

**UNDERSTANDING THE WORKPLACE  
EXPECTATIONS OF GENERATION Z  
QUANTITY SURVEYORS IN CONSULTANCY  
SERVICES WITHIN THE MALAYSIAN  
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

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**UNDERSTANDING THE WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS OF  
GENERATION Z QUANTITY SURVEYORS IN CONSULTANCY  
SERVICES WITHIN THE MALAYSIAN CONSTRUCTION  
INDUSTRY**

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**A project report submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science  
(Honours) Quantity Surveying**

**Lee Kong Chian Faculty of Engineering and Science  
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman**

**May 2024**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project report is based on my original work except for citations and quotations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously and concurrently submitted for any other degree or award at UTAR or other institutions.

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**APPROVAL FOR SUBMISSION**

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## ABSTRACT

Internationally, the construction industry is facing a shortage of quantity surveyors (QS). In particular, consultant firms are faced with the greatest challenge in retaining and attracting employees. As more Malaysians are seeking work overseas and older employees are reaching retirement ages, employers need to understand their newest workforce entrants, Generation Z (Gen Z). Therefore, this research aims to examine the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms of the Malaysian construction industry and suggest improvements for companies to retain their workforce. The objectives are (1) to identify the workplace expectations of employed Gen Z QS in consultant companies; (2) to interpret the effect of Gen Z QS's demographic aspects on their workplace expectations; (3) to assess the extent to which workplace expectations are met in the context of Gen Z QS working in consultant companies; and (4) to propose employee retaining strategies for consultant companies to retain their Gen Z QS workforce. Quantitative research method was used and data was collected with a pre-tested questionnaire. In total, 98 Gen Z QS employed in Malaysian consultant firms participated through convenience sampling method. The findings revealed that the most important workplace expectations are *racial equality*, *gender equality*, *job security*, *adequate paid leave* and *mentoring*. Inferential tests revealed that various demographic factors had significant effects on which workplace expectations were more important, such as *females* prioritised *feedback*, *engagement of creative and innovative ideas* and *clear expectations*. Findings further revealed that many important workplace expectations were only *Somewhat Achieved* by consultant firms with only eight (8) workplace expectations were *Somewhat Neglected* by employers. The six (6) most attractive retention strategies were *provision of regular promotions and growth opportunities*, *job security*, *regular bonuses*, *training and development*, *high base salary* and *healthy work environment*. However, further study is required to overcome the limitations of the small and limited sample size to better represent the Malaysian Gen Z QS cohort.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Research Background

The importance of Malaysia's construction industry cannot be contested. Throughout 2022, Malaysia's construction industry has remained the fifth major contributor of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in all four quarters of the year (Ministry of Economy, 2022a; 2022b; 2022c; 2023). Beyond its effects to the economy, the construction industry serves as a pillar of social development in many aspects (Ofori, 2015). Its labour intensive nature provides employment opportunities for civilians of varying educational levels, single-handedly giving rise to multiple company types, such as the consultancy services where skilled labour such as Architects, Engineers and Quantity Surveyors (QS) are found and contractor firms where a mix of skilled and unskilled labour are employed. Therefore, it is imperative to ensure the construction industry continues to flourish and thrive.

This is especially true as the success of Malaysia's construction industry affects the growth and crippling of its GDP. In fact, as construction projects rely heavily on labour for its completion, the sensitive nature of the construction industry to economic cycles makes it more vulnerable to declines in economic activity that causes unemployment in nations (International Labour Organization, 2021). Historically, the issue of labour shortages are much more evident in economic shifts, such as the Great Depression in the 1930s, the rapid economic growth of China between 2008 and 2016, and the most recent Covid-19 pandemic (Barbosa et al., 2017; Hatoum et al., 2021). While the effects of COVID-19 are now echoes of the past, the Malaysian construction industry continues to face labour shortages up to 400,000 workers post-pandemic during 2022 (Rodzi, 2021).

The shortage of QS are becoming increasingly apparently in both public and private sectors internationally (Hee and Ling, 2011; Ranasinghe, Fernando and Gunarathna, 2014; Herman, 2016). The construction industry is understood as a workplace with poor working environment, poor salaries, poor rewards, and lacking job insecurity (Siti Nur Aishah Mohd Noor and Nadzirah

Zainordin, 2018). The wide range of high responsibility tasks of QS are already a toll to many, causing many QS to be unsatisfied with their work life due to more stress and work-life imbalance as compared to other construction professionals (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). Furthermore, they are more prone to work-life imbalance as their tasks with strict deadlines force many to work overtime or during weekends (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022).

Developed and developing countries alike such as North America, various countries in the Middle East, Australia, Ireland and the UK are lacking professional QS in the industry (Ogunsina, Obiegbu and Adeniyi, 2018; Gerrard, 2023; Goodbody, 2023; Irish Building, 2023; jnally, 2023). Malaysia is not excluded in their shortage of skilled labours, which brings concern to how the construction industry fares in the future (Tan, 2023). While there are limited resources that indicated Malaysia faced a shortage of QS, a trend of Malaysians seeking work overseas are on the rise. If left unchecked, the pool of human resource available in Malaysia will reach a critical and dire level for all industries (Tham, 2023; Yeap, 2024).

While this became a setback to the industry, the greatest impact was observed in consultant QS firms (Aishah Abdulla, 2018; Lewis, 2023). Many consultant QS firms in Malaysia primarily hire QS graduates and engage exclusively in providing services on cost and contract management with their QS employees. Therefore, the ramifications of lowered productivity and employee turnover are quickly observed (Siti Nur Aishah Mohd Noor and Nadzirah Zainordin, 2018).

This places an importance for employers to understand the expectations of their QS employees to successfully retain their employees. In such studies, researchers utilize generational groups to explore their different needs. It is prevalently known that different generational cohorts highlighted different workplace expectations to the table, such as Boomers giving rise to career and monetary rewards while Generation X (Gen X) sparking the work-life balance debate (Rajaendram, 2022).

Thus, when Generation Z (Gen Z) – the newest entrants to the workforce, became a hot topic for news agencies, it gained the public's attention. A large portion of news articles such as Mikaela Cohen's from

CNBC states that companies are struggling to engage with Gen Z workers, some going as far to show disdain and bafflement on Gen Z behaviours (Cohen, 2023). Other news articles take a more explorative approach, intending to understand who Gen Zs are, such as Elizabeth Faber (2023) from Fortune and Rebecca Rajaendram (2022) from The Star that took a investigative analysis on Gen Zs behaviours.

Table 1.1 below shows the generational difference in year of birth and ages. With this visual, it is observed that Gen X and Baby Boomers are reaching or already within the ages of retirement. In the coming future, the World Economic Forum anticipates Gen Z to represent 27% of the general workforce of OECD (Bloomgarden, 2022). Similarly, Malaysia has over 9 million Gen Zs that constitute to 30% of the total population, and expected to represent the new young adults by 2030 (Kee and Madden, 2018).

Table 1.1: Year of Birth and Current Ages of Generations.

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>	<b>Ages as of 2024</b>
Baby Boomers	1946 to 1964	60 to 78
X	1965 to 1980	44 to 59
Y (Millenials)	1981 to 1996	28 to 43
Z	1997 to 2012	12 to 27

Source: Dimock, 2019.

As such, the ability of companies to attract and retain Gen Z workers to take over their older employees' workload will prove critical for their survival. If organizations only focus on retaining current Baby Boomer and Gen X employees, the efforts of retaining, re-training, multiskilling and skill-matching them still poses as a short-term solution (Kim, Chang and Castro-Lacouture, 2020). Therefore, focus should be placed on recognising the needs of employees to further avoid high turnover rates. The efforts of re-hiring and re-training are observed to cost up to 150% of the departing employee's annual salary (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021).

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Companies unprepared for the demands of Gen Z workers will create a situation where potential Gen Z employees are unable to find a work place that provides a person-career fit in the construction industry (Van der Heijden and De Vos, 2015). If Malaysia's construction industry does not shift towards the impending change brought on by Gen Z, there will be a devastating outflow of labour towards other sectors. This will aggravate the current workforce shortage that is precarious to the construction industry's output and performance. In fact, it is known that Malaysian Gen Zs are shown to be more predisposed to enter the financial services industry to fulfill their entrepreneurial aspirations (Kee and Madden, 2018).

As such, importance must be placed onto construction industry employers on identifying and providing the expectations of the new entrants to enforce suitable retaining strategies.

To do so, companies need to understand the expectations held by these new entrants - Gen Z workers, to provide relevant incentives in attracting and retaining them. This is vital as different generations are shown to have varying attitudes, needs and preferences to employment, which will affect the different actions from employers to allow their employees to reach a "person-career fit" (Van der Heijden and De Vos, 2015). When employees' needs are achieved, they can contribute with higher productivity while maintaining higher levels of health, further attracting more talented potentials into the organization's workforce (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023).

A number of studies related to Gen Z has been conducted (Iorgulescu, 2016; Grow and Yang, 2018; Kee and Madden, 2018; Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021; Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023). Even so, there are limited studies carried out on understanding the expectations of profession-specific Gen Z within the Malaysian construction industry. In fact, there are limited studies regarding the work expectations of QS internationally. A noticeable gap has been found in which limited studies have sought to distinguish the workplace expectations of specific professions in the Malaysian construction industry, even lesser for QS.

Furthermore, limited studies account for the demographic factors that affect the work expectations held by these professionals. General employee

retention strategies have been studied for Gen Z, yet few strive to discover the retaining strategies that would benefit both employers and employees of Gen Z QS in the Malaysian construction industry. In particular, rarely are there studies aimed to understand the challenges and setbacks faced by QS internationally nor in Malaysia, not to mention towards Gen Z cohorts.

It is crucial to perform research on a specific group within a generation. Campbell et al. (2015) states generational boundaries are social constructs that are susceptible to stereotyping. Dimock (2019) also explains generational cohorts only enhance data sampling to limit differences across and within generations. There are always outliers, diversity and complexity within groups of populations (Dimock, 2019). Similarly in a horizontal perspective, it is unwise to conclude Malaysian Gen Z in different industries to hold the same priority of workplace needs and expectations. In fact, Gen Z QS should have differing workplace expectations than Gen Z Architects and Engineers. Hence, it is imperative to ensure research between profession-specific Gen Z within specified industries are done to avoid stereotypical bias.

This study will explore the workplace expectations of employed Gen Z QS in the construction industry's consultant firms to provide meaningful distinctions compared to the general Gen Z population. Furthermore, this study will aim to discover the effect of demographic aspects that influences their workplace expectations. An assessment will be done on which workplace expectations were met by employers of consultant companies. Moreover, retaining strategies will be proposed to retain Gen Z QS employed in consultant firms.

Through this research, a clear distinction of the specific work expectations of Gen Z QS can aid employers in implementing effective retaining strategies on their Gen Z employees.

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study was to examine the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms of the Malaysian construction industry and suggest improvements for companies to retain their workforce. The objectives of this research includes:

- (i) To identify the workplace expectations of employed Gen Z QS in consultant companies.
- (ii) To explore the effect of Gen Z QS's demographic aspects on their workplace expectations.
- (iii) To assess the extent to which workplace expectations are met in the context of Gen Z QS working in consultant companies.
- (iv) To propose employee retaining strategies for consultant companies to retain their Gen Z QS workforce.

#### 1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research focuses on the workplace expectation of Gen Z QS in the Malaysian construction industry. The target respondents were limited to employed QS of consultant companies in Malaysia only. This is due to consultant QS firms receiving the greatest impact compared to developer and contractor companies (Aishah Abdulla, 2018; Lewis, 2023). Furthermore, the responsibilities of QS in different company types are distinct, therefore requires a segregation to increase the accuracy of results of this research.

As of 2024, the age range of Gen Z is between 12 to 27 years old. Most of the population are students, however, the expected respondents applicable to this research will be fresh graduates around 20 to 27 years old, ranging from less than 1 year experience to 6 years' experience, due to different educational backgrounds.

#### 1.5 Research Methodology

The general research process is shown as in Figure 1.1. The flow of this study followed a literature review, continuing with research proposal, questionnaire design, data collection and analysis, lastly with conclusion and recommendations.

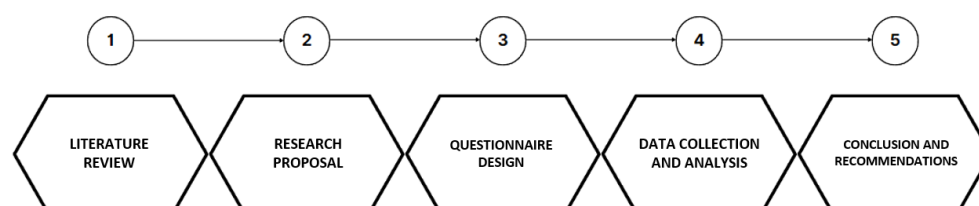


Figure 1.1: Research Process.

A literature review was first carried out to understand the gap within study topic's background. Issues faced within the Malaysian construction industry regarding QS was identified. The research proposal is drafted based as information was gathered during the literature review. The aim and objectives were determined. Further literature review was done on Gen Z, QS, their workplace expectations and the retention strategies of Gen Z employees.

Next, questionnaire design will refer the literature review done. The questionnaire will be pre-tested before officially distributed to collect respondents view on workplace expectations and retention strategies.

Data collection will proceed once a pilot test of a questionnaire is completed. Analysis on the collected data will be done to procure a reliable conclusion that links the independent variables suggested in this study.

The conclusion and recommendations phase will provide a summary of the analysed data and a conclusion of the achieved objectives. Limitations of this research will be identified to provide further recommendations to researchers aiming to carry out further study on related topics.

## **1.6 Outline of the Report**

Chapter 1 outlines the background of Gen Z and QS within the construction industry. This chapter also defined the problem statement, research aims and objectives, project scope and limitation, research process and all chapter outlines.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review to further understand Gen Z, QS, demographic factors, their relationship with work expectations and the retaining strategies of employees.

Chapter 3 justifies the research methods used in this research. An overview of research methods, research instruments, sampling designs and data analysis approaches will be detailed.

Chapter 4 will examine the relationships between the collected data. Different data analysis approaches listed in Chapter 3 will be used to interpret the primary and secondary data procured.



Chapter 5 will summarize all the findings of this research. The conclusion, limitations and recommendations for this research will be done.

### **1.7 Summary of Chapter**

In summary, the construction industry faces a shortage of QS due to reasons such as intensive responsibilities, job dissatisfaction, and work-life imbalance that contributed to organizational non-commitment and turnover. As such, employers need to learn the workplace expectations of these new entrants to find effective retention strategies for these employees. The aim and objectives of this research is to examine the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS, how their demographic aspects affect those workplace expectations, to assess the extent to which workplace expectations are met and propose employee retaining strategies for consultant companies to retain Gen Z QS employees.

Target respondents are employed Gen Z QS in consultant firms within an expected age range of 20 to 27 years old. The research methodology first starts with a literature review, then a research proposal is created. Further literature review is done before diving into questionnaire design. Later, data was collected from respondents and analysed to come up with conclusions, limitations and recommendations in regards to this study. An outline of all chapters in this report was listed.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

The definition of generations, Gen Z, QS, work expectations of Gen Z, demographic factors affecting work expectations, and suggested retaining strategies of employed Gen Z QS will be discussed with regards to previous research done.

