve company goals through strategic and organised planning while simultaneously motivating, supporting, and trusting team members to carry out tasks. Like the qualities listed above, Floyd & Spencer, 2016 (a) list examples such as team player and effective leader for good and positive managerial practices, and dictatorship and enjoys giving orders as bad and negative managerial practices. Additionally, the authors add that when an individual with these negative traits move into a managerial position, it can have a long-lasting negative impact on the department that they are overseeing, not only for the company, but for those working under them. (Floyd & Spencer, 2016 (b))

Delving into the literature

While a manager's main goal is typically to manage employees to achieve company goals, it is also vital for managers to extend empathy, as this can lead to resentment among employees. Allen, 2019 (b) writes that ineffective and poor management can lead to low engagement and productivity thus leading to a high turnover of staff, adding that 'bad' managers can have a profound effect on both the physical and mental health of employees. Allen, 2019 (c) further adds that to prevent poor management in the workplace, the managerial role should be treated like all roles in a company. He gives examples of how a company would not hire an engineer without the appropriate education and experience thus questioning as to why managers with no management education should be given roles in management. (Allen, 2019) (d). Furthermore, Jain, Mittal and Bhat, 2024 (a) discuss a variety of different leadership styles and how this has a profound impact on motivation. Employee motivation is essential for all organisations, and the authors highlight that employees who are motivated in work are more likely to be dedicated and driven in their roles. (Jain et al., 2024) (b). Moreover, Jain, et al., 2024 (c) discusses *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, in which the authors reiterate that Maslow believed that employees would be motivated in work if their basic needs are met. These needs include **basic needs** such as food, water and shelter, **safety needs** such as protection and security, **love and belonging** such as that from friends and family, **esteem needs** such as feeling a sense of accomplishment, and **self-actualization** which includes achieving one's potential. Additionally, Jain et al., (2024) (d) give readers examples of types of management in which inspire employees. They explain the *Transformational Leadership* is an innovative approach in which employees are motivated and encouraged to contribute to company goals. The authors argue that transformational leadership inspires employees to participate in being innovative and allows them to be imaginative. (Jain et al., 2024) (e). This motivates employees in the sense that they are being intellectually stimulated and thus feel like a valuable member of the company which further creates job satisfaction and employee motivation.

When we think of micromanagement for example, the complete opposite to that of the transformational theory, it is no doubt that it has been linked to resentment and a lack of motivation among employees in the workplace. Many experts critique the practice, and there is a variety of research in which heavily criticises it. Hicks, 2021 (a) describes micromanagement as a disease in which can be incredibly toxic for any workplace. He gives variety of different traits of micromanagement, including a manager who controls every aspect of a project, spying on an employee's work, and uses an authoritarian approach to management (Hicks, 2021) (b). In terms of change, Hicks, 2021 (c) believes that the only "cure" as such is for the manager to recognise that change is needed and to undergo management coaching. Managers who are equipped with the correct skillset to lead and manage a team could bring many positive benefits, including an increase in employee motivation and positive well-being. Additionally, Both the motivation and wellbeing of employees have been heavily linked to how well the employee performance in an organisation is. Saepudin, Mulyanti, Mulyanti, and Aviyanti, 2023 (a) write that employee performance gives an indication of company success, arguing that it is important to analyse both competence and motivation; two very important factors when trying to determine the organisation's possibility of success. Not only is the motivation and wellbeing of employees important for employee satisfaction, but it is also detrimental for the success of a company. (Jain, et al., 2024) (2001, 2001) Motivation is particularly essential, with Saepudin et al., 2023 (b) adding that employees that are motivated are focused and more determined to achieve goals.

Additionally, employee job satisfaction has also been linked to the type of leadership style which will affect an organization in the long run. Admit and Fujie (2024) write that a correct leadership style will increase an employee's motivation to succeed in their role and achieve their goals. Additionally, Feng, Patel and Sivakumar, (2020) further add that leadership styles heavily influence employee performance. When considering wellbeing and motivation it is evident that the type of managerial and leadership style has a profound effect on employees. For this study, this literature review will later analyse literature on gen-z, millennial and gen-x employees.

While many scholars agree that poor managerial behaviours and practices lead to lower employee engagement and low job satisfaction, there are some that believe that the criticism of managers has led to a perpetuation of negative managerial behaviour. Ghoshal, 2005 (a) critiques research that discusses issues surrounding poor management and how it affects employees. The author argues that the research related to this area has had a direct negative influence on management practices. (Ghoshal, 2005) (b) (Allen, 2019) (E). Put simply, the author believes that students who are studying about negative managerial behaviours may not actively adopt negative characteristics when pursuing a career in management but have been exposed to the normalisation of poor business management practices when learning about the topic in college or university. (Ghosal, 2005) (c) This is quite an interesting take, one in which Pfeffer 2005 (a) has argued for many years throughout his works. While Pfeffer agrees with most of Ghoshal's argument and oftentimes praises him, he adds to his argument even further stating that the idea of perpetuating poor managerial behaviours far worse than what Ghoshal has argued. (Pfeffer, 2005) (b). Pfeffer references the Aspen Institute of study (2001) and how business schools had a significant effect on student values- placing shareholder values at a higher level and customers and employees became less important. (Pfeffer, 2005) (c) While these arguments may be over twenty years old, they are important to consider, as they give important arguments regardless of when they were written. Exposing business students to the idea of negative managerial traits and how this can have a direct influence on the perpetuation of them when these students move into management positions is an interesting one and has probably not been considered enough. This argument is very opposing of Allens, in which he, like it has already been discussed in this literature review, believes in managerial education and training (Allen, 2016) (f).

However, in more recent times, managerial behaviours do in fact have a significant impact on the motivation and well-being of employees, with the CIPD (2023) writing that managers who are supportive and treat employees fairly will have happier and more productive teams. Moreover, it is evident that managers can help reduce the stress levels of employees through good people management alone.

Literature regarding as to what gen z and millennials desire in the workplace in comparison to gen x

It is no doubt that different generations may have different expectations from their workplaces and managers. While not everyone has the same values, people of the same generation typically share similar attitudes towards multiple things. This research and dissertation focus on how poor managerial behaviours effect the motivation and wellbeing of gen-z and millennial employees in Ireland in comparison to that of gen-x. This section of the literature review will explore these three generations in the workplace, what they consider important in employment, and their attitudes towards poor managerial behaviours.

Gen Z in the workplace

Gen z, like that of millennials, have a certain expectation from their workplaces and managers. Schroth, (2019) writes that gen z brings in new patterns of employee behaviour, and that managers must adjust to managing young and inexperienced employees that are new to the workplace. She also argues that there are often misconceptions that come along with each generation especially those younger, arguing that this can only lead to a divide rather than encourage growth solutions. Gen z and millennials may come with a variety of different attitudes towards work. Both generations tend to have somewhat of a ‘work to live’ rather than a ‘live to work’ mentality and seek employment that is suited to their lifestyle and future rather than basing their life around their job role in an organisation. However, specific stereotypes may come along with this. Ahmed, 2023 (a) debunks multiple stereotypes of gen-z in her article, one of which she argues that gen-z are not a selfish generation rather they prioritise their values and use them as their motivators. She further adds that if they are being offered opportunities in which do not align with their goals, they do not have an issue with declining and saying no (Ahmed, 2023) (b). Laziness is also a very common attribute given to gen-z in the workplace, one in which the author also debunks. Ahmed, 2023 (c) writes that older generations have commonly said that gen z do not work as hard as them or have not had it as tough as them, in which she argues that why should gen z be treated poorly just because older generations were treated that way when starting in the workplace.

It is evident that gen z employees desire a more flexible working arrangement, one in which caters more so towards their plans and goals in life. This can therefore increase their motivation when leaders and managers are more giving towards them and are open to workplace change. Febriana & Mujib (2024) argue that when gen z employees are given more flexibility with their time, they become more productive in the workplace. Additionally, it was found that when gen z employees feel as though that they have a more of an emotional engagement with the company that they are working for, for example, if they feel as though that they are compatible, they feel a significant sense of responsibility toward the organisation and become more engaged and productive. When relating this back to how poor managerial behaviours effect the motivation and wellbeing of gen z employees, it could be said that negative managerial behaviours such as micromanagement could create a sense of dissatisfaction among this generation and could therefore lead to a lack of motivation and

effect their wellbeing. This, therefore, can create more of a workplace divide among Gen-Z employees and their managers.

Millennials in the workplace

Furthermore, in relation to millennials, Wood, 2019 (a) writes that millennials will tend to not stay in a workplace in which they feel uncomfortable and oftentimes, they tend to not stick to any one employer in case of something going wrong. The author however, praises millennials describing them as innovators and more accepting of change and tolerant of different cultures, making them a great asset to a team. (wood, 2019) (b). He also argues that millennials tend to see work as an extension of home, and they must be comfortable in the workplace (Wood, 2019) (c). While Wood makes an interesting argument and while millennials might view comfortability in the workplace as important, the idea that the workplace to millennials is an extension of their home life could very well be argued against. Literature regarding millennial employees primarily discusses the importance of them feeling as though their goals align with their job role, not necessarily discussing the importance of having to feel like work is a home away from home. Nevertheless, Wood, 2019 (d) gives an interesting and insightful argument.

While different generations may have certain values that they hold as important, managers may be able to implement ways of working in which satisfies them which therefore could improve workplace motivation. Headrick Sweeney, Bengue and Carter, 2019 (a) believe that to get millennial employees to invest themselves more into the workplace, organizations must incorporate elements in which are important to them. They go on to give examples of ways in which to inspire millennials in the workplace, such as creating a clear purpose for the organisation, as millennials value working for a company that they believe in. (Headrick Sweeney et al., 2019) (b). Additionally, they also stress the importance of incorporating a flexible working environment, writing that millennials not only desire a purpose in work, but also desire a manager that does not engage in micromanaging and gives autonomy to employees (Headrick Sweeney et al., 2019) (c). In relation to gen z and millennial employees, there seems to be many misconceptions about their attitudes to work. It would possibly be beneficial for organisations to implement team bonding activities for employees of all ages or possible training for managers regarding new management styles. Both generations desire a workplace that suits their lifestyles, one in which they can have a workplace.

From understanding what gen-z and millennials require from their workplace and members of company management, it is quite easy to understand how poor managerial behaviours can significantly affect their motivation and wellbeing. Both generations prefer workplaces in which they feel heard, seen, and have management that have their best interests at the forefront of their minds. Both are similar in the sense that they do not want their job roles to take hold of every aspect of their lives, and appreciate managers who

Gen X in the workplace

In relation to gen x, Agrawal 2017 (a) writes that they are the generation in which feel overlooked, as many changes regarding globalisation has happened in their lifetime. In relation to the workplace, it would be beneficial for managers to appreciate this generation as much as younger employees, as they could potentially feel less valued in the workplace, however the same could also be said for younger generations also. Meechan & Wonglorsaichon, 2024 (a) explore burnout levels amongst gen-z, gen-x and gen-y employees (with gen-y also being known as millennials). From the findings from their research, the authors discuss that each generation is affected by burnout differently, with gen x being burnt out from emotional exhaustion and self-esteem issues in relation to how successful they are, whereas gen x and millennials experience burnout from degradation of personalities in other people. (Meechan and Wonglorsaichon, 2024) (b). This could suggest that while gen x experiences issues surrounding self-esteem, gen z and millennials are more affected by their relationships in the workplace. Interestingly however, in relation to the results from their study, Meechan & Wonglorsaichon, 2024 (c) found that it was in fact gen x with the highest burnout level overall, followed by gen z and then millennials. While this of course is a sample from the study carried out by Meechan and Wonglorsaichon, it gives an interesting insight into a study on these three generational groups regarding workplace burnout.

Additionally, Agrawal, 2017 (b) writes that there is a significant challenge in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of all generations in the workplace and implementing a managerial style that may suit all meaning that an effective manager who has the skills leading and managing all employees is essential. Additionally, in terms of gen x, Agrawal, 2017 (c) writes that they are the more collaborative generation and tend to not like formalization. When looking at organisational commitment, this is a sufficient estimator of how dedicated employees are to their company. Oftentimes, employees may only stay in an organization because they need to, not necessarily because they want to. Agrawal, 2017 (d) adds that gen x place more of a significance on work-life balance and job security, whereas millennials typically have a higher turnover and less commitment and value the freedom of life outside of work slightly more than gen x. However, both generations have some similarities as well as differences, with both gen x and millennials valuing life outside of the workplace. (Agrawal, 2017) (e) When relating this back to this dissertation's title, it is quite evident from this that managerial behaviours can have a significant impact on the three generations' motivation and well-being in the workplace, as they each have a set of workplace desires. However, from looking at the research present in this literature review, all three value a work-life balance, even though the level of importance of this may be different for all three. We know from the research presented in the first section to this literature review, that employees feel fulfilled and valued when their needs are met. When looking back at *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* for example, esteem and self-actualization are essential for feeling accomplished and valued in an organisation, which can significantly influence employees' motivation.

Employees and management in the Irish Context

Interestingly, there is very little research regarding specific generations in the Irish workplace and how negative managerial traits impact them. This leaves a significant research gap, one in which this study will attempt to conclude through its own research.

It would be important to mention however, that Deloitte, 2021 (a) held a survey in relation to millennial and gen z employees in Ireland with over twenty-two thousand participants and covered the topic of health, including employee well-being. Deloitte, 2021 (b) went on to discuss that the Covid-19 pandemic hindered the confidence of young employees in the workplace and companies still see the effects of this today in terms of stress levels and dissatisfaction in the workplace. Interestingly, the survey also found that 40% of millennial and gen z employees in Ireland have found their managers to be unsupportive at times when their well-being and stress levels were affecting their day to day lives. (Deloitte, 2021) (c) Furthermore, three years later, Deloitte carried out another survey in relation to gen z and Millennials employees in Ireland. From this survey, Deloitte, 2024 (a) found that while stress levels among these two generations had improved in the Irish workforce, they remained high, with 40% of gen z employees and 35% of millennials stating that they felt stressed most of the time in work. In terms of the direct impact from the workplace, long working hours, lack of recognition, and work/life balance are the biggest factors among gen z and millennial employees in Ireland. Employers and managers play a significant role in the wellbeing of their employees, with Deloitte, 2024 (b) writing that managers and senior leaders must play a role in encouraging employees to speak more openly about their well-being in work, which could create more satisfaction at work. From this, it is evident that managers play a significant role in the wellbeing and motivation of young employees, suggesting that managers who are active in engaging in employee recognition create employees who are much happier and engaged in the workplace.

While Deloitte's survey focuses on gen z and millennials, it is unfortunate that there were no surveys carried out for other generations such as gen x, as it would have made for an insightful comparison for this literature review. Instead, it could be beneficial to look at other areas of the Irish workplace and the impact of poor managerial behaviours. For example, Hodgins, Lewis, Pursell, Hogan, MacCurtain and Mannix-McNamara, 2022 (a) discuss bullying in the workplace in the Irish public sector and carried out a survey asking employees of their experiences of ill-treatment in which some participants recounted experiences of management engaging in verbal abuse and picking on staff. Additionally, Hodgins et al., (2022) (b) found from the research that poor organisational culture almost encouraged these behaviours, and no accountability was taken, and issues of bullying were not taken seriously, and almost normalised. One participant explained how she was made to work alongside a manager in which had verbally abused her in the past and was told off for when she felt unsettled with this decision. Hodgins et al., (2022) (c) Furthermore, the participants in the study found that these organisations were oftentimes more so backward and old-fashioned, and placed specific importance on power rather than the well-being of their employees. Hodgins et al., (2022) (d) The researchers found that managers in the public service industry must engage in early intervention to tackle issues surrounding workplace bullying, before it turns into something much more serious and training for managers and senior leaders regarding how to deal with ill-treatment in the workplace is also essential. Hodgins et al., (2022) (e) From examining previous scholarly works, it is evident that a lack managerial

efforts and efficiency can lead to a serious neglect and a deep sense of unhappiness from employees in the organisation. On a universal level, it is already evident that poor managerial behaviours effect employee well-being and motivation, and the Irish context is no exception. Poor managerial behaviours also include how managers tackle situations such as workplace bullying, not only negative personality traits and poor leadership styles. The study carried out by the authors shows the negative impacts that poor managerial behaviours can have when issues such as bullying are not appropriately dealt with and gives an insightful example of this in a workplace in the public sector in Ireland.

Chapter 3

Research Question

Research Question

The proposed research aims to investigate:

How poor managerial behaviours impact the motivation and wellbeing of gen z and millennial employees in comparison to gen x in Ireland.

The Aims of the Research

While a multitude of literature has been written regarding employee motivation and well-being in the workplace, how managerial styles and practices have impacted employees, as well as the attitudes towards work and managerial practices from a variety of generations in the workplace today in other parts of the world, there is a significantly small amount of literature regarding specific generations and their attitudes towards management in the Irish context. Therefore, there is a significant gap that should be pieced together. Additionally, it would be interesting to explore whether these poor managerial behaviours influence these three groups of generations: gen z, millennial and gen x.

In terms of why these specific groups have been selected, there seems to be changing attitudes to work among gen z and millennial employees, with a variety of scholars discussing the changing attitudes to work among these two generations. therefore, to gain perspective through personal experiences and how they have dealt with these challenges would be essential. Secondly, exploring gen x employees and comparing them to gen z and millennials in the workplace has given the researcher a vital comparison tool. With gen z and millennial employees being the youngest generations in the workplace now, how do attitudes towards work and negative managerial behaviours affect them in comparison to gen x who have been in the workplace longer than the two? What are the personal experiences of gen x employees regarding management in comparison to gen z and millennials?

Study Objectives

Objective 1 This study aims to explore if there is a significant difference in the attitudes and responses to negative managerial behaviours among gen z, millennial, and gen x employees in Ireland through a survey.

Objective 2 The study will assess whether there is a significant difference in the motivation levels of participants based on their generational groups and if poor managerial behaviours have impacted motivation among the groups differently.

Objective 3 The researcher will then assess whether poor managerial behaviours have had an impact on the wellbeing of those younger participants, gen z and millennials, in comparison to gen x.

Objective 4 To investigate if there is a belief that managers had been given appropriate skills to lead and manage a team and whether this belief is different among the groups or dependent on other factors such as sector of employment.

Objective 5 To investigate as to whether there is a belief that managers tend to treat employees differently based on age.

Objective 6 Lastly, to explore if there is a difference in what the groups expect from managers, i.e. managerial skills.

Hypothesis

While there is a significant lack of research on this topic in the Irish context, it would be useful to look and consider the research carried out in a universal context to get an understanding of the possible outcomes for this research. From the literature, a variety of hypothesis have been considered, and may reflect the outcome of this research.

Hypothesis 1 With changing attitudes to work amongst gen z and millennial employees, this hypothesis argues that these two groups in this study could potentially be more affected from management in the workplace than that of gen x.

Hypothesis 2 Based on the literature, the motivation of gen z and millennial employees may be more affected by poor managerial behaviours than gen x.

Hypothesis 3 Wellbeing could potentially be negatively affected similarly among groups.

Hypothesis 4 The belief that managers had not been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team will be shared among gen z, millennial, and gen x respondents

Hypothesis 5 gen z and millennial respondents will agree that managers tend to treat employees differently based on age.

Hypothesis 6 Each generational group will share the desire for the same traits and managerial skills, i.e. communication, listening and fairness.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the chosen research methods for this study. It will provide a discussion and a justification of the methods, the methodology approach, and how they were used for the research. Moreover, it will also discuss as to how the research was collected and will discuss the various ways in which the researched was analysed throughout.