#### 2.2 Defining Generations

Generations are defined as a fuzzy social construct that groups individuals born during a specified time period who share similar cultural experiences and create cultural change (Campbell et al., 2015). Although generations are defined by their spans, there are no definite generational cutoff points (Dimock, 2019). Baby Boomers, often shortened as boomers, were the only officially designated generation by the U.S. Census Bureau due to the rapid increase and decrease in birthrates post World War two (Dimock, 2019).

Many tried to define generations using various cutoff points. Some determine Gen Z as those born between 1997 and 2010 (Kee and Madden, 2018). Some define it within the range of 1995 to 2010 (Pandita, 2022). Select articles only provide a starting cutoff point, categorizing Gen Z as individuals born during and after the year 1995 (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021).

In this research, Gen Z will be defined as individuals born between the years 1997 to 2012 based on Pew Research Center's supplemented generational cohorts, as in Figure 2.1 (Dimock, 2019).

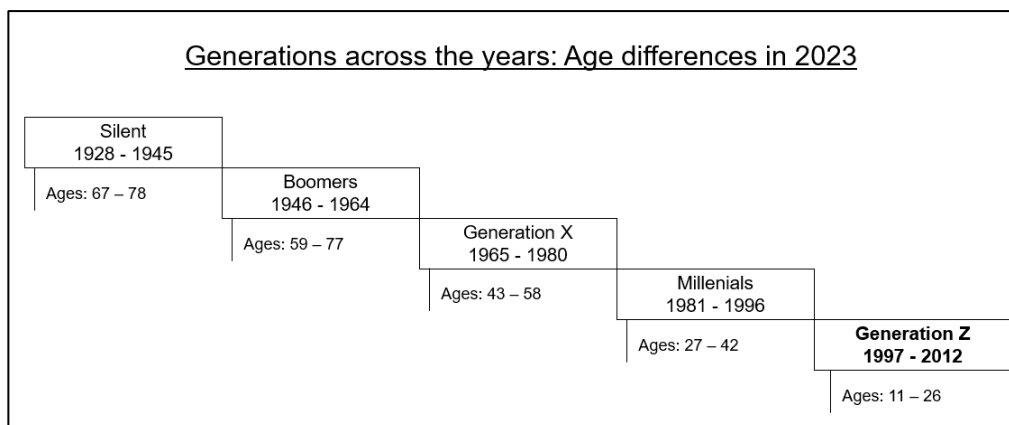


Figure 2.1: Generations across the years: Age differences in 2023.

(Source: Dimock, 2019).

### 2.3 Generation Z

Gen Z, also referred to as iGeneration or Homelanders, represents individuals born between the years 1997 (26 years old) to 2012 (11 years old) as shown in Figure 2.1 (Dimock, 2019). This range includes senior primary school students to the newest entrants in the working industry. They represent 27% of the world's population of about 1.9 billion individuals, while in Malaysia, Gen Z represents roughly 30% of its total population (Kee and Madden, 2018).

Many Gen Zs are open to the idea of change, shown through their adaptable nature to global world issues and technological advances (Iorgulescu, 2016). Malaysian Gen Zs are caring and cooperative in addition to being open-minded and adaptable (Kee and Madden, 2018). They aim to be autonomous and independent, but it is from a rooted mindset of not wanting to impose on their loved ones (Kee and Madden, 2018; Pandita, 2022). Their top three goals in life, with various rankings, are to: (1) challenge themselves to reach their highest potential, (2) search for joy in life and (3) nurture meaningful relationships with people (Kee and Madden, 2018).

Every generation experiences different world experiences that contribute to generational change. There are three major inputs that affect each generation – technology, cultural contact, and major upheavals (Campbell et al., 2015). As for Gen Z, the generational change displayed seems to be higher interest in education as well as social and environmental changes (Deloitte, 2021).

### **2.3.1 Technology**

In terms of technology, Gen Zs were provided with Wi-Fi and high-bandwidth cellular services to access the Internet at a young age (Dimock, 2019). They were born as digital natives and consumed most of their information through the Internet and social media platforms, as compared to Gen Y who grew up reading newspapers (Nielsen, 2019). Through social platforms, Gen Z understood, acknowledged, and sought to perform their due diligence in educating and influencing people, institutions, and organizations no matter the distance (Deloitte, 2021).

### **2.3.2 Cultural Contact**

In terms of cultural contact, Gen Z came into contact with cultures through the help of modern technology. They were the first generation to experience rapid delivery of international cultural knowledge, which influenced their open-mindedness and adaptability in the face of change and unknowns (Kee and Madden, 2018). They are also one of the first generations to be influenced by virtualization, mobility, and universal values from a young age (Micoleta, 2012).

### **2.3.3 Major Upheaval**

Major upheavals include incidents such as wars and economic changes (Campbell et al., 2015). For Gen Z, the COVID-19 pandemic that started in December 2019 was the most recent upheaval that not only impacted Malaysia, but also on a global scale (Abdullah et al., 2022). At that time, most Gen Zs were still students at various educational levels. Schools were closed during the implementation of MCO. Hence, the only access to learning was online education which was commonly impeded by weak internet access (Abdullah et al., 2022). Employed adults of all generations were impacted, but younger entrants in the workforce including Gen Z graduates, were disproportionately affected by unemployment during the pandemic (Aziz et al., 2020). They stood at the forefront and witnessed the economic recession that transpired from the pandemic, which caused a GDP drop from RM17.3 billion to RM10.8 billion (Abdullah et al., 2022).

### **2.3.4 Education as a Prerequisite**

These aspects forged Gen Zs as a generational cohort that prioritised education and considers it a prerequisite in life. The Pew Research Center stated that American Gen Zs reflected a trend where more Americans are pursuing higher education than ever before (Parker and Igielnik, 2020). Malaysian Gen Z are the same, as it is discovered that 79% planned to obtain bachelor's degrees, 56% aimed to secure post-graduate degrees and 29% intended to achieve doctorates (Kee and Madden, 2018). This contributed to a phenomenon where Gen Zs were more likely to work later in life than their predecessors in efforts to invest in their education (Parker and Igielnik, 2020).

### **2.3.5 Pioneers of Social and Environmental Issues**

Gen Z also placed high degrees of importance on social and environmental change. Roughly 64% of Malaysian Gen Zs are passionate about social causes and maintain an environmentally friendly lifestyle (Kee and Madden, 2018). A survey showed that Gen Zs only invest in organizations that align with their values (Deloitte, 2021). They were not hesitant to sever relationships to influence how these companies affect the environment and contribute to inequality and discrimination of all kinds (Deloitte, 2021). They are a hyper-connected generation who continuously digest information on various themes related to social and environmental issues from social media (Quillen, 2018). As such, this made them more socially and environmentally aware and responsible than most generations, and aimed to ignite an interest and responsibility to these issues (Pandita, 2022).

## **2.4 Quantity Surveyor**

A QS is a profession within the construction industry of all Commonwealth countries. Wherever they are employed, they are involved in all stages of construction projects from conception to completion, even beyond the post-construction phase (Yap et al., 2022). QS are responsible for managing the cost of construction projects while improving their values and maintaining expected quality and standards (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). They are also in charge of contract documentation and quantification of works (Yap et al., 2022). Unlike specific professions in the industry, QS are not

limited in the types of projects, ranging from residential, commercial, and industrial buildings, infrastructures, and heavy engineering projects (Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM), 2023).

Under the Quantity Surveyors Act 1967, Part III of Section 7 and Section 8 determined that no person may introduce themselves as a QS Technologist, Provisional QS, Professional QS nor a Consultant QS if they are not registered with the relevant professional bodies. Similarly, persons cannot practice, carry on business, or take up employment as these titles if unregistered.

There are practical and educational pathways to achieve being registered with a professional QS body. As such, to accommodate for Gen Z QS who are still in training for their QS registrations, for this research, QS will be considered as employees working under tasks related to cost management, employees with certificates, probation, or training related to quantity surveying practices or employees working under the title “QS”, “Cost Engineer”, “Contract Administrative”, “Cost Manager”, “Project Coordinator”, “Project Cost Controller” and “Cost Planner” within a consultant firm (NZIQS, 2023).

#### **2.4.1 Job Pathway of QS in Malaysia**

The job pathways of QS in the Malaysian construction industry are mainly distinctive between developer firms, contractor firms, and consultant firms (Panday, 2020). In general, QS in consultant firms represent the client’s organization while QS in contractor firms represent the construction companies building the client’s design (Aishah Abdulla, 2018; Lewis, 2023). Developer firms hire in-house QS who may perform a mix of both Consultant QS and Contractor QS tasks, but primarily studies the feasibility of land and complies with planning laws to develop properties (Birruntha, 2020).

The industries and companies penetrable by QS are not limited to those three. Indirectly, QS can work in law firms, financial companies, estate managing firms, suppliers, subcontractors, and specialist companies within or outside the construction industry (AGCAS, 2023). However, the focus of this research will only be on consultant firms, as their business model depends on a large quantity of QS employees providing consultancy services on cost and

contracts, which would receive the greatest impact in a scenario of QS shortage (Aishah Abdulla, 2018; Lewis, 2023).

#### **2.4.1.1 Consultant Firms**

Consultant firms are companies employed by a client, developer, or owner to recruit the expertise of QS in a construction project. They are responsible for understanding and translating the client's needs, managing and providing advice on the project cost as a cost consultant or cost manager. Their tasks are not limited to but range from feasibility studies, cost estimation, preparing and reviewing tenders, cost planning, life cycle costing, and cost-benefit analysis (Aishah Abdulla, 2018; Lewis, 2023). In Malaysia, there are many organizations specializing as Consultant firms in various sizes across all states, such as JQS International Sdn Bhd, JUBM Group, Vescope Sdn Bhd, and Northcroft Lim Perunding Sdn Bhd (Vescope, 2017; Northcroft, 2018; JQSI, 2023; JUBM Group, 2023). There are some developer firms in Malaysia with an internal team of specialised QS such as Gamuda Berhad and IJM Corporation Berhad, but a third-party Consultant QS is still required to prepare unbiased documents, as Developer QS only functions as supportive professionals (Gamuda Berhad, 2016; IJM Corporation Berhad, 2023). However, only QS employed under specialist consultant firms will be considered applicable respondents for this survey.

#### **2.4.2 Professional Pathway of QS in Malaysia**

The professional career pathway of QS in Malaysia is not limited, but generally recommended to receive professional qualifications from or become a member of the Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM), the Board of Quantity Surveying Malaysia (BQSM), or the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). RISM and BQSM are based in Malaysia while RICS is an internationally recognised professional body based in the United Kingdom (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), 2023a).

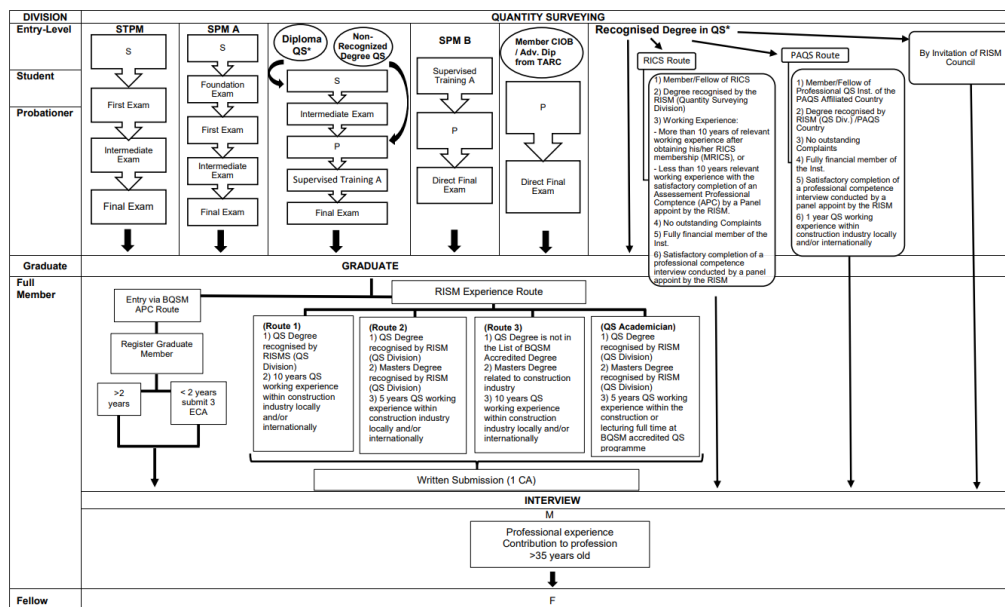


Figure 2.2: Professional Pathway of QS in Malaysia.

(Source: Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM), 2019).

#### 2.4.2.1 Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM)

The coverage of individuals in the QS profession by RISM can be seen in Figure 2.2. The division of QS individuals is split into entry-level, student, probationer, graduate, full member, and fellows (Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM), 2019). Graduation from either exams, training, recognised degrees, or invitation by RISM councils are prerequisites before one can register as a full member of RISM (Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM), 2019). Employed Gen Z Malaysian QS would be expected to fit within the full membership of RISM, as Fellows of RISM require one to be at least 35 years old (Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM), 2019).

#### 2.4.2.2 Board of Quantity Surveying Malaysia (BQSM)

BQSM is also known as Lembaga Juruuku Bahan Malaysia (LJBM). BQSM provides four different types of registrations for individuals – Quantity Surveying Technologist (QST), Provisional QS (PVQS), Professional QS (PQS) and Consulting QS (CQS) (Board of Quantity Surveyors Malaysia (BQSM), 2023). Those who graduated with accredited degrees can directly register as a PVQS with BQSM, and can choose to upgrade their membership



to PQS and CQS once the requirements are met through a set of procedures (Board of QS Malaysia (BQSM), 2023). Employed QS in the construction industry who graduated with an accredited diploma in quantity surveying can only first join as a QST after passing the Direct Final Examination given (Board of Quantity Surveyors Malaysia (BQSM), 2023).

#### **2.4.2.3 Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)**

RICS remains neutral on the definition of QS and allows the general public to do so with their definitions. While it is not required to be an RICS member to be considered a QS, RICS does provide two types of memberships – Associate Member (AssocRICS) and Chartered Member (MRICS) (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), 2023b). With relevant higher or foundation professional qualifications and at least two (2) years of experience, one can also register as an AssocRICS, but that does not apply for MRICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), 2023b). With a relevant bachelor's degree, one can apply as an AssocRICS and MRICS with one (1) and five (5) years of relevant experience (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), 2023b). Without professional qualifications, one can still become an AssocRICS with four (4) years of relevant experience and MRICS with ten (10) years of relevant experience operating by seniority, academia, or specialisation at an advanced level (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), 2023b).

#### **2.4.3 Setbacks in Quantity Surveying Industry**

The shortage of QS in the construction industry is becoming increasingly apparent (Hee and Ling, 2011; Ranasinghe, Fernando and Gunarathna, 2014). The issue is aggravated further by the increasing turnover rates of QS in the industry (Ranasinghe, Fernando and Gunarathna, 2014). On the micro level, the labour shortage issue is worsened by the rising number of new quantity surveying firms, and an outflow of QS resigning from the public sector to enter into private sector employment (Ranasinghe, Fernando and Gunarathna, 2014; Herman, 2016). On the macro level, QS are aiming for overseas employment in search of higher pay (Ranasinghe, Fernando and Gunarathna, 2014).