Philosophical Assumptions

In terms of the assumptions that the researcher had based on some findings in which they had understood more previous literature, the researcher expected that the motivation and wellbeing of gen z and millennial employees in Ireland could potentially be more negatively impacted by poor managerial behaviours than that of gen x. This was possibly due to gen z and millennial employees valuing a workplace that fits in with their lifestyles and has a work life balance. In relation to the belief that managers had been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team, the researcher strongly believed that this would have no link to generation but could possibly have a link to sector. This could potentially be due to the different management approaches among different sectors. Additionally, in relation to whether managers treat employees differently based on age, it is believed that most younger employees may agree that they are treated more unfairly than that of older employees.

Research Design

To collect research from three generational groups, that is generation z, millennial and generation x, the researcher had to decide as to what method they sought to be the best fit for collecting data. Before deciding whether to approach via quantitative or qualitative methods, the researcher had to decide as to how many individuals they needed to participate in the study and what questions they needed to ask to suit the research objective and answered the research question. The researcher had to take into consideration all elements before deciding the approach.

The research objective was to target gen z, millennial and gen x individuals who are working in Ireland or who had worked in Ireland. Furthermore, because the researcher wanted to get a significant amount of data to analyse and to get in-depth findings, they saw it best to approach the research through an online survey. The survey first asked respondents to write their age, whether they thought they were gen z, millennial or gen x based on their age, and their line of work or past line of work if they were unemployed at the time of completing the survey. The online survey consisted of more in-depth questions in relation to employee motivation, mood, and wellbeing and whether they had felt that managers had affected all

three. The survey was made to allow participants to write their answers in as much detail as they saw fit to answer the questions.

Research Instrument

Google Forms Survey

The research objective was to gather information from gen z millennial and gen x employees who are currently working or have worked in Ireland, and to find whether poor managerial behaviours have had an impact on their motivation and well-being during this time, past or present.

To conduct this study, the researcher believed it best to design a Google forms survey, where the researcher asked participants a multitude of questions regarding their gender, age, sector and personal experiences in relation to their negative experiences with managers. Because the research question and objective related strongly to personal experiences and had some optional questions, it was sought best to have a mixed methods approach using qualitative and quantitative methods.

Mixed Method Approach

It was decided that this research would undertake a mixed methods approach to the collected data. This was due to the mix of descriptive and non-descriptive data in the survey. This method meant that the researcher could measure quantitative data while also coding and analysing qualitative data from questions in which required descriptive questions. A mixed method approach allows for the researcher the possibility to conclude with a more concise study if there is a mix of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative Analysis

The survey required participants to select their gender, generation, and to write either their current or past sector of work. The survey also asked whether a past or current manager had ever had an impact on their motivation, mood, and overall well-being, in which they were required to answer yes or no or yes and no. Questions in relation to whether the respondent believed that their past or current manager had been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team and whether they think that a manager has ever treated employees different based on age were also asked. The researcher believed it best to use a quantitative method to measure this set of data. The researcher decided to use IBM SPSS to create bar charts to show this data and carried out a chi-square test of independence.

Qualitative Analysis

Because this research has taken under a more qualitative approach with more open-ended survey questions, it was decided that the researcher should aim to have twenty participants from each generation due to the lengthy process of analysing the qualitative data. The researcher decided to use thematic analysis for analysing the qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2006) wrote that thematic analysis is the process of identifying and analysing themes

within qualitative research, it includes coding themes, putting them into groups and then creating a conclusion from the themes created.

Sample

For the research question to be answered as accurately as possible, the researcher needed respondents to be either gen z, millennial or gen x, so those aged 18 to 59 as of 2024, and to be currently working or have worked in Ireland. The Google forms survey saw all requirements desired.

This research sample is going to specifically focus in on six participants out of the forty-eight in which took part in the survey. These participants consist of two gen z, two millennials, and two gen x. Each of the three groups had one male and one female. The different areas of work consisted of two gen x employees in telecommunications and the service industry, two millennials in the IT and public service industry, and two gen x employees in education and transport. The research question asks how poor managerial behaviours have an impact on the motivation and well-being of gen z, millennial and gen x employees in Ireland.

When asked if poor managerial behaviours had an impact on their motivation, all but one of the participants, a male gen z who works in aviation agreed.

Research Limitations

This research had limitations in which possibly hindered an even more concise and in-depth study. This, therefore, would have influenced the overall research. It was decided before the study that the researcher should aim to have twenty participants from each group, that is gen z millennial and gen x, this was due to the amount of quantitative data that had to be put through IBM SPSS and the qualitative data in which the researcher had to code, analyse, and report on.

The Limitations of a Survey for Both Quantitative and Qualitative Data

A Google forms survey is open to everyone of all genders, ages and backgrounds. For this survey in particular, the requirements were that respondents must have been aged between 18 to 59, making them gen z, millennial or gen x, and they had to be currently working in Ireland or had previously worked in Ireland. These requirements were visible to all who clicked on the survey, to which they had to tick the box on a consent form to say that they had read and understood the nature of the study and who could participate. While the consent form attached to the study asked participants to answer honestly, and while the Google forms survey allowed the researcher to see the age of participants, their generation and their line of work, there was no specific way of tracking which generation or which gender could decide to participate when the research tool was online through a survey.

The limitations of the Survey and how they Impacted Research Aims

The use of a survey for both quantitative and qualitative data meant that the researcher did not have much control on the number of respondents from each generation or their ages. If for example, it was decided that interviews were going to be conducted for the qualitative research, the researcher could have decided the number of participants from each generation

and their ages that were required beforehand. However, because the researcher wanted to analyse data across a broad spectrum and wanted a variety of personal experiences and opinions from a large group of people, a survey was the best approach. Before this study was carried out, it was decided between the researcher and the accompanying supervisor that there should be an aim of having sixty participants in total. This was due to the nature of the google forms survey, in which predominantly consisted of open-ended questions. The mix of a survey and the use of more qualitative data, as well as some quantitative data regarding gender, generation and work industry, meant that the researcher had to analyse a variety of data.

Gender Ratio

The researcher found that there were significantly more females than males. 33 females took part in the study and only 14 males and only 1 individual identifying as other. While this research was not focusing on specific genders, the male and female responses could have made for an insightful comparison in the analysis and findings section.

Generational Ratio

The study had forty-eight participants in total, ranging from the ages of 18 to 59, with the age of 23 being the one with the most participation with 6 participants. Furthermore, 20, 24, and 35 were the age groups in which had the second most amount of participation with the 3 participants in each. Most age groups had only one participant. If the data had of been more diverse, the research would have been further in depth. In terms of the number of respondents per generation, 19 were gen z 14 were millennials, and 15 were gen x.

The lack of measurement on area of Employment

The questions asked were based on either a past or current role to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of the negative managerial effects on the respondents. This meant, that the research could not measure whether each of the respondents were basing this on their current role if employed, or a past role.

Ethics

In terms of ethics, the researcher's main aim was to make the research approach as ethical as possible. The Google forms survey undertaken by participants was completely anonymous and respondents were insured that their names and place of work would not be asked. Before undertaking the study, participants had to tick a box on the consent form to ensure that they had read and understood the nature of the study and what was required of them before continuing.

Questions regarding age, gender, sector of employment, and personal experiences were required, but again were completely anonymous. In terms of anonymity and safety, all responses were stored on a password protected computer, and the survey will be deleted once the research is completed. Only the researcher of the study can access the data.

Chapter 5

Findings & Analysis

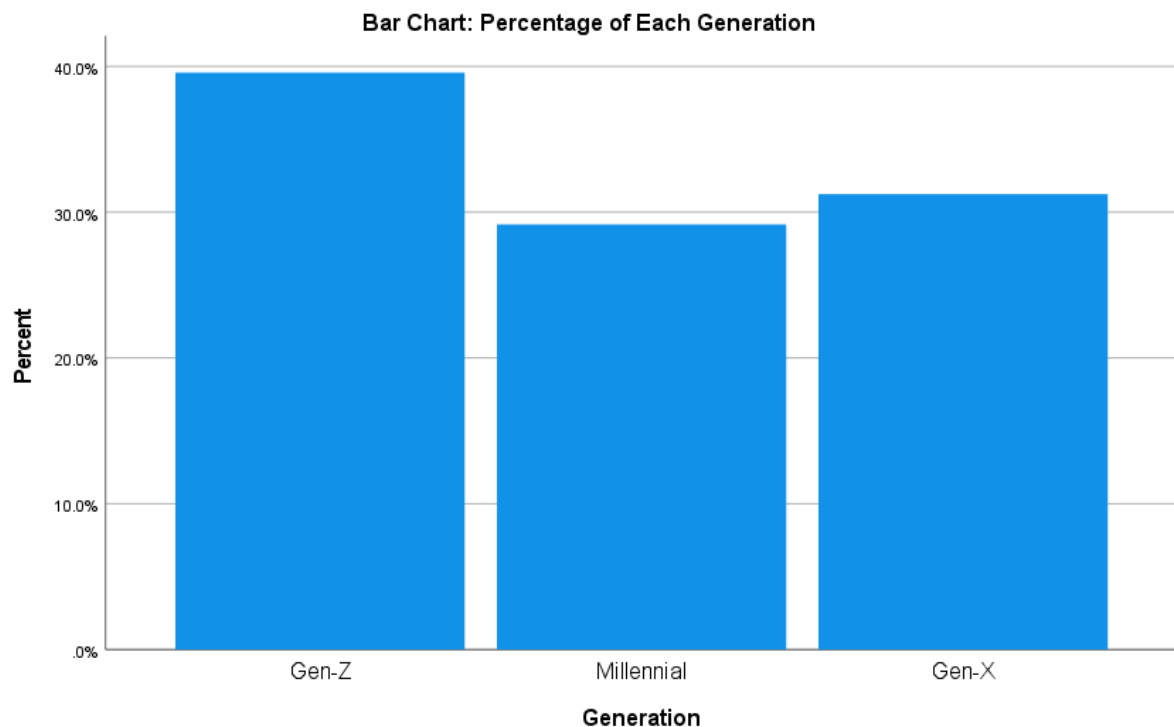
Background

48 participants took part in this study, with 19 participants being gen z, 14 being millennial, and 15 being gen x. All participants came from a range of industry backgrounds, and all are either currently working in Ireland or have previously been working in Ireland.