Limited studies have explored the challenges faced by Gen Z in general, much less Gen Z QS. However, many researchers have discovered that many QS are dissatisfied with their jobs (Hee and Ling, 2011; Ranasinghe, Fernando and Gunarathna, 2014; Sheikh Ilmi et al., 2019; Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). Low salaries, work-life imbalance, lack of incentives, lack of promotions, high work stress, health conditions, lack of learning and growth opportunities, and heavy workload are among the few uncovered reasons for resigning from their jobs (Hee and Ling, 2011; Ranasinghe, Fernando and Gunarathna, 2014; Herman, 2016; Sheikh Ilmi et al., 2019; Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). Many are forced to work longer hours and even on weekends to adhere to the given deadlines while attempting to ensure cost, time, and quality achievement on assigned tasks (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). Much of these existing shortage issues in the quantity surveying industry, however, can be easily resolved with proper human resource practices (Ranasinghe, Fernando and Gunarathna, 2014).

## **2.5 Work Expectations of Generation Z QS**

Work expectations are also commonly referred to as “Employee Expectations”, “Work Requirements”, and “Work Preferences” across various literatures. Generally, expectations are a tool used when considering an engagement with a particular item, system, individual, or organization. In the context of employment, they are a list of considerations adopted by employees, each with various criteria and priorities, that motivate an employee to be associated with a company (Pandita, 2022).

Theoretically, every individual has different expectations of their future workplace, which guides them to select the most suitable education pathway that increases the odds of being employed by their ideal organization. Similarly, different generations are shown to have varying attitudes, needs, and preferences that applies to the context of employment (Sandhu Sukhbir et al., 2016). When employees observe a match in their values and needs in their working lives, a “person-career fit” is achieved (Van der Heijden and De Vos, 2015). An employee who is matched with an unsuitable environment will experience workplace stress and affect their performance (Roskams and Haynes, 2020). This can cause employees to experience negative impressions

of their organization and display low motivation levels that will affect their performance and work quality (Gkorezis and Kastritsi, 2017).

Construction industry employers understanding the work expectations of Gen Z signifies they can produce career sustainability within their organization. When career sustainability is achieved, employees are provided with meaning from their working experiences in their social workplace (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023). Furthermore, meeting the needs of employees directly contributes to higher levels of health and productivity, aiding to retain and attract more talented individuals into the working environment to form a diverse workforce who can provide customer satisfaction and performance gains (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023). If the workforce is further sustained through competent human resource management, organizations can prevent high turnover rates and occupational injuries, thereby lowering construction project costs (Karakhan et al., 2023).

Limited studies are exploring the specific work expectations of Gen Z QS. Hence, work expectations that were prioritised by Gen Zs in previous studies were reviewed and analysed. A list of significant work expectations was organized and compiled in Table 2.1.



### **2.5.1 Organizational Core Values**

The organizational core values category comprises the morals and ethics adopted by organizations. This category reflects Gen Z's expectations of working for a company that reflects their values as they are interested in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) concerns (Vitasek, 2022).

#### **2.5.1.1 Organization with Honesty and Integrity**

Gen Zs are concerned with the ethics and integrity of organizations. An organization with honesty and integrity indicates a corporation with well-defined visions and missions (Hatoum et al., 2022). Organizations can clearly communicate their identity, values, directions, and principles to the general public through their visions and mission (University of Minnesota, 2015). A lack of clear vision and missions suggests an unestablished company, which is generally understandable in smaller startups but problematic in middle and larger enterprises. Without them, employees cannot accurately act in an organization's best interest, which may cause misalignment within the work environment (Meyer-Cuno, 2021).

Without these proper ethical foundations to rely on, it is easy for employees in the construction industry to perform unethical conduct. Among the construction industry professions, QS are known to be most susceptible to unethical conduct in regards to leaking construction project tender prices and creating uneven competition. The occurrence of unethical practices is not only negatively impactful to the construction industry but also to the economy and human resources on an international scale. It also magnifies the bad reputation held by construction companies (Paul et al., 2021).

On a personal level, Gen Zs want to work for an organization that aligns with their morals and values. This allows them to feel more empowered and provides a sense of making a difference in the employment organization (Deloitte, 2021). The clash of values and morals within an organization would seed distrust, decrease the positive impression of one to their work company, and foster an intention to resign. The intention to resign is the first step of an employee leaving a company, also known as turnover intention (Hee and Ling, 2011).

### **2.5.1.2 Organization with Positive and Concrete Environmental Impact**

Gen Zs are pioneers of environmental and social change. Even as health and employment issues gained momentum in raising fears during the COVID-19 pandemic, Gen Zs continue to prioritise care towards environmental and social issues (Deloitte, 2021). Roughly 64% of Malaysian Gen Zs are maintaining an environmentally friendly lifestyle (Kee and Madden, 2018). This makes them especially sensitive to corporations that irresponsibly perform economic actions that contribute to air pollution, chemical pollution, extinction of animals, and climate change (Vitasek, 2022). This means they are willing to sever relationships with companies that do not claim responsibility for affecting the environment not only as consumers but also as stakeholders and employees (Deloitte, 2021).

They look favorably to organizations who demonstrated their pledge to sustainable efforts, such as the international oil company BP which has made noticeable progress in achieving its net zero carbon emission goals (Vitasek, 2022). Arcadis displays its support for environmental causes by setting a net zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2035 and providing sustainable consultation to projects with intentions of environmental sustainability (Arcadis, 2021; 2023). This reflects a statement that Gen Z will tend to larger corporations when considering employment as SMEs do not have as many resources to achieve macro sustainable pledges (Rajaendram, 2022).

However, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can also impact the environment in small ways positively through efforts such as volunteering in beach cleanups, providing metal silverware instead of one-time use plastic utensils in the workplace, implementing the three R's – reuse, reduce, recycle, and donate to non-profit environmental organizations.

### **2.5.1.3 Organization with Positive and Concrete Social Impact**

Social issues are another major concern held by Gen Z during the COVID-19 pandemic (Deloitte, 2021). Malaysian Gen Zs are the same, as above 67% of them are passionate about social causes (Kee and Madden, 2018). They are opinionated on the corporate social responsibilities (CSR) that should be undertaken by companies (Davidson and Ellis, 2021; Deloitte, 2021). Nearly

all social issues such as racial discrimination, systemic racism upon disabilities, gender, ethnic minorities, income and wealth inequality are aspects frowned upon by this cohort (Deloitte, 2021).

Corporates that further aggravate social foundations such as social equity and health issues easily lose loyalty among younger consumers including Gen Z and Millennials (Vitasek, 2022). This is because Gen Zs are a cohort with a deep sense of community and recognizes the urgency of taking action before situations generate a detrimental outcome (Edelman and Hagelgans, 2022). The importance of organizations adopting a socially aware perspective is heightened when Gen Zs can influence older generations to mimic their support in social causes (Edelman and Hagelgans, 2022). Gen Zs are also sharp in evaluating if companies are only making social statements without putting effort into accomplishing them (Edelman and Hagelgans, 2022). Thus, optimistically, they intend to work for companies that can show positive and concrete social impact.

## **2.5.2 Organizational Working Style**

The working style category comprises the nature of an organization's systemic workflow. This reflects Gen Z's expectations of working for an organization that is harmonious with their work tendencies and culture.

### **2.5.2.1 Flexibility in Work**

Gen Zs value flexibility in the workplace in various ways. This includes determining their personal work times, work location, a fluid organizational hierarchy as well as interchangeable working styles as their few considerations prioritised by this cohort (Pandita, 2022). Flexibility in communication methods is also one of the expectations harboured by Gen Z (Arar and Öneren, 2018), where they can communicate through email, face-to-face interaction, and by messaging apps (Kee and Madden, 2018).

This is about their need for a work-life balance. When employees are provided the opportunity to choose their working hours and location, they are provided with a greater sense of work-life separation (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023). They are also provided with a sense of freedom to work at their own pace (Hatoum et al., 2022).

### **2.5.2.2 Positive, Healthy, and Supportive Working Culture**

A positive, healthy, and supportive working culture is nurtured by providing Gen Z employees with mental health support. Assisting in managing stress, mindfulness programs and emotion-regulation initiatives are some of the efforts available for organizations to explore (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021). About 40% of Gen Zs feel that their employers did not take action to support their mental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic, which contributed to high-stress levels that induced Gen Z employees to take time off from work (Deloitte, 2021). Organizations ought to be concerned with the health of their work communities to prevent an impression of neglect to their employees.

Gen Z's preference for a positive, healthy, and supportive working culture parallels with their attention to an organization's attitude towards social issues. Malaysian Gen Zs view a fair work environment as an important criterion of their expected workplaces (Kee and Madden, 2018). Employees, while requiring personalised interaction, should receive equal organizational treatment. Where social issues such as racial discrimination, systemic racism, and income and wealth inequality are present, employees will not be fully supported by the organization (Deloitte, 2021). When a workforce does not feel supported, the community can expect low productivity and a high turnover rate that will dampen organizational performance (Karakhan et al., 2023).

### **2.5.2.3 Supports Creative and Innovative Ideas**

Workplace creativity is defined as producing original, useful, and novel ideas, while workplace innovation is defined as introducing, modifying, encouraging, and executing creative ideas to recognize problems to fulfill organizational needs (Hughes et al., 2018). The operational definition of creativity, however, can only be recognized through consensual assessment by experts in the same field (Amabile, 1996).

It is recognized that Malaysian Gen Zs are moderately inclined to employer organizations that allow them to use their creativity (Kee and Madden, 2018). Similarly, construction management Gen Z in Kentucky,



America regards creativity and innovation in the workplace as moderately ranked expectations (Hatoum et al., 2022).

This is perhaps an expectation seeded by wanting organizations and managers to engage in Gen Z's preferred ideas and opinions. They want their perspectives considered without being judged from the lens of experience nor skill-based competence, instead focused on the generation of creative alternatives and potential contributions (Pandita, 2022). About 44% of Malaysian Gen Zs consider their ability to come up with creative ideas and innovative solutions an advanced skill within their grasp (Kee and Madden, 2018). They want to prove their capabilities and be recognized by providing independent contributions (Pandita, 2022).

Notably, the nature of entrepreneurship resides in innovation, where entrepreneurship is the successful execution of creative ideas to create a new business or initiative in an existing business (Amabile, 1996). This reflects the entrepreneurial nature of Gen Z in Malaysia, where 63% are inclined to start up a full-time or part-time business of their own, especially towards the 85% who plan to venture into business startups after accumulating work experience and capital (Kee and Madden, 2018). Organizations may notice Gen Zs enjoy their exploration of entrepreneurial tendencies through implementing creative and innovative endeavours within their workplace.

#### **2.5.2.4 Clarity in Expectations, Roles, and Responsibility**

Organizations and managers who can provide clarity in expectations, roles, and responsibilities are well appreciated within Gen Z cohorts. A study about construction management Gen Z in Kentucky, America considers clear instructions in roles and responsibilities as high priority when considering employment (Hatoum et al., 2022). Clarity within expectations of employees may be directly related to an organization's honesty and integrity in regard to established visions and missions. Managers who reflect the organization's honesty and integrity are well-liked by Malaysian Gen Z employees (Kee and Madden, 2018).

It is discovered that that American Gen Z moderately prioritises standardization, where managers can give clear instructions on the method of performing tasks, or provide a system that is consistent in handling assigned

work (Hatoum et al., 2022). Gen Zs also expect constant feedback on how they can better perform their roles (Kee and Madden, 2018). This is especially important in construction industry practices that are based on traditional work patterns (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). Standard forms of contracts such as PAM 2018, PWD 203A 2010, and CIPAA are used to ensure the responsibilities of all contractual parties are fairly distributed (Patterson, 2010). The different types of procurement methods available for construction projects are familiar and provide a consistent framework and structure for the construction process (Love, Skitmore and Earl, 1998). The certainty in contractual terms and obligations urges compliance to prevent the organization and their employees from negligence and non-performance of duty may be a motivation for Gen Z employees to require clarity in expectations, roles, and responsibilities from their organization.

#### **2.5.2.5 Degree of Collaborative Work**

The expectation of teamwork-oriented work tasks is different research done among Gen Z cohorts. A reliable conclusion on their preference for collaborative work tasks cannot be generated due to the inconclusiveness of results.

A research based in India concluded that having an employer brand where collaboration with a team and colleagues are the preferences of Gen Z (Pandita, 2022). Construction management Gen Z students in Kentucky, America consider a collaborative work environment with moderate importance (Hatoum et al., 2022). Nearly half of Romanian Gen Z in the Faculty of Business and Tourism preferred working in large groups (Iorgulescu, 2016).

In contrast, nearly half of the Malaysian Gen Zs are split, with 48% preferring collaborative work compared to solo work (Kee and Madden, 2018). 34.6% of Romanian Gen Z prefer working independently (Hatoum et al., 2022).

The neck-to-neck statistics are contradictory and require further studies to determine whether Gen Zs prefer collaborative work tasks or vice versa, much less the QS among them.

### **2.5.3 Development and Advancement Opportunities Provided**

The development and advancement opportunities comprise individual growth options available through the employment of an organization. This category reflects Gen Z's aspirations and expectations of themselves.

#### **2.5.3.1 Mentoring**

Mentoring is one of the most sought-after criteria in Gen Z work expectations. It is the provision of an experienced mentor who can pass on useful knowledge and skills that will develop talents (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021). In relation, this reflects Gen Z's need for reliable, competent, and communicative seniors, managers, or supervisors who can guide them in handling assigned job tasks (Kee and Madden, 2018). Business and tourism Gen Z in Romania are ready to develop positive relationships and interactions with superiors to learn (Iorgulescu, 2016). Although among construction management students of American Gen Z, mentoring is only considered moderately important (Hatoum et al., 2022).

Much of the expectation of mentoring is ingrained in Gen Z's importance to education and learning in general. They are a generation who actively seeks to learn and enhance their knowledge bank, even though they consider themselves self-learners (Pandita, 2022). Interestingly, their preferred way to learn in the workplace mimics their tendency of learning through the Internet – where their workplace should consist of several reliable seniors to gain insight similar to how the Internet should consist of various trusted sources to absorb information.

#### **2.5.3.2 Training, Development, and Re-education**

Gen Zs appreciate training, development, and re-education provided by their employment organizations that can improve their skills and work readiness (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023). This is founded upon the nature of Gen Z who value constant learning and self-improvement. They are more conscious of opportunities than previous generations thanks to their exposure to online platforms and social media (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023). Thus, they see workplaces not only as a source of income but also as a wellspring of gaining more knowledge. This is similar to Malaysian Gen Z's

adopted purposes in life of challenging oneself to achieve their highest potential and seeking truth and knowledge (Kee and Madden, 2018). They do this by also hoping for managers and supervisors who can provide constant feedback (Kee and Madden, 2018; Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023).

Their likeness for re-education is another reflection of seeing higher education as a prerequisite in life. Whether it be post-graduate programmes related to quantity surveying or other degrees in the related construction industry field, Gen Zs are hyped on furthering their educational attainments. The additional knowledge can aid their employment companies in providing more skill proficiencies that are currently lacking within the construction industry (Ranasinghe, Fernando and Gunarathna, 2014).

### **2.5.3.3 Career Advancement and Growth Opportunities**

Traditionally, career advancement was achieved through long-term employment in a company. One would select a profession and rise through the organizational hierarchy to shoulder higher levels of pay, status, and responsibility by establishing oneself in their professional field of work (Parasuraman, Greenhaus and Linnehan, 2000). Now, career advancement does not only encompass vertical hierarchy movement but also involves horizontal hierarchy movement through change of employer, industry, occupation, and geographical location (Parasuraman, Greenhaus and Linnehan, 2000). Employees are now provided with the alternative of mobility across multiple companies instead of a single company to fulfill their template of psychological success in career growth (Parasuraman, Greenhaus and Linnehan, 2000).

This proves an important factor that employers should consider when applying strategies in hiring and retaining talented workers. It is ascertained that fulfilling Gen Z's entrepreneurial inclinations not only achieves both personal monetary fulfillment and personal achievement (Kee and Madden, 2018), but it also encourages employee loyalty. Furthermore, they embrace facing challenges and working on new things to encounter problematic situations that can enhance their learning journey (Pandita, 2022). Gen Z will appreciate being entrusted with challenging tasks and experiences to explore opportunities for individual growth.

#### **2.5.4 Benefits and Remuneration Provided**

The benefits and remuneration provided comprise monetary and psychological benefits available through employment of an organization. This category reflects Gen Z's traditional direct needs and wants from the workplace.

##### **2.5.4.1 Job Security**

Job security is present when an organization can provide its employees with a sense of relief in terms of job loss (Hatoum et al., 2022). Much literature highlights that job security is the strongest motivation of Gen Z when selecting an employment organization. This includes the latest Deloitte survey where unemployment remains the 2<sup>nd</sup> top concern for Millennials and Gen Zs (Deloitte, 2023). Gen Zs are more loyal when organizations foster an environment with stable employment (Rajaendram, 2022).

An influence on Gen Z's persistence in job security may lie within the most recent COVID-19 pandemic. During that time, Malaysians witnessed a near 100,000 individuals unemployed due to layoffs and closing of businesses, voluntary and mutual separation schemes (Harun and Yunus, 2023). Low-wage employees were more likely to face job losses during this time, which disproportionately affected many young entrants in the workforce, including Gen Zs (Aziz et al., 2020). Even Gen Zs who were still students observed and saw their parents struggling to retain their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic. This caused fear among the individuals in the age groups of 18 to 37 years old on losing their jobs (Aziz et al., 2020). Hence, the need for job security is not unfounded within this cohort of individuals.

##### **2.5.4.2 Work-Life Balance**

The concept of work-life balance was first introduced and birthed by the efforts of Generation X's needs from witnessing their Boomer parents burn out from work overcommitment (Rajaendram, 2022). The millennials and Gen Z cohort continue to subscribe to a balanced distinction between work and personal lives. Presently, many Gen Zs and millennials are experiencing work-related pressures that contribute to rising levels of burnout, similar to the Gen X cohorts (Deloitte, 2023). A few factors include unhealthy team cultures,

heavy workloads, and work-life imbalance (Deloitte, 2023). Thus, it will not be surprising for Gen Z to continue prioritising work-life balance when given the opportunity. This is especially so as QS are exposed to higher levels of stress and work-life balance compared to other construction professionals (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022).

Work-life balance remains a top priority of Gen Z when considering employment organizations. American construction management views work-life balance as a high priority when considering employment organizations (Hatoum et al., 2022). Malaysian Gen Z sees a work-life balance in work as the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest priority (Kee and Madden, 2018). Aside from career fulfillment through employment, Gen Zs value relationships with their friends and family (Deloitte, 2021). They appreciate the existence of work-life separation so they can devote time to relationships, hobbies, and relaxation (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023). This new generation has continued to move forward from the concept of complete devotion to work to approach work as a medium to provide income and value to their lives.

#### **2.5.4.3 Favourable Remuneration and Non-Wage Benefits**

Any deep dive into understanding Gen Z will bring up the idea that money isn't the only consideration when selecting an employment organization. In comparison with Boomers who show stronger tendencies towards higher pay only, Gen Zs set their sights on greater and more (Rajaendram, 2022).

Much of the research done on Gen Z focuses on describing other work expectations harboured by the generational cohort since the concept of making career selections based on salaries is familiar to the general public. However, this does not mean Gen Zs disregard the importance of a base salary provided by an organization. This is based on historical context where during the COVID-19 pandemic, Malaysian Gen Zs who were lucky to remain employed after the mass lay-offs still met with salary deductions from 30% to 50% (Abdullah et al., 2022). Following that income loss and the inflation that followed the pandemic many Malaysian households, especially lower-income families who needed to spend more on food (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2022). Even now, the high cost of living remains the top societal concern of Millennials and Gen Z across the world (Deloitte, 2023).

Moreover, the rewards expectations of Gen Zs include coverage of non-wage benefits. Wage is considered the base pay that employees receive for being employed and performing work tasks for the organization (Hicks and Adams, 2003). Gen Z places importance on having non-wage benefits, such as bonuses, insurance coverage, health coverage, retirement incentives, savings incentives, adequate amounts of paid leave and leaves entitlements (Peluso, Innocenti and Pilati, 2017). Further examples of non-wage benefits include pensions, allowances or subsidies on travel, clothing, accommodation, child care, and meals, holiday trips arranged by organizations, study leaves, recreational facilities, and education support (Hicks and Adams, 2003).

## **2.6 Demographic Factors affecting Work Expectations of Generation Z QS**

To further understand the work expectations of Gen Z QS, it is imperative to explore how their personal demographics affect their workplace expectations. The demographic information that will be collected from respondents includes Gen Z QS' age, gender, ethnicity, educational background, work experience, professional qualifications, marital status, workplace region, company size, and base income range.

### **2.6.1 Age**

As established, in the year 2023, Gen Z ranges between individuals who are born between the years 1997 (26 years old) and 2012 (11 years old). Among them, those who graduated and were employed as QS in consultant firms are expected to be roughly 20 to 26 years old (born 1998 to 2004), with varying secondary school education and higher education backgrounds. The expectations of younger members of a generation may show a difference in perspective, needs, and values compared to older members of the same generation (Dimock, 2019). While there are no relevant researches that explore the differences between older and younger employed Gen Z QS, it is expected that there will be some variance between the younger and older employed QS of this cohort.

### **2.6.2 Gender**

The difference between female and male QS has received attention in literature studies. Employing female employees in the construction industry workplace is considered a non-traditional recruitment method, as the construction industry is predominantly composed of males (Ceric and Ivic, 2020). Gender difference also contributes to gender-dependent work-life imbalance as each gender is expected to play different roles within their families, personal lives, and their jobs (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). It is shown that female construction students hold higher expectations of their expected salaries and responsibilities compared to their male counterparts (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). Furthermore, consultant firms have a higher number of female QS employees compared to male employees (Siti Nur Aishah Mohd Noor and Nadzirah Zainordin, 2018). This suggests the importance to distinguish the differences in work expectations shown by female and male QS within the Gen Z cohort, instead of stereotyping them into one category of work expectations.

### **2.6.3 Ethnicity**

The concept of ethnicity is undefined, ambiguous, and subject to change across populations and generations, which may be defined by comparing cultural characteristics in terms of physical appearance: stature and skin color, and cultural characteristics: cuisine, dress, and language (Hirschman, 1987). The three main ethnicities in Malaysia are Malays, Chinese, and Indians (Department of Information, 2016). The Orang Asli, also known as Bumiputera or natives of Peninsular Malaysia, are generally split into the Negrito, Senoi, and Proto-Malay. In essence, roughly 62% of the population are Malays, roughly 21% are Chinese, 6% are Indians while 1% comprise unspecified minor ethnicities labeled “others” in the Demography of Population by Malaysia’s Department of Information (2016).

Each individual from different ethnicities is influenced by religious values, cultural inclination, and habits, which may influence Gen Z’s held expectations on their work environment. While no relevant research has embarked on the effect of ethnicity on Gen Z QS work expectations, some studies have discovered the effect of ethnicity contributing to differences in



aspects such as education, unemployment duration after graduation, work values and retirement expectations (Waite, Rindfuss and Tray, 1986; Honig, 1996; Lim, 2001; 2011). In particular, the study of work-value differences between Malaysian Malay and Chinese shows no conclusive differences, while mothers with different ethnicities are shown to have different expectations of education to their children (Waite, Rindfuss and Tray, 1986; Lim, 2001). As such, there is a possibility that different ethnicities among Gen Z QS will show a variance in their work expectations.

#### **2.6.4 Educational Background**

In higher education, the option of undergraduate degrees and postgraduate degrees are available for further study. Locally, Gen Zs in Malaysia can become a professional QS by first completing SPM, followed by STPM or other pre-university programmes (Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM), 2019). From then on, branches of alternatives vary from completing exams, acquiring experience through probations, and graduating from accredited Diploma or Degree courses before these graduates can work for consultant firms or other construction industry companies.

In particular, those with Bachelor's Degrees are expected to earn more than colleagues with a Diploma, as employers are willing to pay up to 50% in salary differences to those with Degree qualifications (EduAdvisor, 2022; Time Doctor, 2023). Moreover, Degree qualifications are more competitive and provide more advancement opportunities compared to Diploma certificates (EduAdvisor, 2022). Gen Z QS may have chosen their educational pathways to satiate their work expectations by understanding the different pros offered by these educational programmes.

#### **2.6.5 Work Experience**

Since the expected respondents are expected to be those aged 20 to 26 years old, all respondents will have different amounts of work experience as a QS in their consultant firms. This is further reflected by their educational backgrounds, such as the difference between a Diploma certificate and a Degree certificate QS. As such, even between respondents of the same age, each individual will have different years of work experience.

While no previous research has tried exploring the effect of work experience on Gen Z QS' work expectations, previous research has explored the generation effect work experience has on career expectations. Prior research has established that when an employee gains more work experience, their desire for a higher salary is directly proportionate (Sallop and Kirby, 2007). It is discovered that when employees have longer work experience, they are more equipped with self-efficacy factors such as occupation information, goal selection, planning, problem-solving, and self appraisal. These aspects allow employees to develop more realistic work expectations, be more confident, and set realistic goals for their future (Liu, Draper and Dawson, 2022). As such, it is expected that Gen Z QS with longer work experience may show more realistic work expectations in this study.

#### **2.6.6 Professional Qualifications**

The main qualifications for QS in Malaysia include being registered with RISM, BQSM, and RICS. In summary, the professional qualifications provided by RISM is a Full Member or a Fellow; professional qualifications by the BQSM are either QST, PVQS, PQS or CQS; and professional qualifications by RICS include the AssocRICS and MRISM (Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM), 2019; Board of Quantity Surveyors Malaysia (BQSM), 2023; Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), 2023b).

It is not required for Malaysian QS to register in either professional bodies to be employed to perform quantity surveying work tasks. However, the decision of respondents to pursue particular types of higher qualifications from these professional bodies may reflect their future expectations of career advancement, income range and entrepreneurial tendency to start up their own company in the construction industry.

#### **2.6.7 Marital Status**

Single, married, widowed, and divorced are the marital statuses that apply to respondents of this survey (Robards et al., 2012). The additional commitment of employees to a legal partner may input a different perspective of responsibility and thus, work expectations. Traditionally, the married man is expected to be the breadwinner of the family, while the married woman is

expected to care for the emotional needs of the family and children if they plan to have successors of the family name (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). Thus, an increase in the expected income range, work-life balance, career advancement, and flexibility in work can be expected from respondents who are married, as compared to single, widowed, or divorced respondents.

#### **2.6.8 Workplace region**

The choice of Gen Z QS on their workplace location may affect their workplace expectations. While no relevant studies explored the effect of workplace region on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS, some research has explored regional contributions to aspects such as income, opportunities, socio-economic issues, and cost of living. Traditionally, individuals who search for higher pay will flock to areas closer to city centers. This is reflected in a study that shows the salary trend differences between urban, suburban, and rural areas between principals in Columbia. Salaries were highest in urban areas, followed by suburban and rural areas where principals were employed. Furthermore, a salary difference between employed principals in different states were also observed. This was affected by dynamic factors such as the size of schools and the cost of living (Poppink and Shen, 2003).

In Malaysia, the economic competitiveness in urban areas has caused a tremendous increase in land and housing prices, which urged many lower and middle-income households to move to suburban or further areas with lower residential property prices. A polarization where many well-paid income households would dominate metropolitan areas such as Kuala Lumpur would be observed, whereas residents marginalized economically would venture further into suburban or rural areas (Jamalunlaili Abdullah, 2012). Yet, living further from city centers translates to larger commuting costs due to lesser access to public transportation (dBartolome and Ross, 2007).

This creates a conflict between not only older generational cohorts but also Gen Z who just freshly graduated from educational institutes to enter the work field. Whether middle and lower Gen Z QS travel towards city center work locations, in hopes of higher remuneration or transportation benefits, or choose consultant companies near their suburban or rural living places to receive adequate salaries while facing lower living costs – this remains an

unexplored aspect affecting their work expectations, with limited studies venturing on these facets.

### **2.6.9 Company Size**

The current company size that employed Gen Z QS is another important factor that determines the workplace expectations preference of Gen Z QS. The sizes of Malaysian companies will be determined by the number of full-time workers instead of profit margin, including bosses and Human Resource employees, for ease of identification. Micro companies have less than five full-time workers, small companies have five to 29 workers, medium-sized companies have 30 to 75 workers while large companies have more than 76 workers (Relin Consultants, 2023).

Larger companies tend to provide employees with specialized tasks, while smaller companies utilise employees on a wide range of roles (Indeed, 2023). Larger companies also have more resources to provide higher salaries and better incentives, while smaller companies provide more opportunities for employees to implement creative and innovative ideas that help build up the company (Perry, 2022; Indeed, 2023). Additionally, larger companies provide a clearer pathway to promotion more than smaller companies, but smaller companies provide more challenging work tasks to all employees (Perry, 2022).

### **2.6.10 Base Income Range**

The income range set out in this research will follow the B40, M40 and T20 income groups, including the income subgroups such as B1 with less than RM2,560 base salary, B2 with RM2,560 to RM3,439 base salary, B3 with RM3,440 to RM4,309 base salary, B4 with RM4,310 to RM5,249 base salary, and M1 with RM5,250 to RM6,339 base salary (Romeli, 2023).

In traditional career advancement, vertical hierarchy movement occurs when an employee performs well and remains loyal in the organization (Parasuraman, Greenhaus and Linnehan, 2000). Organizations reward their employees with higher pay and status for their loyalty and good performance in the workplace. Furthermore, employees with better educational

backgrounds and professional qualifications are more likely to rise in the organization's hierarchy to accept heavier responsibilities.

Although, the workplace region of these employed QS will also affect the income range. Organizations based in city centers such as Kuala Lumpur may observe higher employee salaries compared to suburban areas such as to accommodate the higher food and transport costs, similarly to salaries of principals in urban areas compared to rural areas in Columbia (Poppink and Shen, 2003).

## **2.7 Retaining Strategies of employed Generation Z QS**

There are two types of retaining strategies – long-term and short-term. Long-term strategies involve the effort to execute changes about the construction industry's poor image (Ceric and Ivic, 2020). Short-term strategies are those which can be implemented within companies internally, as they include efforts to retain current employees, employ foreign workers, non-traditional recruitment – such as employing women and ethnic minorities, adult re-training, multiskilling current employees through training, providing incentives to maintain employee satisfaction, and implementation of skill-matching programs (Ceric and Ivic, 2020). For the sake of this research, retention strategies will focus on the short-term strategies to retain employees within an organization.