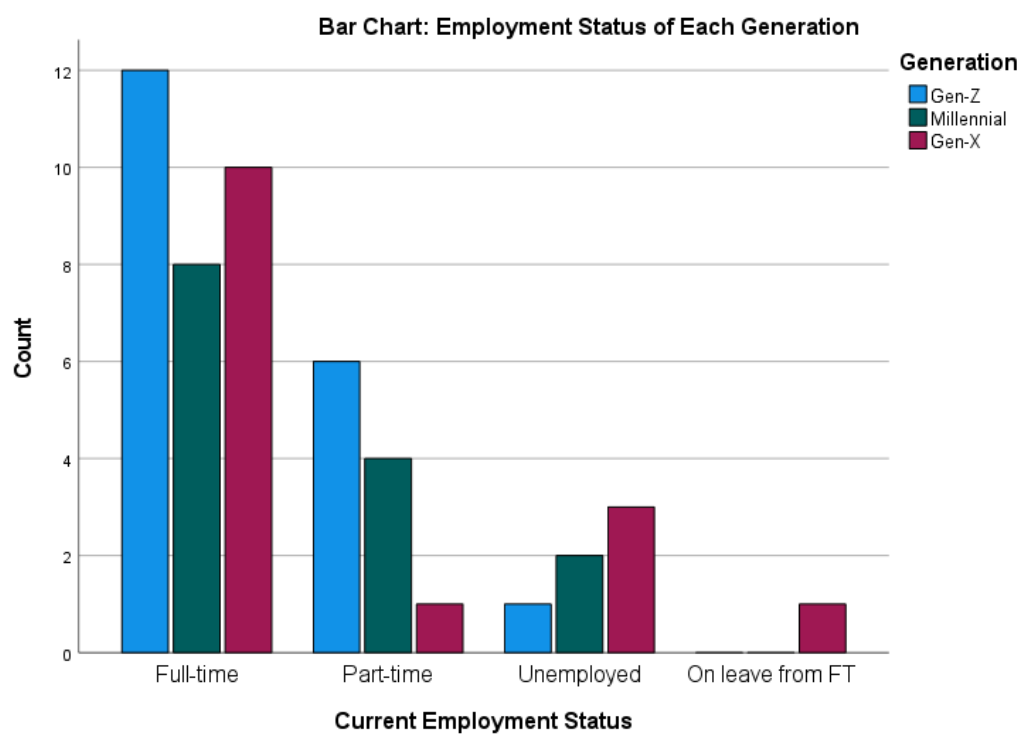
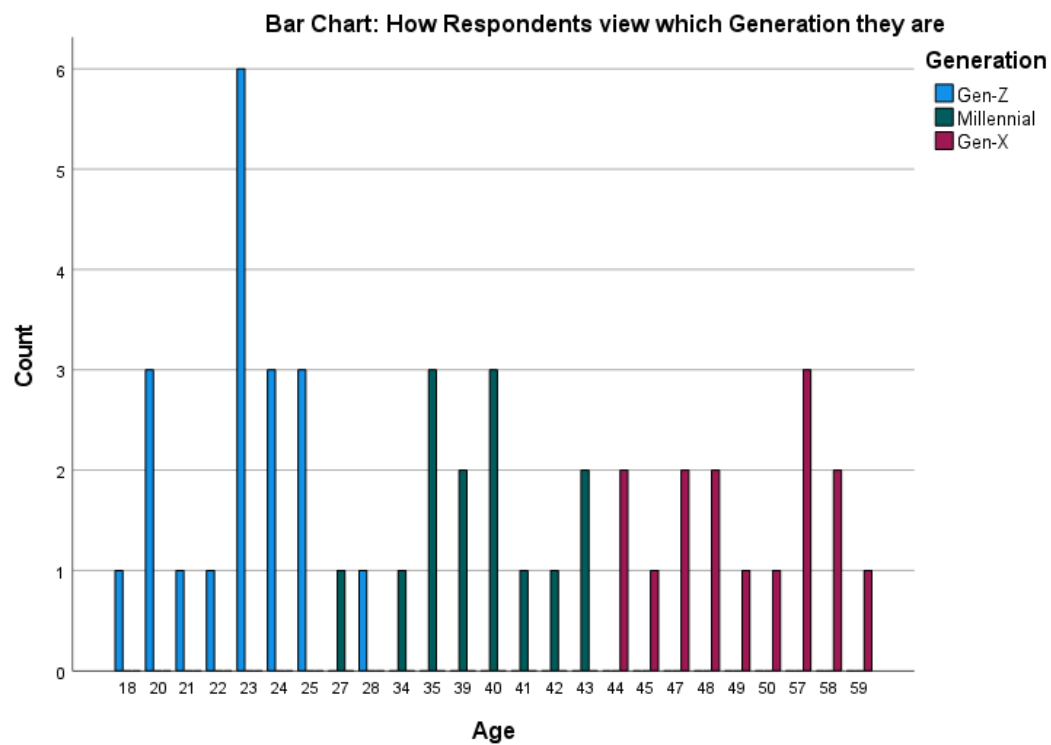
Mixed Method Approach

For this research, with the use of both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher had decided first to analyse the variables with bar graphs in IBM SPSS to visually show the quantitative and carried out chi-square tests of independence on the relationships between them. For qualitative analysis, the researcher further carried out thematic analysis on the responses in which required participants to give descriptive answers of their personal experiences and opinions.

Bar chart representing amount per group

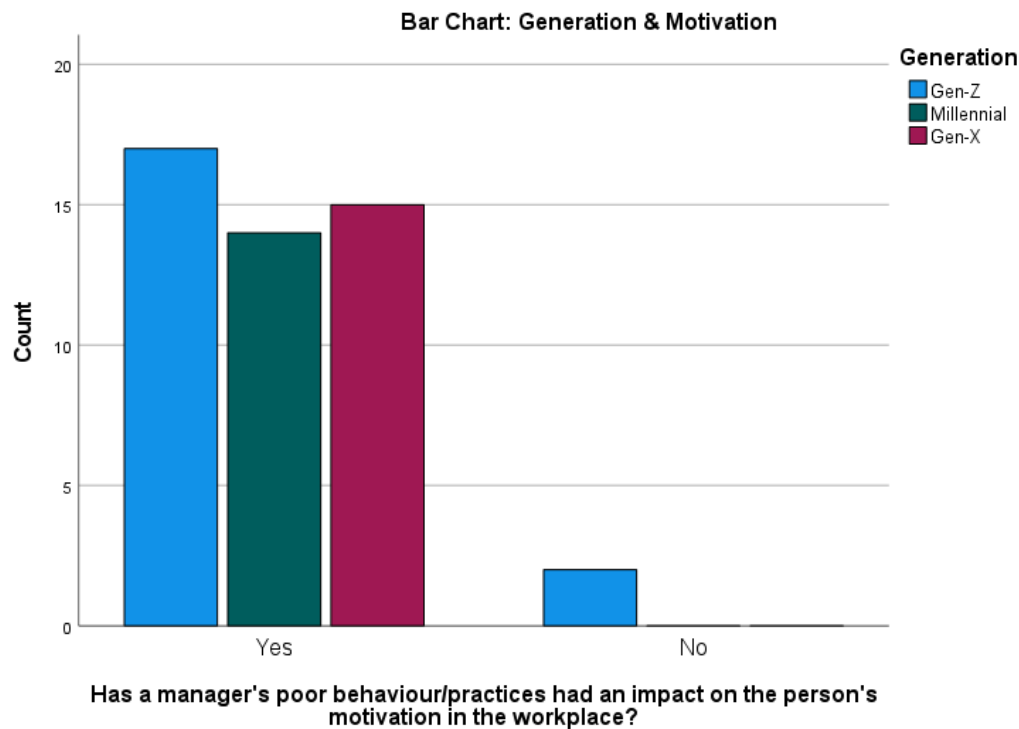


The bar charts below were created via IMB SPSS which shows the percentage of participants by each generation.



Theme 1: The Significant Similarities on how Poor Managerial behaviours effect the Motivation of gen z and millennials in comparison to gen x in the Irish workplace

A Quantitative and Qualitative Approach



Quantitative Approach to measure the impact of Motivation using Chi-Squared Test

The researcher conducted a Chi-Square test of independence in IBM SPSS to determine the significance of the relationship between generation and whether a manager had ever had an impact on their motivation in the workplace.

The researcher found that there was no significant association between generation and whether they believed that a manager had affected their motivation in work, but rather it was similar among all three groups, with the significance being .203 meaning that the null was accepted with $p \geq 0.05$. This means that the belief that managers impact motivation is not dependent on generation.

Analysis of Motivation Continued: Qualitative Approach Using Thematic Analysis

Participants were asked to describe their experiences if they agreed or disagreed that poor managerial behaviours effected their motivation. The managerial impact on motivation was significantly similar for all generations, bar those two participants who had said that poor managerial behaviours have not impacted their motivation in which were two male gen z, one working in aviation and the other in warehousing.

Identifying Main Themes under Motivation

It was evident that from analysing the qualitative data that there were common themes among the groups that which clearly identified no significant difference. When asked as to how managers affected their motivation, gen z and millennial l as well as gen x participants had common and recurring answers. These included: 1. a lack of recognition and positive feedback, 2. bullying and intimidation which resulted in a lack of a desire to work and trust in managers and 4. being uninspired to reach their full potential.