The accomplishment of applying these short-term strategies allows a company to establish a sustainable workforce. Not only will they retain their workforce, the strong bonds cultivated between employees will combat high turnover rates and low productivity while attracting potentially high achieving new prospects (Karakhan et al., 2023). To note, the loss or retirement of more experienced and skilled employees creates a gap in knowledge and skills within the workplace (Kim, Chang and Castro-Lacouture, 2020). Organizations should strive to maximise and lengthen the period of time an employee stays within an organization to avoid unnecessarily spending 150% of the departing employee's annual salary to re-hire and re-train a new employee (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021). As Gen Zs are still just starting to flock into the labour market, quantity surveying companies

should strive to establish any nearest and achievable work expectation realised by Gen Zs.

The retention strategies will be based on further exploration on the challenges faced by and retention strategies for QS, and Gen Z in the construction industry, or in general, as limited relevant research has explored the effective retainment strategies for both.

### **2.7.1 Assume corporate social responsibility (CSR)**

Companies that assume corporate social responsibility are attractive to Gen Z employees. CSR is focused on taking care of the natural environment and general social welfare (Bieleń and Kubiczek, 2020). Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, Gen Zs take environmental and climate change concerns as seriously as health and employment concerns. Not to mention, they are ready to boycott companies who do not take responsibility for ensuring a positive impact towards environmental and social causes (Deloitte, 2021). Furthermore, consultant companies should hire employees of various backgrounds. In the context of Gen Z, a company with diversified employees is attractive when they are considering employment (Pandita, 2022). Gen Zs are a generation that is unorthodox, liberal and embraces diversity in terms of race, gender, disabilities, educational backgrounds and cultural background (Deloitte, 2021). The employment of a diversified workers gives Gen Zs a sense of inclusion for all types of characters (Pandita, 2022). It is important for organizations to ensure all members in the work environment are respected and fully utilized, to ensure each member is valued for who they are instead of what they are not (Karakhan et al., 2023).

### **2.7.2 Avoid assigning unmanageable workloads**

In the context of Gen Z project managers, many report high levels of stress and pressure when they are assigned intense or high workloads. This influences their ability to have flexibility within the workplace, which disrupts their work-life balance and does not allow flexibility within their schedules (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023). Their flexibility in work are nonexistent as they are forced to work overtime to complete the work tasks with strict deadlines (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). Intense workloads that

are unmanageable are also detrimental to the health and well-being of the employees, causing a lack of career sustainability that reduces organizational performance and commitment (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023). Unmanageable tasks can lead to the inability of employees to keep up with deadlines and cause them to be unable to manage their personal lives (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022).

### **2.7.3 Nurture collaborative cultures within workplace**

Even though Gen Z are undecided on whether they prefer collaborative tasks or individual assignments in the workplace (Iorgulescu, 2016; Kee and Madden, 2018; Hatoum et al., 2022), that does not equate they do not prefer a workplace that has a collaborative culture. Gen Z individuals who prefer independent work do not appreciate isolation, instead, they want to be part of a culture that is mutually supportive, where employees regardless of age, ethnicity, and hierarchical titles work in a collaborative manner. In fact, a collaborative culture requires employees within a group or an organization to form a community and have positive and caring relationships between each other to create a sense of companionship and camaraderie (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021; Karakhan et al., 2023). They should avoid displaying favouritism or discrimination to specific employees as well (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). In addition, organizations that can appropriately allocate work to a team with different skills and marital status can encourage life management of QS as tasks can be more equally distributed. Harassment of all types should be dealt with immediately to protect all employees (Schroth, 2019).

### **2.7.4 Nurture flexible working style within workplace**

Gen Zs will appreciate the flexibility in choosing their working hours, working locations, hierarchical titles, and assigned tasks (Pandita, 2022). They are not particularly attached to traditional rigid job titles and, in fact, prefer a chance to decide their ideas of career advancement within the organization (Pandita, 2022). Flexible workplace arrangements such as remote working also allow employees to be productive for the organization while keeping their personal and private lives distinct, creating work-life separation. Gen Zs can feel

satisfied by such organizational arrangements while ensuring maximum efficiency in their performance (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021). Flexibility within work contributes to higher employee happiness and job satisfaction, which increase organizational productivity while boosting the company's competitiveness (Siti Nur Aishah Mohd Noor and Nadzirah Zainordin, 2018).

#### **2.7.5 Create a healthy work environment**

Gen Zs want their employers to be aware of their mental and physical health (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021). In a Deloitte survey, 40% of Millennials and Gen Zs feel their employers did not support their mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, instead about 35% of Gen Zs took leaves in order to soothe the stresses and anxieties caused by it (Deloitte, 2021). Physical health can be cared for by providing adequate health benefits such as free healthcare in selected clinics and hospitals. Organizations can also provide mental health care to employees by offering stress management, emotion-regulation programs and mindfulness initiatives (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023).

#### **2.7.6 Provide career mentoring**

The provision of career mentoring is also a reflection of an organization's collaborative culture, which is appreciated by Gen Zs (Pandita, 2022). Mentoring is invaluable in equipping Gen Z with self-efficacy factors such as occupational information, goal selection, planning, problem-solving, and self-appraisal that aids in confidence and realistic expectations (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021; Liu, Draper and Dawson, 2022). Furthermore, mentoring aids in building up resilience towards career shocks and as mentors can provide coping mechanisms and strategies when encountering challenges while working (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021). This allows employees to be more hardy when facing uncertainties at work, as most Gen Zs grew up in higher-income families. Especially since they are a generation who is more academically inclined with lesser entry-level working experience compared to previous generations (Schroth, 2019). In some cases, mentoring is



also a method for managers to facilitate personal change in employees whenever needed (Schroth, 2019).

### **2.7.7 Provide training and development opportunities**

In contrast to mentoring that provides Gen Z with a guide in the workplace, training and development programmes allow them to fulfill their inclination to learn new skills and information (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021). This is becoming increasingly important, as the expected competencies of QS within the construction industry are expected to shift to encompass sustainable construction and information technology (Yap et al., 2022). Instead of the traditional roles of QS in value management and project management, emphasis on communication, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), ethics and professional conduct are becoming the significant competencies expected from QS (Yap et al., 2022).

### **2.7.8 Provide growth opportunities**

Career advancement and growth opportunities are important for Gen Z cohorts. Their expectations from organizations to provide them with learning, development, and mentoring opportunities are rooted as an expectation for career development towards vertical or horizontal hierarchy (Barhate and Dirani, 2022). It was one of the intrinsic rewards that impacts the motivation of QS positively (Siti Nur Aishah Mohd Noor and Nadzirah Zainordin, 2018). It is discovered that when QS observed low promotion chances, they would switch companies to join another company for job advancement opportunities. Growth opportunities can be provided through assigning challenging work tasks that require high skill and trust, such as letting QS decide which tenders should be recommended after comparison. Furthermore, changing the job scopes to fit employees' traits provides QS with job satisfaction from lack of work task stagnancy (Hee and Ling, 2011). Consultant companies can also create entrepreneurial opportunities for Gen Z to fulfill their entrepreneurial inclinations in order to retain them (Kee and Madden, 2018).

### **2.7.9 Give monetary and non-monetary rewards**

Many articles have connected the relationship between work motivation, job satisfaction and rewards for employees. Rewards can be categorized in two ways: base salary and non-wage monetary benefits. Notably, most have specified a balanced mix of monetary and non-monetary rewards are required in order to fulfill the needs and wants of employees (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021). In addition, it can be further split into tangible and intangible rewards, where tangible rewards include bonuses, travel rewards and extra leave days; while intangible rewards include career advancement, flexibility in work and training programmes (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021).

### **2.7.10 Provide job security**

Job security can be provided by organizations in various ways. For one, companies should ensure that employees receive their salaries on time instead of delayed or non-payment of wages. This is because many individuals, especially married spouses are breadwinners of the family and rely on one sole member to provide for all family members (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022). Initiatives such as onboarding, defined as all practices or policies implemented by an organization to facilitate newcomer adjustment can be done to increase a sense of job security within Gen Z. Specifically, organizations ought to supply a checklist of timeline, goals, responsibilities and establish a medium of communication and feedback while ensuring each employee is aware of their significance in the workplace (Schroth, 2019). This reassures Gen Z that they are needed in the workplace, and allows them to follow a rubric that will be productive for the organization to ensure their employment within a company.

## **2.8 Summary of Chapter**

In this study, Gen Z individuals are defined as those born within the range of 1997 to 2012. Further, QS in this study targets those working under job titles with “QS” and the profession or tasks that are similar to QS in nature in the consultant firm. Four categories were utilized to distribute 31 workplace expectations – Organizational Core Values, Organizational Working Style,

Development and Advancement Opportunities, and Benefits and Remuneration Provided. The nine demographic factors that would affect work expectations of Gen Z QS are age, gender, ethnicity, educational background, work experience, professional qualifications, marital status, workplace region, and income range. The ten proposed retaining strategies to be ranked by Gen Z QS are to assume CSR, avoid assigning unmanageable workloads, nurture collaborative cultures within the workplace, nurture flexible working style within the workplace, create a healthy work environment, provide career mentoring, provide training and development opportunities, provide growth opportunities, give monetary and non-monetary rewards, and provide job security.

A theoretical framework for approaching the variables in this study is shown in Figure 2.3.

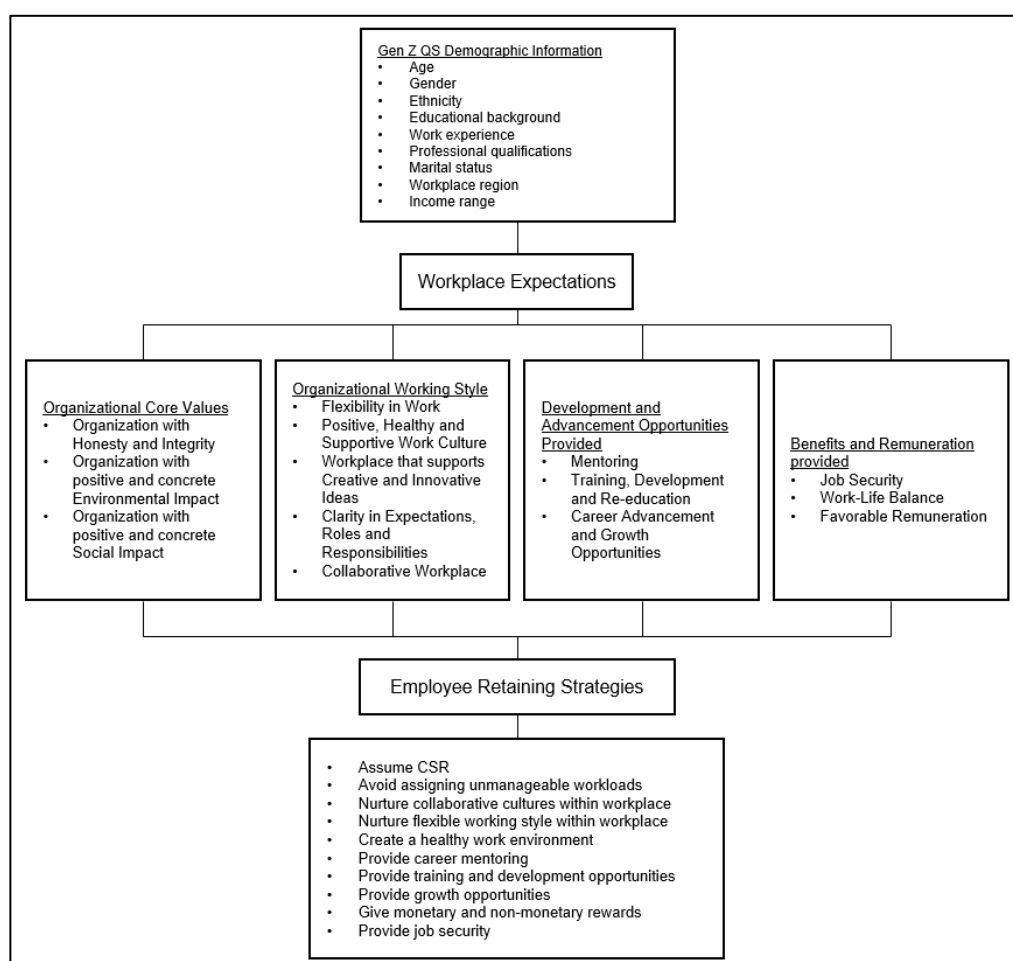


Figure 2.3: Theoretical framework of this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the research method, instruments, target population, sampling design and data analysis used. A quantitative method was used in this research, through the aid of a pre-tested questionnaire. Primary and secondary data were involved to determine the objectives and literature review of this research. Only Gen Z QS in consultant firms are set as the target respondents of this research, with a minimum of 30 respondents for each demographic group. Data analysis involved the use of descriptive test, reliability test, and inferential to achieve all objectives set out in this research.

#### 3.2 Research Method

Research methods are defined as the approaches used to collect data and analyse them in a purposeful manner (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). There are two main methods of research methods, which are Qualitative and Quantitative research. Similarly, the type of data collected can be qualitative data and quantitative data (Neuman, 2014). Table 3.1 summarizes the difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Table 3.1: Qualitative and Quantitative Research differences.

<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<b>Quantitative Research</b>
Researcher involved	Researcher detached
Thematic and patterns analysis	Statistical analysis
Open-ended questions	Instrument based questions
Situationally constrained	Independent of context
Uses soft data – words, photos, symbols, sentences	Uses hard data – numerical data
Focus on interactive processes, events	Focus on variables
Construct social reality, cultural meaning	Measure objective facts

Source: Lawrence Neuman, 2014; Creswell and David Creswell, 2018.

Qualitative research is the study of soft data which includes words, images, symbols and sentences through an interpretive and critical social science perspective (Neuman, 2014). Multiple sources of data are gathered, such as interviews, observations, documents and audiovisual information that is organized by the researcher (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research gives rise to new hypotheses and describes mechanisms or processes with details for through the use of open-ended questions to a small set of respondents (Neuman, 2014). The role of a researcher is important in analysing the acquired data before presenting it to readers, as it is emergent from the participants' perspective rather than from a researcher's lens (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Quantitative research is the study of hard data that is numerical in nature through the use of variables and hypotheses testing and measurement (Neuman, 2014). It is deterministic in nature and poses a primary purpose with a pre-determined period of study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Quantitative research attempts to understand the relationship of variables or prove suggested hypotheses determined in each study (Neuman, 2014). Unlike qualitative research, quantitative research requires a large sample size of a target population as the study is based from a researcher's lens. While analysing the numerical data collected, scores of reliability and validity were applied to each variable to determine if a hypothesis is true, false, or applicable only in certain situations (Neuman, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

### **3.2.1 Selected Research Method**

Quantitative research method is the most suitable method for this study. The purpose of this research is to identify the workplace expectations of a generational cohort in a specific industry, to examine the relationship between demographic aspects and the related cohort's work expectations, and to find out which expectations of this cohort were met by their employers. The nature of this research is instrument-based questions that does not require the involvement of researcher's understanding and thematic analysis, only a statistical analysis of the results. No measure on social reality and cultural

meaning is required and only focuses on suggested variables in the literature review. This parallels with the nature of quantitative method to measure objective facts based on hard, numerical data and perform statistical analysis to confirm or deny hypothesis suggested (Neuman, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

### **3.3 Research Instrument**

A research instrument is a technique or tool that aids in gathering and interpreting the collected information. It can be self-designed, modified or one developed by other researchers (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). For this study, a questionnaire was used to collect respondent's information while relying on primary and secondary data to generate a suitable questionnaire.

#### **3.3.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a collection of survey questions grouped together to gather data from respondents. Questionnaires can be in paper formats, online surveys or interactive between the researcher and respondent. A questionnaire should be easy to understand and not confusing to the respondents, and should be free of any suggestive phrases and words that would lead respondents to give expected answers (Neuman, 2014). It is often used to generalize a sample population, which fits the purpose of this study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

The questionnaire used was an online survey that was split into different sections to collect different data. As shown in

Table 3.2, Section A aims to collect the demographic information of respondents, Section B attempts to determine the most important workplace expectations of Gen Z QS, Section C aims to evaluate which expectations were met by their consultant employers and Section D aims to discover the retaining strategies that would speak well to the respondents. The Likert scale would be used to allow respondents to rate their level of agreement in sections B, C and D, where 1 indicates very negative or strong disagreement and 5 indicates very positive or strong agreement.

Table 3.2: Design of Questionnaire.

Section	Item	Likert Scale
A	<u>Identify respondents who are:</u> 1. Gen Z (born 1997 – 2012) 2. Currently working as QS 3. Currently employed in Malaysian consultant firm <u>Collect Demographic Information:</u> 1. Birth year 2. Gender 3. Ethnicity 4. Educational background 5. Work experience 6. Professional qualifications 7. Marital status 8. Current workplace region 9. Current company size 10. Base income	N/A
B	<u>Important Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS</u> 1. Part A – Organizational Core Values 2. Part B – Organizational Working Style 3. Part C – Development and Advancement Opportunities 4. Part D – Benefits and Remuneration Provided	1: Strongly Disagree 2: Disagree 3: Neutral 4: Agree 5: Strongly Agree
C	<u>Extent of Expectations met by Employers in Consultant Firms</u> 1. Part A – Organizational Core Values 2. Part B – Organizational Working Style 3. Part C – Development and Advancement Opportunities 4. Part D – Benefits and Remuneration Provided	1: Strongly Disagree 2: Disagree 3: Neutral 4: Agree 5: Strongly Agree
D	<u>Retaining Strategies</u> 1. Practices equality to all genders, disabilities and races. 2. Provides high base salary. 3. Provides job security. 4. Provides mentors. 5. Allows flexibility in work times and work locations. 6. Provide regular promotions and growth opportunities. 7. Builds a collaborative culture in workplace. 8. Creates a healthy environment (mental and physical). 9. Provides regular bonuses. 10. Provides training and development opportunities. 11. Avoids assigning unmanageable workloads. 12. Ignores their impact to the environment.	1: Extremely Unattractive 2: Unattractive 3: Neutral 4: Attractive 5: Extremely Attractive



### **3.3.2 Pretest**

A pretest was conducted before formal distribution of questionnaire to collect data from target respondents. The questionnaire was given to five (5) people, three (3) of which were Gen Z QS employed in consultant firms while two (2) were non-Gen Z QS. All pretest participants confirmed the questionnaire was easy to understand and had minor grammar mistakes. Therefore, further pretest and analysis of the created questionnaire was not required.

While similar to pilot tests, it is an informal method of ensuring the designed questionnaires will induce respondents to provide reliable information that will ensure the reliability of results during data analysis (Neuman, 2014). By performing pretest, potential issues can be discovered early on and improved (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

### **3.3.3 Data Collection**

Different types of data were collected in this research to achieve the listed objectives. A mixture of both primary data and secondary data were used in completing this study. Data are used to describe attributes, compare research, reanalyze unresolved questions of previous research, advance different and future fields of researches and provide education (Hox and Boeije, 2005).

#### **3.3.3.1 Primary Data**

Primary data is comprised of data collected through conducting experiments, interview surveys, qualitative research as well as observing administrative, and existing records that are spontaneous, emergent or solicited in nature (Hox and Boeije, 2005). This includes the questionnaire designed for acquiring quantitative data from relevant respondents that were used in this research. Primary data was acquired through online distribution of questionnaire to respondents throughout Malaysia and allowed respondents to respond at their own time and convenience. These primary data were then be analyzed through use of other research instruments and methods of data analysis. The analysis performed will then become secondary data for other researchers to further their studies.

### **3.3.3.2 Secondary Data**

Secondary data such as official statistics, administrative records or accounts kept by organizations, books, news, journals, articles, reports and papers that are kept in a data archived and requires researchers to evaluate reliable and relevant information that is applicable for their research (Hox and Boeije, 2005).

In this study, secondary data was used to perform literature review, research methods and explore the gaps in research to determine the objectives of this research study. Information and results from journal articles, reports, news, books, web pages and theses were gathered and filtered to select information relevant to the study topic. Critical thinking was applied while reading and understanding these secondary data to create conclusions and identify research gaps. Furthermore, secondary data was used to create the questionnaires aimed at target respondents of this research topic.

## **3.4 Sampling Design**

Sampling is referred as the process to select and specify the type of respondents within a select population. It is important to proceed with sampling as incorrect selection of target respondents will affect the accuracy of a research (Fowler, 2014). The act of sampling allows researchers to save costs, collect data quickly while determining the availability of population elements and procuring accurate results (Cooper and Schindler, 2014).

### **3.4.1 Sampling Frame**

Three common ways exist to sample a population. Sample frames are used to narrow down respondents who can participate in a survey and considered as a justifiable respondent. In this research, the sampling frame will involve a demographic group that qualify for a certain situation. Specifically, those within the Gen Z cohort, QS field of work and employed in consultant are included in the sample.

### **3.4.2 Target Respondents**

The target respondents for this study are Gen Z QS that are currently employed by consultant firm employers. Students, including those who are interning under consultant firm employers were excluded from this survey. Demographic information were collected through the questionnaire to ensure participating respondents fit the prerequisites of this research.

### **3.4.3 Sampling Method: Non-Probability Sampling**

There are two (2) main types of sampling methods – probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The non-probability sampling – convenience sampling was used.

Non-probability sampling is subjective and arbitrary in nature, choosing a sample size with a pattern or basis as reference (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). The nature of quantitative research demands a large sample size (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Furthermore, the intention of this research is to identify the work expectations of Gen Z QS in Malaysia. As of now, there are no reliable sources that can determine the exact sample size for this research to do probability sampling methods such as simple random sampling and systematic sampling that relies on a known number of a target population (Fowler, 2014).

Thus, using non-probability sampling allows all known and unknown respondents applicable to participate in this survey without limiting to a particular set of respondents (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Convenience sampling was used, where it is unrestricted and accidental. It was used on the basis of recruiting respondents from specific consultant companies with Gen Z QS, where these respondents will then recruit other social ties who are also Gen Z QS that are employed in consultant firms (Vehovar, Toepoel and Steinmetz, 2016).

Emails were sent to consultant firms across Malaysia to invite as many companies to participate in this research as possible. Direct invitations were sent to LinkedIn profiles who are Gen Z (born in 1997 to 2012), currently working as a QS and employed in a Malaysian consultant firm. A link was provided at the beginning and end of the questionnaire that

participants could share with relevant connections to take part in this questionnaire as well.

#### 3.4.4 Sampling Size

The Cochran Formula was used to calculate the minimum number of respondents required for this research, as shown below:

$$n = \frac{p(1-p)z^2}{e^2} \quad (1.1)$$

Where

$n$  = sample size

$p$  = population proportion (assumed as 50%,  $p = 0.5$ )

$z$  = reliability level of 95 % ( $z = 1.96$ )

$e$  = acceptable sampling error (assumed as 5%,  $d = 0.05$ )

The formula calculates the sample size,  $n$  with an estimated population proportion,  $p$  that poses the required attributes for this research. Usually, a proportion at 50% represents the greatest variability, thus commonly used to calculate sample sizes (Uakarn, Chaokromthong and Sintao, 2021).

As there was no reliable reference of the amount of QS who are under the Gen Z QS in Malaysia, the population proportion is assumed as 50% and indicate p-value of 0.05 that is represented by  $z$ . While the reliability level is determined as 95%,  $z$  will be defined as 1.96, and  $e$  defined as 0.05 to be the permissible sampling error. This meant that this study can allow sampling errors of 5% or less. The calculation totaled to a minimum of 384 respondents required to ensure the data is considered as valid.

This research will also reference the use of Central Limit Theorem (CLT) to determine the minimum sample size as the prerequisite for Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis H Test to conduct inferential statistics. If a minimum sample size of 30 respondents is achieved, a normally distributed data that represents the population mean can be achieved to conduct inferential tests (Ganti, 2024). Therefore, each demographic factor should have at least 30

respondents, such as 30 male Gen Z QS and 30 female Gen Z QS, to maximise the achievable results for this research.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

There are many tools available for analysing data acquired through survey questionnaires. Appropriate approaches should be reviewed and selected to ensure the conclusiveness of the data is reliable and accurate. Numerical data was reviewed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.0 was used in this study to generate analytical results for further discussion. Microsoft Excel will also be used to proceed with reliability test, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

#### 3.5.1 Reliability Test

The Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test is used to determine internal consistency between a set of items as a group using the Likert-scale measurement (Sileyew, 2020). It is based on the derivation of a Cronbach's Alpha value, where coefficients above 0.70 are considered acceptable and reliable in a research (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Table 3.3 below shows the adopted rule of thumb for Cronbach's Alpha Results that are above 0.70 which are acceptable. The reliability test was used to measure the internal consistency of Sections B, C and D of the questionnaire results.

Table 3.3: General Rule of Thumb of Cronbach's Alpha Results.

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$0.9 \leq \alpha$	Excellent
$0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$	Satisfactory
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$	Acceptable

Source: Taber, 2018

#### 3.5.2 Descriptive Test: Measures of Central Tendency

Descriptive test is the use of mean, mode and median. It will indicate the central tendency of respondents to each statement in the questionnaire. The generated mean amount was used to rank variables for this study according to

its relevance, while mode and median determined the prevalent outcome. The variables work expectations of Gen Z QS, the extent to which work expectations are met, and recommended strategies for retaining employees will involve the use of descriptive statistics.

### **3.5.3 Non-parametric Measures: Inferential Statistics**

Non-parametric test were used in this research to analyse the data collected. This is because the primary data from respondents are not known and cannot be surely hypothesized as normally distributed (LinkedIn, 2023). Furthermore, the primary data collected were in the form of Likert scale and most adequate to measure with inferential methods. Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis H Test and Spearman's Rank Correlation were employed.

#### **3.5.3.1 Mann-Whitney U Test**

Mann-Whitney U Test is a form of non-parametric measure used to identify significant differences between two groups of respondents. The higher mean rank of one group indicated more importance compared to the lower mean rank of the other group, if the p-value generated was less than 0.05. Similarly to the associational test, Mann-Whitney U Test also generated two possible hypothesis statements, where null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) indicated no significant relationship while the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) indicated a significant relationship between two parameters (McKnight and Najab, 2010).

In this research, Mann-Whitney U Test was used to identify whether male and female Gen Z QS in consultant firms had significantly higher importance to workplace expectations. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

- $H_0$  : There is no inclination of importance by male and female Gen Z QS in consultant firms on workplace expectations.
- $H_1$  : There is a inclination of importance by male and female Gen Z QS in consultant firms on workplace expectations.

Furthermore, Mann-Whitney U Test was used to identify whether Malay and Chinese Gen Z QS in consultant firms had significant inclined importance to workplace expectations. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant inclined importance by Malay and Chinese Gen Z QS in consultant firms on workplace expectations.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a significant inclined importance by Malay and Chinese Gen Z QS in consultant firms on workplace expectations.

Additionally, Mann-Whitney U Test was used to identify whether Gen Z QS in consultant firms with Diploma or Degree had significant inclined importance to workplace expectations. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant inclined importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms with Diploma and Degree on workplace expectations.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a significant inclined importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms with Diploma and Degree on workplace expectations.

Moreover, Mann-Whitney U Test was used to identify whether Gen Z QS in consultant firms without professional qualifications and with BQSM: PvQS qualifications had pronounced important to workplace expectations. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no pronounced importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms without professional qualifications and with BQSM: PvQS qualifications on workplace expectations.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a pronounced importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms without professional qualifications and with BQSM: PvQS qualifications on workplace expectations.

Other than that, Mann-Whitney U Test was used to identify whether Gen Z QS in Klang Valley consultant firms and Gen Z QS in Non-Klang Valley consultant firms had pronounced importance to workplace expectations. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

$H_0$  : There is no pronounced importance by Gen Z QS in Klang Valley consultant firms and Non-Klang Valley consultant firms on workplace expectations.

$H_1$  : There is a pronounced importance by Gen Z QS in Klang Valley consultant firms and Non-Klang Valley consultant firms on workplace expectations.

Finally, Mann-Whitney U Test was used to identify whether Gen Z QS in consultant firms of the B1&B2 and the B3&B4 income subgroup had inclined importance to workplace expectations. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

$H_0$  : There is inclined importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms of the B1&B2 and the B3&B4 income subgroup on workplace expectations.

$H_1$  : There is a inclined importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms of the B1&B2 and the B3&B4 income subgroup on workplace expectations.

### **3.5.3.2 Kruskal-Wallis H Test**

The Kruskal Wallis H Test is a form non-parametric measure used to identify significant differences between two or more groups of respondents. It is an extension of the Mann-Whitney U Test. In a situation where the tested variables do not have the same distributional shape, the mean ranks generated will be compared for accurate result interpretation. Similarly to Mann-Whitney U Test, the higher mean rank of one group indicated higher importance compared to the lower mean rank of the other group, if the p-value generated was less than 0.05. Two possible hypothesis statements, where null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) indicated no significant relationship while the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) indicated a significant relationship between two parameters (Xia, 2020).



In this research, the Kruskal-Wallis H Test was used to identify whether Gen Z QS in small consultant firms, medium consultant firms and large consultant firms held higher importance to workplace expectations. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no higher importance held by Gen Z QS in small, medium and large consultant firms on workplace expectations.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a higher importance held by Gen Z QS in small, medium and large consultant firms on workplace expectations.

### 3.5.3.3 Associational Test: Spearman's Rank Correlation Test

Spearman's Rank Correlation Test is a form of non-parametric measure that uses a coefficient,  $r_s$  and asymptomatic p-value to identify the strength and monotonic direction of two parameters' relationship. When the p-value is less than 0.05, the relationship is considered significant. Table 3.4 below summarised the interpretation of correlation coefficient if the monotonic relationship is considered significant. Two generated hypothesis statements can be accepted as the results, where null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) indicated no significant relationship while the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) indicated a significant relationship between two parameters (Fowler, Cohen and Jarvis, 1998).

Table 3.4: Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient Interpretation.