[Lack of Recognition and positive feedback from Managers leads to a similar Lack of Motivation among all three Groups](#)

All participants except for two had agreed that poor managerial behaviours effected their motivation. For those that agreed, the vast majority had mentioned that a lack of recognition for their efforts had made them become increasingly unmotivated in their roles. They felt increasingly underappreciated which led them to lose interest. Along with a lack of recognition came the lack of positive feedback, where all generational groups had discussed the issue of only receiving negative feedback and how this had a significant effect on their attitudes to work.

[Bullying and Intimidation seriously effect individuals which leads to a lack of trust in managers and a desire to work](#)

Descriptions of bullying and intimidation from managers and how it results in a lack of motivation were also extremely common among all three groups. While this may come as no surprise, it is interesting to note as to just how common it is for all people of all ages regardless of work industry. It is important to note that those working in public service, retail, hospitality and telecommunications mentioned bullying and intimidation the most, all of which were from individuals that belonged to each of the three generational groups.

Micromanagement was recurring in relation to motivation also, as well as the poor treatment of staff from management such as being generally rude, shouting at employees, a significant lack of professionalism, and acting as an authoritarian figure, which lead to individuals to be upset and distressed in work. These negative attitudes lead to employees across all three generations to lack a significant amount of trust in their managers, which thus effected their motivation and desire to work for them.

In terms of intimidation from management, many respondents had mentioned that managers had used intimidation tactics as way to control them. Many of whom recounted experiences intimidation. One individual, a female gen z working in telecommunications, wrote that when a manager had told her to do something that she was not scheduled to do, they threatened her

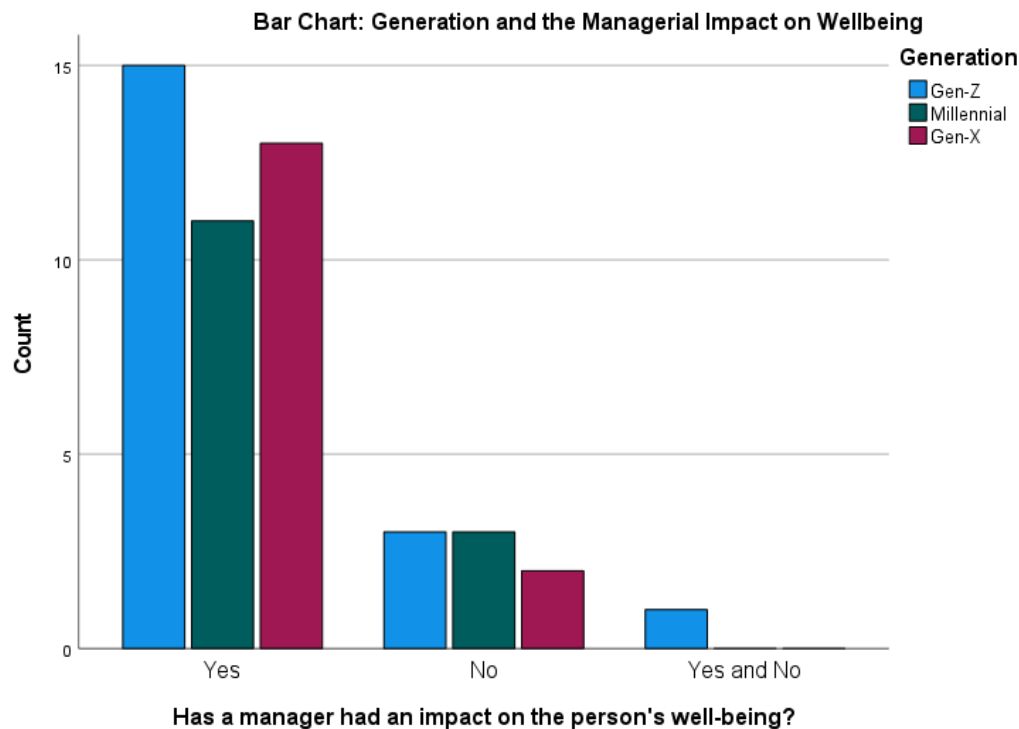
with a written warning. Additionally, there were many situations among respondents of managers speaking to them in a threatening and intimidating manner.

The Common belief among Gen Z and Millennials that Managers do not Inspire Employees to reach their full Potential

From looking at the data, there were some gen z and millennials that had mentioned that their managers, whether in a past or a current workplace, had not inspired them to progress or even to reach their fullest potential. One female gen z working in the public service wrote that she practically had to beg to do courses and to be upskilled to the point where she had felt discouraged and stopped asking her manager for assistance. Similarly, a female millennial working in the IT industry wrote that there was no assistance given when she wanted to progress in her career. Furthermore, a male gen z working in telecommunications felt as though his work efforts were meaningless, as managers did not seem to care for staff to reach their full potential. In terms of managers acting as an example for employees, a male gen z who had previously worked in the service industry wrote that it was difficult to feel inspired when his manager was also not inspired and motivated to carry out tasks, he further added that it was difficult to be inspired when the manager did not seem to care greatly for the outcome. Additionally, a female millennial working in the hospitality sector wrote that it was her belief that if managers do not care a great deal about an outcome, then there should not be a great expectation among staff members to care a great deal also.

Theme 2: The Attitudes towards to how Managers effect Wellbeing are Similar among Gen-Z, Millennials and Gen-X but Can differ amongst Sectors

A Quantitative and Qualitative approach



Quantitative Approach to measuring the Impact on Wellbeing amongst generation using Chi-Square Test of Independence

Like motivation, there seemed to no significant relationship between each generation and whether a manager had impacted their wellbeing, but rather it was a similar reading for all three generational groups. The chi-square test of independence gave a value of .753, which is significantly higher than that of 0.05. This means that $p \geq 0.05$ and that the null is accepted. The null in this instance is that there is no significant association between generation and the belief that poor managerial behaviours have had an impact on specific generations. In other words, it is not dependent on generation.

Analysis of Wellbeing Continued: Qualitative Approach Using Thematic Analysis

Like motivation, participants were asked to further describe their experiences in relation to whether a manager has had an impact on their wellbeing. In relation to wellbeing, more participants had disagreed that manager(s) had had an impact on wellbeing than motivation. This was a mix of all generations over a multitude of industries. Four participants had disagreed, a female gen z, two male gen z, to which one responded that while he has felt undervalued, he found that his wellbeing had never been affected by a manager, a millennial and a gen x. It was found however, that there was a link between the negative impact on wellbeing and sectors.

Identifying Main themes under Wellbeing

Stress, Anxiety and feeling Undervalued and the Similarities amongst all Generations

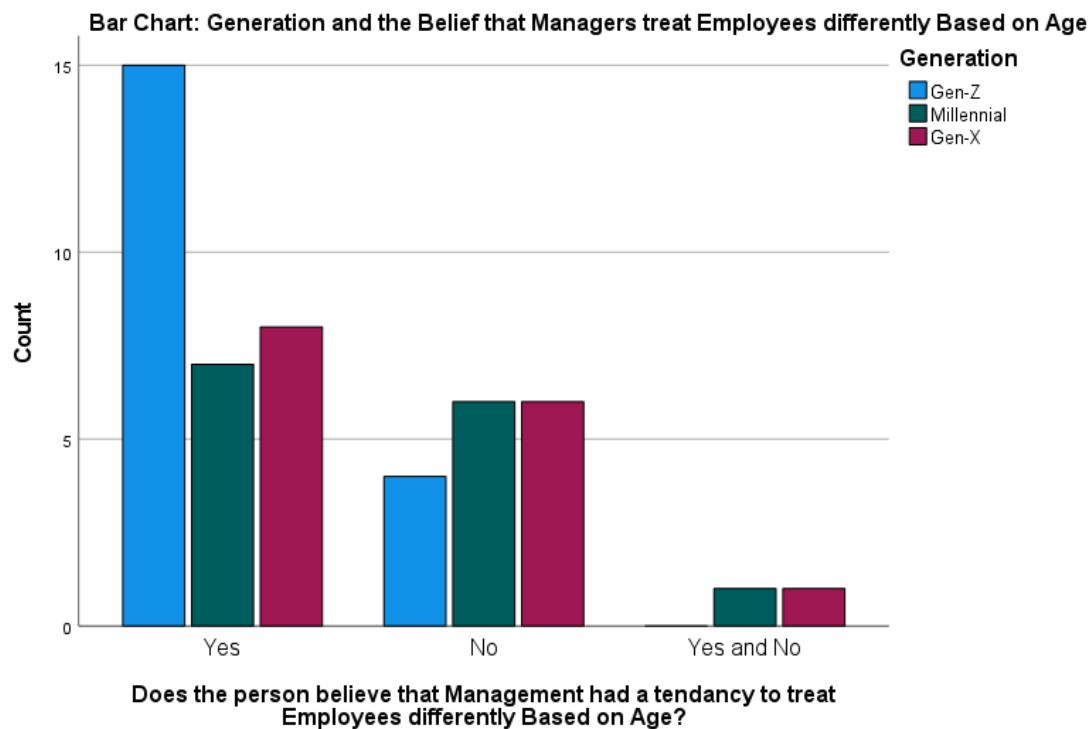
For those that agreed that a manager had impacted their wellbeing in either a past or present workplace, the vast majority had mentioned stress and anxiety. Stress and anxiety were brought up multiple times and varied among all three generations. One individual, a female millennial working in healthcare, had described her experience of having extreme headaches and vomiting as a direct result of a manager's impact on her wellbeing. Another respondent, a female gen z working in the public sector, said that her stress and anxiety had led to a negative impact on her overall performance in work. A male gen x employee working in pharmaceuticals, mentioned that he found the extreme workload from management to be overwhelming, and to make matters worse, he and his colleagues had a camera put over their work area. Additionally, a male gen x in the public sector found that there was no genuine appreciation for the work that he and his colleagues did, rather the managers that he worked with were more interested in their status as senior managers and how things looked from an outside perspective.

The Link between Managers and the negative Impacts of Wellbeing in Relation to Industry

From analysing the data, there seems to be a very evident link between negative managerial impacts on wellbeing and sector of work. Those industries in which respondents were mostly negatively affected were the public service, retail, hospitality, healthcare, and telecommunications. The individuals who did not find that poor managerial behaviours impacted their wellbeing were mainly found in industries such as education and IT. The public service industry mainly consisted of gen x employees working full-time, the retail and hospitality industries mainly consisted of gen z and millennials working both part-time and full-time, healthcare had mostly gen x employees but also some millennials, and both gen z and millennials in telecommunications. The individuals in the sectors in which were impacted the most, described more situations in relation to stress, anxiety, experiencing bullying from managers and feeling under appreciated.

Theme 3: The belief that Managers tend to treat Employees differently Based on Age

A Qualitative and Quantitative Approach



Chi-Square Test of Independence: Analysing if there is a Relationship between Generation and the Belief that Managers treat employees differently based on Age

Using a chi-square test of independence, the researcher also compared the belief that managers treated differently employees based on age. Under Pearson's test, the value of significance was .389, suggesting that there was no significant association. This means that we accept the null with $p \geq 0.05$ and can conclude that the belief on whether managers treat employees differently based on age is not dependent on generation.

The Treatment of Employees Based on Age Continued: A Qualitative Approach using Thematic Analysis

Identifying Main Themes

Gen-Z believe that Managers tend to Treat younger Employees more unfairly Based on Age

Despite the lack of significance using the chi-square test of independence, it is important to look at the responses from participants to gain a qualitative assumption. From analysing the survey data through themes, it was evident that more gen z employees believed that managers tended to treat employees differently based on age than millennial or gen x. There was a significant gap between gen z and the two other groups. While of course it must be reiterated that this study's largest generational group in which took part were gen z, there were only five respondents in the difference. Nonetheless, both gen-z and millennials were the groups with the highest number of respondents that agreed.

Gen-Z and Millennial employees in the Retail and Hospitality Industries Believe that Managers treat younger employees differently based on Age the most

The most common sectors among both gen-z and millennials were retail, hospitality, telecommunications, and public service. From theme 2 of this analysis and findings section, the researcher found that there was a link between how managers can affect wellbeing and sector, to which it was found that generation can be linked to both also. It is quite similar for the treatment of employees based on age, as when we consider that most gen-z and millennials are in the retail, hospitality, telecommunications and public sector we can see a pattern. Those participants in which agreed were mainly from the retail and hospitality industries.

Gen-Z and Millennials personal experiences of being Treated unfairly in Comparison to other Employees

From looking at the experiences of participants under the survey questions regarding if the person believes that their manager treats employees differently based on age, there are a few common reasons that are recurring. For gen-z and millennials, the biggest indicator is that they believe that managers tend to take older employees more seriously. They oftentimes can feel overlooked and forgotten about and that their voice does not seem to matter. A female millennial respondent working in healthcare wrote that a manager would oftentimes overlook the ideas of younger employees and would sometimes 'laugh off' their ideas. Similarly, a male gen-z working in the hospitality industry for over eight years wrote that he had seen instances of older staff members being trusted to carry out tasks although younger employees had more experience. A female gen-z working in hospitality recounted an experience of a manager that did not believe her when she had told her of an incident that had occurred, the manager had gone to an older staff member, and it was then that the manager believed that the occurrence took place. This made the female gen-z to feel as though she could not be taken seriously by her manager.

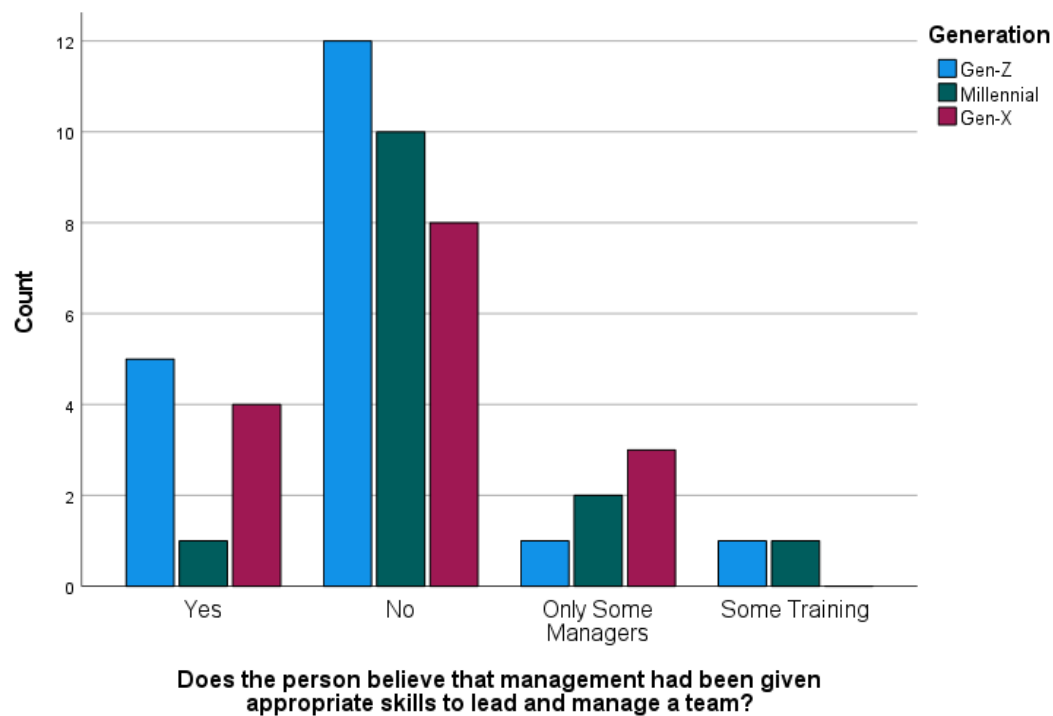
Gen x respondents and the Attitudes to the Assumption that Managers treat younger Employees differently

The survey found that most gen-x respondents described no experience of managers treating younger employees unfairly, or that they themselves were treated unfairly based on their own ages as gen-x employees. However, the argument that younger employees are treated more unfairly than that of older generations is an opinion that was also seen among respondents that were gen-x. A female gen-x who has been working in the retail industry had explained that employees who are younger, such as gen-z, are treated, in her own words “far worse” than older employees. Like this, a male gen-x working in pharmaceuticals wrote that oftentimes managers would completely overlook younger employees and their opinions. Additionally, a female gen-x working in the healthcare industry as a nurse wrote that it was very common knowledge that older nurses on wards would typically not take the concerns of younger nurses as seriously as those older. However, it is important to consider that in some instances, predominately depending on sector, managers may listen to older employees more due to the level of experience they have. One male gen-x working in the public sector had explained that because his field is quite technical, those younger that have just graduated from college or university would not have the same amount of experience as those older and have been working in the sector for many years, meaning that managers would of course in this instance, consider the opinions of older employees more so. There is no doubt that there could very well be a genuine difference between being unfair and treating young employees more poorly than listening to the opinions of older more experienced employees when it comes to completing tasks and projects in work. Some respondents had also written that they believed whether a manager would treat an employee differently based on age depended on them as an individual and as a manager.

From analysing the data, there seems to be three main takeaways:

1. Gen z and millennials are the groups in which believe managers treat younger employees more unfairly the most.
2. Gen z and millennials that are working or who have worked in the retail and hospitality sectors believe that managers tend to treat younger employees more unfairly the most.
3. Most gen x respondents did not describe experiences of seeing this in the workplace, but a minority of them had agreed.

Theme 4: The belief that Managers had not been given the Appropriate Skills to lead and manage a team relates strongly to Sector but not to Generation alone



Chi-Square of Independence: Analysing if there is a Relationship between Generation and the Belief that Managers had been given the Appropriate skills to lead and manage a Team

The researcher conducted a chi-square test of independence to test if there was a significant relationship between generation and the belief that managers had the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team. The chi-square test of independence gave a significance of .590 which again, is significantly larger than 0.05. This means that the null is accepted with $p \geq 0.05$ and that the belief that managers had not been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team is not dependent on generation.

The belief that Management has the Appropriate Skills to lead and manage a team continued: Qualitative Approach using thematic analysis

It was evident from the survey responses that most participants did not believe that management had the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team. In terms of each group, all three significantly disagreed, with gen-z having the most, followed by millennials, and then gen-x. While generation were a strong indication, it was not completely evident through generation alone. From looking at previous data, it is evident that sector also had a significant determination in the opinions of each generation.

From analysing responses, there was a clear link between past or present line of work, generation, and whether the person believed managers had been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team. When considering retail, hospitality and the public service for example, both gen-z and millennials dominated each of these groups. These industries were linked the highest to those in which respondents believed did not have the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team. That is not to say however, that gen-x respondents in these sectors only disagreed, but rather the responses show that that most of those individuals working in these sectors were gen-z and millennial respondents.

Industries such as IT, education, healthcare and social care, saw the majority, if not all to be gen-x. These were the industries in which individuals did not express the believe that managers had not had appropriate skills, rather they had expressed the opposite. This could indicate that these industries had a direct link to appropriate skill training.

Theme 5: Gen-Z and Millennial employees value different managerial skills in comparison to Gen-X but all three view the Attitudes to Work in Ireland to be the same

When asked as to what managerial skills they valued the most in the workplace, there was a very visible variety among all three groups. When analysing and grouping the answers, the researcher found that gen-z and millennial employees seem to value managers who express empathy, compassion and encourage career growth, whereas while gen-x agree with gen-z and millennial respondents, the vast majority of gen-x wrote that trust, respect, and recognition were important managerial traits to them. In relation to all three as whole, there was a significant emphasis on the importance of feeling valued, and the desire for managers to express their gratitude for employees. All three also desire managers who genuinely care for employee wellbeing.