<b>Positive or Negative Correlation Coefficient, <math>r_s</math></b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
$0.00 \leq r_s < 0.20$	Correlation is very weak
$0.20 \leq r_s < 0.40$	Correlation is weak
$0.40 \leq r_s < 0.70$	Correlation is moderate
$0.70 \leq r_s < 0.90$	Correlation is strong
$0.90 \leq r_s < 1.00$	Correlation is very strong

Source: Fowler et al., 1998

In this research, the associational test was employed to identify the correlation between age and the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between age and the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between age and the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

Additionally, the associational test was employed to identify the correlation between work experience and the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between work experience and the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between work experience and the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

Moreover, the associational test was employed to as supplementary evidence to compare the correlation between two demographic factors – age and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between age and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between age and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

In addition, the associational test was employed to as supplementary evidence to compare the correlation between two demographic factors – age and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between age and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between age and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

Similarly, the associational test was employed to as supplementary evidence to compare the correlation between two demographic factors – work experience and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between work experience and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between work experience and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

On the other hand, the associational test was employed to as supplementary evidence to compare the correlation between two demographic factors – base income and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between base income and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between base income and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

Lastly, the associational test was employed to as supplementary evidence to compare the correlation between two demographic factors – base income and age of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between base income and age of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between base income and age of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

### **3.6 Summary**

The research method that was used is quantitative research. Research instruments such as questionnaire, pilot test, data collection of primary and secondary data were used. The preliminary design of the questionnaire will involve four sections – Section A collecting the demographic information of respondents; Section B collecting the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS; Section C collecting the expectations met by employers in consultant firms; and Section D regarding retaining strategies. The sampling method used is a non-probability sampling. The target respondents are employed Gen Z QS in Malaysian consultant firms. Data analysis used SPSS and Microsoft Excel to perform Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test, Measure of Central Tendency, Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis H Test, and Spearman's Rank Correlation Test.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The data collection period lasted for five (5) weeks, from 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024 to 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024. A total of 104 responses were received. Among that, six (6) sets of responses were eliminated as they did not fulfill all prerequisites set out: (1) born between the years 1997 to 2012, (2) currently working as a QS in Malaysia, and (3) currently employed by a consultant firm. As such, only 98 valid respondents participated in this survey. The pool of respondents is considered small.

#### 4.2 Descriptive Test: Respondents Demographic Profile

The demographic profile collected in the questionnaire's Section A was summarised as in Table 4.1 below.

The distribution of Gen Z respondents who were born between 1997 to 2001, was fairly equal at ranges of 16% to 20%, where most respondents are 23 years old and born in 2001 (19.39%, n = 19) and the least respondents are 22 years old and born in 2002 (9.18%, n = 9) and 21 years old and born in 2003 (3.06%, n = 3). There were more female respondents than male respondents, each comprised 54 (55.10%) and 44 (44.90%) respectively. In terms of ethnicity, Chinese represented 56.12% (n = 55) of all respondents, followed by Malays represented 41.84% (n = 41) and Indians represented 2.04% (2 respondents).

Additionally, more than half of the respondents (67.35%, n = 66) entered the workforce as Degree Holders, whereas one-third (30.61%, n = 30) of the respondents are Diploma Holders, and only two (2) respondents (2.04%) furthered their studies to Masters. Nearly one-third of respondents (32.65%, n = 32) have only less than one (1) year's worth of work experience, with six (6) respondents (6.12%) having no more than five (5) years of work experience.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of all 98 respondents.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Age (Year of Birth)</b>	1997	17	17.35
	1998	16	16.33
	1999	16	16.33
	2000	18	18.37
	2001	19	19.39
	2002	9	9.18
	2003	3	3.06
<b>Gender</b>	Male	44	44.90
	Female	54	55.10
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Malay	41	41.84
	Chinese	55	56.12
	Indian	2	2.04
<b>Educational Background</b>	Diploma	30	30.61
	Degree	66	67.35
	Masters	2	2.04
<b>Work Experience</b>	Less than 1 year	32	32.65
	No more than 2 years	25	25.51
	No more than 3 years	20	20.41
	No more than 4 years	15	15.31
	No more than 5 years	6	6.12
<b>Professional Qualifications</b>	None	43	43.88
	BQSM: PvQS	47	47.96
	BQSM: PQS, RISM: Full Member	8	8.16
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	83	84.69
	Married	15	15.31
<b>Company Region</b>	Klang Valley	65	66.30
	Non-Klang Valley	31	31.60
	Work from Home in Klang Valley	2	2.00

Table 4.1 (Continued)

<b>Company Size</b>	Small (5-29 full time workers)	35	35.71
	Medium (30-75 full time workers)	32	32.65
	Large (76 or more full time workers)	31	31.63
<b>Base Income</b>	B1: Less than RM2,560	4	4.10
	B2: RM2,561 - RM3,439	53	54.10
	B3: RM3,440 - RM4,309	29	29.60
	B4: RM4,310 - RM5,249	8	8.20
	M1: RM5,250 - RM6,339	4	4.10

More than half (58.16%,  $n = 57$ ) of respondents had only less than two (2) years of working experience, while others had work experiences ranging from more than two (2) years to less than five (5) years (41.84%,  $n = 41$ ). Roughly half of all respondents (47.96%,  $n = 47$ ) are registered as a PvQS under BQSM, and the other half (43.88%,  $n = 43$ ) did not hold any professional qualifications. The majority of respondents were single (84.69%,  $n = 83$ ).

Interestingly, only two (2) respondents (2.04%) worked exclusively from home in Klang Valley areas. Most of the respondents' employer companies are located in Klang Valley areas (66.30%,  $n = 65$ ) while others were located in Non-Klang Valley areas (31.60%,  $n = 31$ ).

The questionnaire provided a list of base salary ranges, where B1, B2, B3 and B4 are subgroups of the B40 income group while M1 is a subgroup for the M40 income group (Romeli, 2023). More than half (54.10%,  $n = 53$ ) of respondents were in the B2 income group, followed by 29.60% ( $n = 29$ ) in the B3 income group, 8.20% ( $n = 8$ ) in the B4 income group, while both B1 and M1 income groups each had four (4) respondents (4.10%). More than half of the respondents (58.16%,  $n = 57$ ) had a base income of less than RM3,440 while the others (41.84%,  $n = 41$ ) had a base salary of within RM3,440 to RM6,339.

This research followed Bank Negara Malaysia's definition of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) small-sized companies are defined as a company with five (5) to 29 full-time workers, a medium-sized companies

have 30 to 75 full-time workers while large-sized companies have 76 or more full-time workers (Relin Consultants, 2023). “Workers” in this sense includes QS, any Human Resources and Bosses. The category of respondents working in different company sizes are nearly divided into three-thirds, with small companies employing the most respondents (35.71%, n = 35) and large companies employing the least respondents (31.63%, n = 31).

#### 4.2.1 Adjustment of Base Income based on CLT

To perform inferential test on the base income, the data for B1 and B2 were merged into one category, the B3 and B4 were merged into the other category, as shown in Table 4.2. M1 was not tested as it did not fulfill the prerequisite of the minimum of 30 respondents based on CLT.

Table 4.2: Adjusted Base Income Category based on CLT requirements.

Parameter	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Base Income</b>	B1&B2: Less than RM3,439	57	58.20
	B3&B4: RM3,440 - RM5,249	37	37.80
	M1: RM5,250 - RM6,339	4	4.10

#### 4.3 Reliability Test: Cronbach’s Alpha

A Cronbach’s Alpha Test was done on Sections B, C, and D to determine the reliability of responses received, as shown in Table 4.3 below. Section B and C had an Alpha value above 0.9, which is considered excellent consistency, while Section D had an Alpha value between 0.7 and 0.8, which indicated acceptable consistency.

Table 4.3: Reliability Test Results on Sections B, C and D in the Questionnaire.

Sections	Title	Cronbach's Alpha Value	N of Items
B	Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS	0.905	31
C	Expectations met by Consultant Employers	0.928	31
D	Retaining Strategies	0.765	12



#### 4.4 Descriptive Test: Key Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms

Section B of the questionnaire aimed to achieve the 1<sup>st</sup> objective – to identify the workplace expectations of employed Gen Z QS in consultant companies. Respondents were asked to rate which 31 workplace expectations were most important for their employers to provide. The results are summarised in Table 4.3 below based on four (4) categories.

##### 4.4.1 Category-Based Analysis: Key Workplace Expectations

Of all four (4) categories, Gen Z QS in consultant companies considered the *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category as 1<sup>st</sup> key workplace expectation category (average mean = 4.36). In here, two (2) expectations were appraised as *Extremely Important* (median = 5.00) and one was considered *Very Important* (median = 4.50). All other workplace expectations in this category were considered *Important* (median = 4.00) by the respondents.

Companies that *provide job security* were considered an *Extremely Important* workplace expectation. It was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> overall with a mean of 4.54 and was perhaps brought on by the critical impact of mass job losses during COVID-19 has shown them the importance of a stable job (Aziz et al., 2020).

Results also described the expectation of companies that *provide adequate paid leaves* as *Extremely Important* for Gen Z QS. It ranked 4<sup>th</sup> overall (mean = 4.50) that may be explained by Gen Z's similar needs to Gen X's on work-life balance (Perera, Ridmika and Wijewickrama, 2022).

Furthermore, companies that *gave periodic bonuses* were ranked 6<sup>th</sup> overall (mean = 4.46) as an *Extremely Important* workplace consideration. Bonuses are an additional income source for employees, which explains its importance to generations of all kind, including Gen Z QS.

Table 4.4: Most Important Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS based on Categories.

Important Workplace Expectations	Categorical Rank	Mean	Overall Rank	Median	Importance
<b>Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided (n = 6) (Average Mean = 4.36)</b>					
2.D Provide job security		4.54	3	5.00	Extremely Important
2.D Provide adequate paid leave		4.50	4	5.00	Extremely Important
2.D Gives periodic bonus	1	4.46	6	4.50	Very Important
2.D Does not assign unmanageable workload		4.36	10	4.00	Important
2.D Provide high base salary		4.34	12	4.00	Important
2.D Prohibit OT culture		3.99	23	4.00	Important
<b>Part A - Organizational Core Values (n = 7) (Average Mean = 4.18)</b>					
2.A Treat all races equally		4.65	1	5.00	Extremely Important
2.A Treat all genders equally		4.63	2	5.00	Extremely Important
2.A Do not discriminate disabilities		4.43	7	4.00	Important
2.A Discourages unethical conduct	2	4.35	11	4.00	Important
2.A Has well defined visions and missions		4.14	18	4.00	Important
2.A Demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s)		3.55	29	4.00	Important
2.A Demonstrate micro sustainable pledge(s)		3.49	30	4.00	Important
<b>Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities (n = 8) (Average Mean = 4.12)</b>					
2.C Provide mentoring		4.48	5	5.00	Extremely Important
2.C Provide promotions to higher positions		4.42	8	4.00	Important
2.C Sponsor external training(s)		4.30	15	4.00	Important
2.C Provide internal training(s)	3	4.28	16	4.00	Important
2.C Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway		3.99	22	4.00	Important
2.C Sponsor employees' further studies		3.96	24	4.00	Important
2.C Provide promotions to other branches		3.87	26	4.00	Important
2.C Provide challenging work tasks		3.64	28	4.00	Important
<b>Part B - Organizational Working Style (n = 10) (Average Mean = 4.02)</b>					
2.B Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment		4.37	9	4.00	Important
2.B Provide feedback on employee performance		4.33	13	4.00	Important
2.B Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas		4.30	14	4.00	Important
2.B Define clear expectations from employees		4.24	17	4.00	Important
2.B Provide flexible work hours	4	4.08	19	4.00	Important
2.B Provide mental health support		4.05	20	4.00	Important
2.B Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies		4.00	21	4.00	Important
2.B Provide flexible work location		3.88	25	4.00	Important
2.B Often assigns group work tasks		3.68	27	4.00	Important
2.B Often assigns solo work tasks		3.26	31	3.00	Neutral

The next category with an average mean of 4.18 was considered the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important batch of workplace expectations, *Organizational Core Values*. Two (2) particular expectations were deemed *Extremely Important* (median = 5.00) by Gen Z QS in consultant firms, while many others were considered *Important* (median = 4.00). This aligned with the literature review where Gen Zs are concerned with the environmental and social impacts brought by companies (Deloitte, 2021; Pandita, 2022).

As introduced, companies who provide *equal treatment to all races* (mean = 4.65) and *equal treatment to all genders* (mean = 4.63) were ranked *Extremely Important* by the Gen Z QS cohort. Each of them ranked 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> overall, which partially paralleled the literature review that mentioned Gen Zs are the pioneer generation that is urging companies to care for social responsibilities (Kee and Madden, 2018).

Ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, the *Development and Advancement Opportunities* category contained one (1) workplace expectation that was deemed *Extremely Important* (median = 5.00) by the Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Similar expectations were also all considered *Important* (median = 4.00) by the respondents.

In particular, Gen Z QS most favorably considered *provision of mentorship* as an *Extremely Important* workplace expectation. It ranked 5<sup>th</sup> overall with a mean of 4.48, most likely due to their expectations of a reliable guide in the workspace that can teach them vital knowledge to handle assigned work tasks (Kee and Madden, 2018).

Finally, the category of *Organizational Working Style* with ten (10) items and an average mean of 4.05 was ranked categorically last. All expectations such as *providing mental health support* and *allowing employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies* were considered *Important* (median = 4.00), except for the expectation where companies *often assigned solo work tasks* that was considered *Neutral* (median = 3.00). This meant that Gen Z QS did not consider their employment company based on the frequency of assigned solo work tasks and aligned with the literature review where Malaysian Gen Z does not prioritise solo-based assignments (Kee and Madden, 2018).

In short, six (6) workplace expectations were considered *Extremely Important* (median = 5.00), one (1) workplace expectation deemed *Very Important* (median = 4.50), 24 workplace expectations considered *Important* (median = 4.00), while only one (1) workplace expectation was determined as *Neutral* (median = 3.00). The significant results were highlighted as in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Significant Results of Key Workplace Expectations.

<b>Importance</b>	<b>Workplace Expectations</b>
<b>Most Important</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat all races equally</li> <li>• Treat all genders equally</li> <li>• Provide job security</li> <li>• Provide adequate paid leave</li> <li>• Provide mentoring</li> </ul>
<b>Very Important</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives periodic bonus</li> </ul>
<b>Neutral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often assigns solo work tasks</li> </ul>

#### **4.5 Descriptive Test: Assessment on the Extent of Workplace Expectations Met by Gen Z QS Employers**

Section C of the questionnaire had respondents appraise which workplace expectations were met by their employer companies. Measure of Central Tendency was used to study to what extent Gen Z QS's needs were met in consultant QS companies. As such, objective 3 – To assess the extent to which workplace expectations were met in the context of Gen Z QS working in consultant companies, was achieved.

Table 4.6 provides an overview of which workplace expectations were most important to Gen Z QS in consultant firms and which were achieved by their employers. A large portion of expectations were *Somewhat Achieved*, three (3) expectations *Neutral*, and eight (8) workplace expectations were determined as *Somewhat Neglected* by their current employers.

Table 4.6: The Extent of Gen Z QS Workplace Expectations that are Achieved by Consultant QS Firms.