In terms of how they view the attitudes to work in Ireland today, the consensus among groups was that employees in Ireland today value a work life balance with flexible working hours and want a career in which suits their life goals. The desire for fair treatment was also reiterated, with respondents from all three of the groups expressing that favouritism seems to very common in workplaces, and that managers must learn to value and treat all employees. The issues surrounding motivation also came up, to which some respondents had wrote that they would feel more motivated if they had felt more valued by their managers.

Chapter 6

Discussion

The importance of understanding employee needs to improve motivation and wellbeing

From considering the findings from the research, it is evident that employees desire managers that show value, fairness, and express their gratitude for employee efforts. While this may come as no particular surprise, it is important to mention that this is evidently overlooked by many organisations in a variety of sectors in Ireland. It could be argued that this is something that has become almost too vague with not enough emphasis. Managers have goals and a schedule to achieve company targets and to encourage team members to do the same, but for this to happen, employees must be motivated themselves. The quantitative data showed no significance between generation and motivation and wellbeing, but rather it proved that it effected all generations similarly. When looking at motivation and wellbeing and how managers impact them through the qualitative data, it was evident that feeling undervalued, feeling as though management engaged in favouritism, not expressing gratitude for employees, bullying, and the lack of encouragement for employee career progression all contributed to feeling unmotivated and, in some cases, impacted their wellbeing.

When linking this back to scholarly works, it is evident from past research that employee wellbeing and employee productivity are both hugely affected by the lack of understanding of employee needs. When understanding gen-z and millennial employees, it was evident from the findings that these two groups in particular value managers who act as mentors and encourage career growth, managers who are actively engaged with them and show support, and managers who show empathy and compassion. Revuru and Bandaru (2024) discuss how the impact of managers can have a profound effect for sustaining engagement in the workplace for gen-z employees. From their own study, the authors also found that gen-z value managers who encourage career growth and act as mentors, who show empathy, value the importance of a work-life balance for their employees, show appreciation for the work of their employees, and do not put too much pressure on employees to achieve targets. Additionally, Lee, Aravamudhan, Roback, Hyoun and Ruane (2021) similarly found that gen-z employees are more motivated when leaders and managers are engaging in transformational leadership, one in which is consistently developing and evolving to suit the demographic of employees. They found that gen-z employees tend to value managers who understand their wants and desires in the workplace, such as that like a work-life balance. Lee et al., (2021). This study reiterates the idea of the importance having leaders and managers who inspire gen-z employees to reach their full potential, show empathy, and understand the important factors to them, such as a work-life balance. This way, motivation and productivity can be increased. In terms of what the researcher's study has highlighted, is the idea that more gen-z employees felt as though they were treated more unfairly by managers than other employees in other generational groups in their workplace. However, this can depend on sector and does not

necessarily mean that managers cannot trust older and experienced employees, but rather it is more of an issue regarding gen-z employees being poorly treated.

It was found from the study that Irish gen-z and millennial employees have similar beliefs in terms of what managerial traits they deem as important. Like gen-z, millennial respondents appreciate managers who encourage career growth and for employees to reach their full potential, show empathy, and understand employee desire for a work-life balance. When referring to Wood (2019), who writes that millennials will oftentimes leave a workplace in which they do not feel comfortable in or one that does not fit in with their career goals, it was also evident from this research that Irish millennial are no exception. In relation to motivation, the researcher of this study found that Irish millennial employees, like gen-z, value a mentor-type relationship with managers. In their research, Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) found that millennial employees tend to like open communication with their supervisors and managers, in which they value managers who give them feedback. Knapp (2017) also writes that millennials enjoying collaborating and engaging with managers. This idea that millennials value feedback and managers that encourage their growth in the workplace was also found in this study. In terms of motivation and wellbeing, it would be beneficial for Irish workplaces to implement ways in which managers and millennial employees could have supervisory relationships. This could potentially improve job satisfaction which could lead to an increase in motivation and positive wellbeing among millennials. Interestingly however, Knapp (2017) writes that gen-z employees value their independence whereas it is millennials who value teamwork. The researcher of this study in relation to the Irish context found that both groups valued managers who acted as mentors and acted as a guide. This could potentially be a grey area in which can be researched further.

When considering the findings, Irish gen-x employees' motivation and wellbeing was found to be impacted by not having recognition or not being showed appreciation for work efforts from managers. It was found from the research that gen-x employees in Irish workplaces value positive feedback and employee recognition. When comparing this to the literature found, Agrawal (2017) wrote that gen-x generally value job security in comparison to other generations and have higher levels of organisational commitment. This idea that gen-x value recognition could very well be linked to the idea that they are typically more committed to their organisation, and desire managers who praise their efforts and dedication to their job roles in return. From analysing survey responses among Irish gen-x employees, there was a clear indication that these individuals put emphasis on recognition and praise and almost felt a sense of resentment towards managers who did not give positive feedback or any praise for their work. Additionally, Meechan and Wonglorsaichon (2024) found that in terms of workplace burnout, gen-x employees' burnout was a direct cause of a lack of self-esteem and being emotional exhausted. In terms of gen-x in the Irish context, this was quite similar, as respondents found their motivation and wellbeing to be significantly affected by the lack of recognition and positive feedback. Irish companies could look to implement employee recognition schemes in which could ultimately improve the motivation and positive wellbeing of its gen-x employees.

A Discussion on trusting young employees and the benefits of this

The survey asked respondents whether they believed from their own experience if managers had treated employees differently based on age. From the responses, respondents from all generations agreed but it was predominantly evident that the majority of gen-z and millennials, but mostly gen-z, agreed that that managers treat employees differently based on age. Those gen-z that agreed, all believed that younger employees were treated more unfairly than those older than them. While of course it is important to mention that all employees of all ages can experience poor treatment from managers, which in fact has already been seen from the survey responses, most gen-x employees that were involved in this survey said that they had not seen a manager treat an employee any different due to their age. However, four gen-x respondents did write that those younger employees, such as gen-z and millennials, were more inclined to be treated more unfairly in the workplace than other employees. In the findings and analysis section of this study, the researcher had discussed that they had found that this had a link to specific sectors. Some respondents had mentioned that in their industry, particularly those technical, those with more experience were more so trusted with more projects due to their wealth of knowledge over those employees who were fresh out of college or university. Arguably, there is a vital difference between trusting more experienced employees with tedious tasks than outwardly treating those younger in a poor manner.

There was, to a certain extent, a link between the negative treatment of employees and the sector of employment. For example, it was found those in industries such as retail, the public service, hospitality, healthcare and telecommunications had experienced this more than others. However, it must be reiterated that most people that took part in the survey were in those industries, that excludes the individuals that took part that also agreed but were or are working in other sectors such as the service industries, social care, IT, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, and transport.

From the qualitative findings, it was clear from the experiences of gen-z, millennial and gen-x employees that those younger were, in their experiences, not taken as seriously and more so treated unfairly in comparison to older generations. It has already been mentioned that poor treatment of young employees such as gen-z and millennials does not specifically look like managers trusting more experienced staff to carry out certain projects, but rather it is more so to do with the undermining of them and having a lack of trust in their motives as employees. There are multiple stereotypes that may come along with younger employees, especially gen-z and millennials who may often be seen as 'lazy' due to their want for a work life balance. However, if managers in organisation give these employees more responsibility and trust, while simultaneously understanding their desires, it could increase their job satisfaction. Having a manager that is trustworthy and encouraging is essential for all employees, but it could be beneficial for Irish organisations in the long run if they incorporate plans for younger employees. Yuvasree and Rajeswari (2022) write that if gen-z, millennial and gen-x employees utilise their individual talents and work closely, organisations could see huge benefits. While the majority of gen-z and millennial employees do not see themselves working in the same organisation for the rest of their lives, Yuvasree and Rajeswari (2022) suggest employee development or improvement programmes in which can help younger employees to develop their skills further which could potentially make them feel like more valued employees and possibly inspire them to stay in the organisation.

Upskilling seemed to be important for those gen-z and millennials working in industries such as the public service, whereas a manager with empathy and compassion seemed to be important for those in industries such as retail and hospitality. It would be potentially beneficial for companies to create a survey for their gen-z and millennial employees to gain an understanding of their level of job satisfaction, and employee opinions regarding as to where they can improve going forward.

A discussion on the importance of managerial people skills

Managerial training and the idea of learning the skills to lead and manage a team of people may be a good idea for organisations. While managers may be skilled in reaching targets, there sometimes may be not enough emphasis on people management and the skills that come along with this. Skills such as effective communication, showing empathy, and listening are also important, and arguably they have become almost too vague for organisation to implement and managers to follow. We may know that these skills are important, but from day to day they may not be implemented properly due to several factors such as time pressure, in which can have the possibility of creating stress, annoyance and frustration among employees and managers. When creating the survey, the researcher asked respondents if they believed that a past or present manager had been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team, to which the researcher gave examples of such skills including effective communication, empathy, listening and accountability. Out of the forty-eight respondents in the survey, only three wrote that they believed that either a past or present manager had been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team. The other forty-five participants believed that they had not been given the appropriate people skills. These individuals were from a wide range of sectors. This sparks questions regarding the possible implementation of mandatory managerial training. While some organisations in Ireland may already have managerial training activities and programs, it would potentially be beneficial for all sectors to consider implementing this.

In relation to the literature, there have been questions regarding these specific set of skills and their importance for decades. regardless of whether they are openly spoken about or not. Morand (2001) wrote that traits such as empathy and listening are deemed as almost central to management and are almost an unwritten factor to managerial practices. These skills are unwritten and are at the core of people management, thus suggesting that they may not be as discussed as other managerial skills such as technical or problem solving which are probably seen more in day-to-day managerial activities. The idea of soft and hard skills has been discussed by many researchers. For example, Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht and Lee (2010) describe soft skills as unseen and include traits such empathy and social skills, whereas hard skills are seen as more administrative, strategic, and technical. The difficulty regarding soft skills is that they are largely believed to do with human development rather than having the ability to learn them. Levasseur (2010) wrote that it can be a challenge for managers to gain these new skills, as having a desire to learn soft skills is easier than acquiring them. While traits such as empathy and listening can largely depend on personality and the environment of human development, the researcher of this study argues that the implementation of people skills training programmes for managers could still be widely beneficial in the Irish context. From looking at the responses from the survey, there seems to be a large group of managers

across a variety of industries that may lack these soft skills in Ireland. The researcher does not believe that each of these managers necessarily lacked empathy and compassion, but rather it could depend on the pressure from organisations put on managers to achieve targets. From the findings, the researcher of this study argues that organisations may want to undergo their own research regarding employee job satisfaction and the issue surrounding the lack of soft skills among management. This could have the potential to be implemented by the Irish government as part of an investigation into employee wellness in Ireland. Depending on the findings, organisations could implement managerial training on these soft skills, and this could potentially be supported by government bodies.

It is no doubt that these unseen skills are vital for people management in Ireland, and the research shows that there is room for improvement. Change and the implementation of managerial training among different sectors in Ireland is a huge task, one that may take years to implement. There needs to be more research conducted regarding specific sectors to measure employee job satisfaction among those of different generations. The quantitative data has shown that there may not be a significant link between motivation and wellbeing and generation, but there is a link between sectors. Additionally, the qualitative data and personal experiences of people who are or have worked in Ireland shows that there is a significant level of unhappiness in our organisations. Improving this further is largely up to the organisations themselves, and many factors must be considered. The first step is to gain an understanding of the levels of motivation and the state of employee wellbeing and how much of this is dependent on managers, to which the organisations can then decide if they believe it to be sufficient (Levasseur, 2010) (Dixon, et al., 2010) (Febriana, et al., 2024) to introduce the managerial training of people skills.

Conclusion

This research set out to explore as to how poor managerial behaviours impact the motivation and wellbeing of gen-x and millennial employees in comparison to gen-x in Ireland. The researcher found a significant gap in the Irish context in relation to the study of generations and the influence of negative managerial behaviours. In terms of the main questions set out, the researcher wanted to find if there was any significant difference between younger generations, such as, in this case, gen-z and millennials, and an older generation such as gen-x in Ireland. Many scholars have discussed the differences in what different generations want out of their job roles on an international level, and the researcher of this study wanted to investigate how poor managerial behaviours impacted them differently in the Irish context. Additionally, the researcher wanted to collect and analyse the personal experiences of respondents to produce in-depth findings and a discussion on the topic.

In relation to motivation and wellbeing, the researcher found that there was no direct link between the impacts of poor managerial behaviours and either of the three generations. When considering this more broadly, there was no link between those of younger generations such as gen-z and millennials and those of an older generation like gen-x. The researcher did however find that this was more so related to the sector of employment with most respondents that agreed to be working in industries such as hospitality, retail, the public service, healthcare and telecommunications. However, it should be noted that they were the most popular sectors in which respondents were or are still employed in, thus suggesting that if there had been more respondents it could have changed the finding slightly. Moreover, the researcher did not find a significant comparison between generation and the belief that managers had been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage a team, but rather this was widely shared among all generations in most sectors. In terms of the belief that managers tend to treat employees differently based on age and how this relates to the views of the three generations, gen-z and millennial mostly wrote that young employees are oftentimes treated more unfairly due to their age. However, there was no significant difference as some gen-x participants also agreed that they found younger employees to oftentimes be forgotten about or undermined in their workplace. Lastly the researcher found that while these generations want to work in a positive workplace with a healthy environment, it was found that they desire this differently, with gen-z and millennial employees valuing mentorship, empathy and compassion from managers, and gen-x valuing positive feedback and appreciation.

The researcher believes that this study has contributed to a wider argument on the effects of negative managerial behaviours on specific generations in the Irish context and believes that they have found significant findings in which could be of help to future research. Looking back, the researcher has found that they would have been interested in investigating gen-z, millennial, and gen-x employees in the retail, hospitality or public sectors and how managerial behaviours impact those individuals specifically. This is mainly because those working in those industries seemed to detail more negative experiences than positive.

Recommendations for future study

For future study, the researcher would recommend an investigation into specific sectors in Ireland. While this study has given an insight into a variety of sectors on a national level, an exploration into individual sectors could give a more in-depth look into how poor managerial behaviours effect employees in Ireland. While respondents in all industries gave an account of negative treatment, it was particularly common in select industries. In particular, the researcher found that motivation and wellbeing and the belief that managers had not been given the appropriate skills to lead and manage were in sectors such as hospitality, the public service, retail and healthcare. This could be a helpful starting point for those wishing to investigate this further. Similarly, there were several cases in which saw only one respondent from one sector. For example, there was only one respondent that worked in social care, a female gen-x who recounted her negative treatment and how this significantly impacted her motivation and wellbeing. This included other sectors such as the service industry, IT, pharmaceuticals and education. There are significant gaps for these sectors to be investigated also.

While the researcher was confident in their research tool, that is through a google forms survey, as it gave respondents anonymity and a platform to express their experiences comfortably, future researchers may want to undergo interviews to make sure that they are selecting an even number of individuals from each sector, gender, and work industry. This could help produce an even more thorough study.

CIPD Recommendations based on findings

Surveys

Based on their findings, the researcher suggests that organisations conduct surveys for employees to analyse how motivated they are and how they find managerial behaviours can affect their wellbeing. This means that organisations can see where they are in terms of how satisfied their demographic is with their workplace. From this, organisations can see the individuals that are affected.

The implementation of managerial training

Before an individual comes into a managerial role, it would be essential for them to undergo a short training on how to work with people of all ages and how to connect with employees based on their generation, the skills that are essential for managers such as communication and the importance of empathy in the workplace.

Employee recognition programmes

Organisations can introduce employee recognition programmes in which they give back to employees for their efforts. Employees of the month awards can be given on monthly basis where one employee from each department can become awarded each month. Organisations can also introduce annual awards. On a more regular basis, employee spotlights can be

introduced in which congratulates the achievements of some employees that week such as targets reached. This could improve the motivation and wellbeing of employees.

Mentorship programmes

The research found that younger employees such as gen-z, tend to appreciate managers who act as mentors and encourage career growth. Mentorship programmes between those that are new to the working world and those who are more experienced such as managers could work closely. The mentor could give advice on projects and career growth.

Timelines for implementations of recommendations

Surveys may not take too long to make, but it could take some time for executives to figure out what they want to know regarding their employees' job satisfaction. The drawing up of ideas and creating the survey could take between approximately 2-3 weeks.

In terms of managerial training, it could be mandatory for managers to undergo some training before beginning in their new role. This should be undertaken 2 weeks before they start. Manager should also undergo training days that take place each month.

Employee recognition

Employee of the month awards should be given each month; this could take some time in deciding what the employee should be given as an award. For example, does the organisation want to set aside funds for prizes such as gift vouchers? In terms of employee annual awards, this can take a couple of months to plan, and employee spotlight emails will need at least 2 weeks in advance to track employee targets.

Mentorship programmes

Creating mentorship programmes could take some time. The organisation will have to find managers or more experienced employees who feel comfortable to mentor a younger employee and give them some advice when needed. An online sign-up form could be sent around to managers and employees who have been working in the company for a significant period, in which they can put their names down and give a short description of why they want to sign up. This could take 2-3 months to draw up the form, gain responses, and to assign individuals to mentors.

Costings

Depending on the survey tool being used, the making of surveys should not be costly, especially when there are free options such as through google forms. In relation to employee recognition programmes, this can be quite costly depending on the size of the company. For example, in terms of employee awards for employees of the month, the company will have to set aside money for prizes, and this depends on how many employees are awarded. Additionally, annual employee awards can also be costly depending on the size of the event. Does the organisation want to rent out a hall for the evening? Will they have to set aside funds for a catering company if there will be a dinner? What prizes will there be given and how much will they cost? All factors must be taken into consideration. Managerial trainings will be quite costly, but they are highly beneficial for the organisation. Where will managers undergo training and who will train them? This will give an indication as to how much the company will have to set aside. Lastly, mentorship programs should not be costly, but it depends on whether the company want to create activities during the working day for the mentors and their employees.

CIPD Personal learning and reflective piece

Writing a dissertation has taught me a great deal about the research process. Firstly, in terms of the new information that I have found from my topic of interest, I have learned a great deal about what is important for a variety of Irish employees, especially gen-z, millennial and gen-x individuals, those whom this research is based upon. In terms of the research process overall however, it has taught me about the importance of research itself, why it is so important to read and critically analyse the opinions and works of other researchers before relating and comparing them to my own findings to support them. Research has taught me that oftentimes, I may have one single idea, but this can relate to so many other ideas, making the argument much more intricate than what was expected. During the process, I have oftentimes had an idea of what I want to write, but I may have come across a interesting argument that spurs me on to another argument and so on and so forth. This has meant that I have learned a great deal about the topic, much more than I expected to learn.

Practicing independent research has also given me the opportunity to grow as a researcher by giving me the opportunity to practice and put my critical thinking and time management skills to the test, and to push myself out of my comfort zone. It is a time consuming and tedious experience that requires patience, but it has made me much more confident I my abilities. Individual research contributes to a wider body of research, which is hugely significant, especially in the areas that have not been researched enough, this can act as a catalyst for future research and has given me a great sense of accomplishment. Researching a topic can be a rigorous and almost daunting task at times, but conducting my own research and completing my dissertation has been a rewarding experience.

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