Achieved Workplace Expectations	Mean	Categorical Rank	Overall Rank	Mode	Median	Achievement	Importance Median (Table 4.4)	Importance
<b>Part A - Organizational Core Values (n = 7) (average mean = 3.73)</b>								
2.A Treat all races equally	4.06		6	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	5.00	Very Important
2.A Treat all genders equally	3.97		10	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	5.00	Very Important
2.A Do not discriminate disabilities	3.68		14	3.00	3.00	Neutral	4.00	Important
2.A Discourages unethical conduct	4.20	1	2	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.A Has well defined visions and missions	4.16		4	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.A Demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s)	2.74		25	2.00	2.00	Somewhat Neglected*	4.00	Important
2.A Demonstrate micro sustainable pledge(s)	3.31		18	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
<b>Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided (n = 6) (average mean = 3.40)</b>								
2.D Provide job security	4.04		8	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	5.00	Very Important
2.D Provide adequate paid leave	3.76		13	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	5.00	Very Important
2.D Gives periodic bonus	3.61	2	16	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.50	Quite Important
2.D Does not assign unmanageable workload	3.23		22	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.D Provide high base salary	3.30		19	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.D Prohibit OT culture	2.46		28	2.00	2.00	Somewhat Neglected*	4.00	Important
<b>Part B - Organizational Working Style (n = 10) (average mean = 3.35)</b>								
2.B Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment	3.62		15	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.B Provide feedback on employee performance	3.97		11	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.B Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas	3.23		21	3.00	3.00	Neutral	4.00	Important
2.B Define clear expectations from employees	3.99		9	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.B Provide flexible work hours	2.74	3	26	2.00	2.00	Somewhat Neglected*	4.00	Important
2.B Provide mental health support	2.77		24	2.00	2.00	Somewhat Neglected*	4.00	Important
2.B Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies	2.92		23	3.00	3.00	Neutral	4.00	Important
2.B Provide flexible work location	2.43		29	2.00	2.00	Somewhat Neglected*	4.00	Important
2.B Often assigns group work tasks	4.35		1	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.B Often assigns solo work tasks	3.51		17	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	3.00	Neutral
<b>Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities (n = 8) (average mean = 3.32)</b>								
2.C Provide mentoring	4.20		3	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	5.00	Very Important
2.C Provide promotions to higher positions	3.89		12	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.C Sponsor external training(s)	3.26		20	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.C Provide internal training(s)	4.06	4	7	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important
2.C Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway	2.31		30	2.00	2.00	Somewhat Neglected*	4.00	Important
2.C Sponsor employees' further studies	2.16		31	2.00	2.00	Somewhat Neglected*	4.00	Important
2.C Provide promotions to other branches	2.59		27	2.00	2.00	Somewhat Neglected*	4.00	Important
2.C Provide challenging work tasks	4.07		5	4.00	4.00	Somewhat Achieved	4.00	Important

The achievement of workplace expectations deemed *Neutral* or *Somewhat Neglected* by employers was underscored, as these aspects were considered significant to Gen Z individuals in consultant firms. Recognizing these insights can serve as a valuable reference for consultant companies seeking to enhance their workplace environments. Fortunately, the results show that all workplace expectations considered *Extremely Important* by Gen Z QS in consultant firms were *Somewhat Achieved* by their employers.

Among all categories, the *Organizational Core Values* categorically ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with the highest average mean and achievement of workplace expectations. It is followed by *Benefits and Remuneration Provided*, *Organizational Working Style* and finally, *Development and Advancement Opportunities* with the least achieved workplace expectations.

#### **4.5.1 Analysis: Neutral Achievement of Workplace Expectations**

The expectation *do not discriminate against disabilities* was ranked last and considered *Neutral* in the *Organizational Core Values* when asked if their employer companies achieved it (mean = 3.68, mode = 3.00, median = 3.00). The mode of 3.00 may be attributed to the fact that most Gen Z individuals in consultant firms do not have any colleagues with disabilities (OKU), hence they lacked a reference point to gauge whether their employers discriminate against individuals with disabilities. However, the mean score of 3.68, which moderately leans towards 4.00, suggested that some consultant firms were not discriminatory towards OKUs. This indicated a nuanced perspective within consultant firms regarding inclusivity and non-discrimination practices.

The expectation to *engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas* had a mean of 3.23, a mode of 3.00, and a median of 3.00, which indicated a *Neutral* perception. The mode could be explained by the lack of experiences among Gen Z QS where employees either did not proactively suggest ideas or employers did not actively encourage such submissions. However, the mean score suggested that a portion of Gen Z QS's creative and innovative ideas were indeed engaged by their employers. This indicated that while there is room for improvement, some consultant firms are receptive to and supportive of their employees' innovative contributions.

The extent of achieved workplace expectation *allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies* received a mean of 2.92, mode of 3.00 and median of 3.00 which was considered *Neutral* in perception. As in Table 4.1, approximately 75% of Gen Z QS had less than three (3) years of working experience, while only six (6) respondents had no more than five (5) years of working respondents. The mode can be attributed by the experience where employers are cautious to allow employees in junior positions to spearhead creative projects until their competencies are thoroughly assessed.

Moreover, entrepreneurship tendencies are often expressed through the execution of creative ideas and implementation of innovative endeavors (Amabile, 1996). Companies that have low achievements to *engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas* would directly indicate a low achievement to *allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies*.

Interestingly, the reverse relationship is not consistently observed. Some companies may excel in engaging with employees' creative and innovative ideas but still fall short in supporting entrepreneurship tendencies among their workforce. However, if a company exhibits low achievement in engaging with employees' creative and innovative ideas, it definitely results in low achievement to allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies. This underscored the role of creativity and innovation in nurturing entrepreneurial spirit within organizations.

#### **4.5.2 Analysis: Somewhat Neglected Workplace Expectations**

It was found that the workplace expectation *demonstrate macro sustainable pledges* were determined least achieved by employers categorically in *Organizational Core Values*. It had a mean of 2.74, mode of 2.00 and a median of 2.00 and was considered *Somewhat Neglected*. Referring to Table 4.1, roughly 68% of the Gen Z QS respondents were employed in SME companies. The mode of 2.00 is explained by smaller companies' lack of resources to demonstrate macro sustainable pledges such as net zero carbon gas emissions compared to larger companies (Rajaendram, 2022; Vitasek, 2022). This proved the literature review where SMEs fall short in meeting

ambitious sustainability goals compared to larger corporations with greater financial and operational capacities.

Three (3) workplace expectations were considered *Somewhat Neglected* in the *Organizational Working Style* category. *Provide flexible work hours* and *provide flexible work location* had means of 2.74 and 2.43 respectively, both had modes of 2.00 and medians of 2.00 which was considered *Somewhat Neglected*. This aligns with Table 4.1 where only two (2) out of 98 respondents could work remotely. The vast majority of QS consultant companies required their employees to work in office settings on fixed schedules. This may have stemmed from employers' biased belief to lean towards in-office work, despite proven research that remote working can increase employee productivity by 13% (Tsipursky, 2022). Employers should consider the implementation of flexible work schedules and locations to capitalize on the potential benefits of increased productivity and lower turnover rates associated with remote work (Tsipursky, 2022).

Besides, the workplace expectation *provide mental health support* had a mean of 2.77, mode and median of 2.00 which was considered *Somewhat Neglected*. This highlighted that Malaysian consultant firms lack prioritisation to offer of mental health support for employees. In a high-stress work environment, the absence of adequate mental health support will cause an impression of neglect to employees, which forces them to recuperate by taking time off from work to recuperate (Deloitte, 2021). Employers should consider the implementation of proactive mindfulness programs to better support their employees' well-being and prevent feelings of neglect (Borg, Scott-Young and Naderpajouh, 2021).

Three (3) workplace expectations were considered *Somewhat Neglected* in the *Development and Advancement Opportunities* category. The expectation of *provide promotions to other branches* was assigned with a mean of 2.59, mode and median of 2.00 which was considered *Somewhat Neglected*. As seen in Table 4.1, roughly 68% of respondents were employed in SME companies. This explained the mode of 2.00 as SMEs rarely reached a level of stability to have branches in other states or countries (Rajaendram, 2022).



The work expectations *sponsor employees' further studies* and *assistance in re-education for alternative career pathways* were ranked with means of 2.16 and 2.31 respectively, both with modes and medians of 2.00 which was considered *Somewhat Neglected*. This proved that most consultant companies do not prioritise investing in the further education of their employees. This trend may be attributed to perhaps in the working industry, further studies were less impactful than the work experience gained by each employee. However, companies should invest in systems to provide educational improvements to reliably procure employees with higher professional qualifications that suit each employee most.

In the *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category, only *prohibit OT culture* had a mode and median of 2.00 which was considered *Somewhat Neglected*. It had a mean of 2.46. This proved the heavy reliance of construction industry on OT culture to complete work tasks and reach deadlines. Companies should conduct an internal examination to understand the issues that necessitate OT by employees to reduce reliance. Addressing these challenges is crucial for creating a more productive, sustainable, and employee-friendly workplace in the construction industry.

#### **4.5.3 Analysis: Somewhat Achieved Workplace Expectations by Gen Z QS Consultant Firms**

There are 19 workplace expectations that were considered *Somewhat Achieved* by Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

Two (2) workplace expectations considered *Extremely Important* in the *Organizational Core Values* category were ranked as *Somewhat Achieved* by Gen Z QS. The workplace expectations *treat all races equally* and *treat all genders equally* were overall 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> most achieved by consultant employers. Each had a mean of 4.06 and 3.97, both with modes and means of 4.00 which was considered *Somewhat Achieved*. Companies can enhance their level of achievement by embracing diversity in their hiring practices, as shown in Table 4.1 where most hired respondents were Malays and Chinese with only 2 Indian respondents, and more hired Gen Z QS were females.

No workplace expectations were considered *Extremely Important* in the *Organizational Working Style*.

In the *Development and Advancement Opportunities* category, the workplace expectation considered *Extremely Important*, that was *provide mentoring* received a ranking of overall 3<sup>rd</sup> most achieved. It received a mean of 4.20, mode and median of 4.00 which was considered *Somewhat Achieved*. Companies can improve their degree of achievement by leveraging the experience and knowledge of older employees through mentorship programs. Encouraging older employees to take up mentorship roles and involve experienced Gen Z QS as mentors for newer Gen Z QS in the consultant firm is also an important step.

Two (2) workplace expectations considered *Extremely Important* were *Somewhat Achieved* in the *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category. Expectations *provide job security* and *provide adequate paid leave* were ranked 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> categorically achieved by companies, but 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> achieved overall. Each received a mean of 4.04 and 3.76, while both had modes and medians of 4.00 which was considered *Somewhat Achieved*. Employers can enhance their degree of achievement by emphasizing the importance of their employees within the company and implementing policies that recognize and reward loyalty and excellence. One effective approach is to increase paid leave benefits for employees who demonstrate dedication and exceptional performance in the workplace.

#### **4.5.4 Summary of Extent of Achieved Workplace Expectations**

The significant results on the extent of workplace expectations achieved by employers of Gen Z QS in consultant firms were summarised in Table 4.28 below.

Table 4.7: Summary of Extent of Achieved Workplace Expectations.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Extent of Achieved Workplace Expectations</b>
<b>Neutral Achievement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not discriminate disabilities</li> <li>• Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas</li> <li>• Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies</li> </ul>
<b>Somewhat Neglected</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s)</li> <li>• Provide mental health support</li> <li>• Provide flexible work hours</li> <li>• Provide flexible work location</li> <li>• Provide promotions to other branches</li> <li>• Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway</li> <li>• Sponsor employees' further studies</li> <li>• Prohibit OT culture</li> </ul>
<b>Somewhat Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat all races equally</li> <li>• Treat all genders equally</li> <li>• Provide mentoring</li> <li>• Provide job security</li> <li>• Provide adequate paid leave</li> </ul>

#### **4.6 Effect of Demographic Factors on Workplace Expectations**

Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis H Test, and Spearman's Rank Correlation Test were used to identify the relationship between various demographic factors and workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. The 2<sup>nd</sup> objective - to explore the effect of demographic factors on Gen Z QS's workplace expectations, was achieved in this section.

Mann-Whitney U Test was used to assess the relationship of gender, ethnicity, educational background, professional qualifications, company region and base income with the workplace expectation of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. As the "marital status" category did not receive the minimal respondent of 30, it was excluded from inferential test.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test was used to assess the relationship of company size with the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

Spearman's Rank Correlation Test was used to assess the relationship of year of birth and work experience with the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

#### **4.6.1 Inferential Test: Effect of Gender on Workplace Expectations**

Table 4.8 summarised the results of Mann-Whitney U Test to determine how gender affected the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

$H_0$  : There is no inclination of importance by male and female Gen Z QS in consultant firms on workplace expectations.

$H_1$  : There is an inclination of importance by male and female Gen Z QS in consultant firms on workplace expectations.

In summary, there were 18 workplace expectations found to be significantly more important by either gender ( $p < 0.05$ ), while 13 others showed no significant relationship ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). As such, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted.

In fact, an overall view confirmed that all 18 significant relationships were determined more important by female Gen Z QS in consultant firms, due to higher mean ranks than males. In the end, the results did not infer any workplace expectation that males considered more important compared to females.

Table 4.8: Mann-Whitney U Test Results of How Gender Affected Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Important Workplace Expectations	Overall Rank	Mean Rank		p-value
		Male	Female	
<b>Part A - Organizational Core Values (n = 7)</b>				
2.A Treat all races equally	1	37.55	59.24	0.000*
2.A Treat all genders equally	2	38.55	58.43	0.000*
2.A Do not discriminate disabilities	7	38.00	58.87	0.000*
2.A Discourages unethical conduct	11	45.05	53.13	0.114
2.A Has well defined visions and missions	18	43.01	54.79	0.025*
2.A Demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s)	29	40.20	57.07	0.002*
2.A Demonstrate micro sustainable pledge(s)	30	40.06	57.19	0.001*
<b>Part B - Organizational Working Style (n = 10)</b>				
2.B Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment	9	39.86	57.35	0.001*
2.B Provide feedback on employee performance	13	35.27	61.09	0.000*
2.B Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas	14	36.18	60.35	0.000*
2.B Define clear expectations from employees	17	36.50	60.09	0.000*
2.B Provide flexible work hours	19	41.84	55.74	0.009*
2.B Provide mental health support	20	41.33	56.16	0.005*
2.B Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies	21	52.28	47.23	0.354
2.B Provide flexible work location	25	43.07	54.74	0.032*
2.B Often assigns group work tasks	27	42.94	54.84	0.031*
2.B Often assigns solo work tasks	31	47.90	50.81	0.598
<b>Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities (n = 8)</b>				
2.C Provide mentoring	5	44.16	53.85	0.057
2.C Provide promotions to higher positions	8	44.95	53.2	0.106
2.C Sponsor external training(s)	15	46.23	52.17	0.256
2.C Provide internal training(s)	16	43.68	54.24	0.037*
2.C Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway	22	45.39	52.85	0.167
2.C Sponsor employees' further studies	24	52.69	46.90	0.288
2.C Provide promotions to other branches	26	53.50	46.24	0.168
2.C Provide challenging work tasks	28	46.17	52.21	0.254
<b>Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided (n = 6)</b>				
2.D Provide job security	3	38.09	58.8	0.000*
2.D Provide adequate paid leave	4	49.05	49.87	0.871
2.D Gives periodic bonus	6	41.91	55.69	0.007*
2.D Does not assign unmanageable workload	10	40.43	56.89	0.001*
2.D Provide high base salary	12	46.91	51.61	0.372
2.D Prohibit OT culture	23	51.14	48.17	0.579

In the *Organizational Core Values* category, seven (7) aspects showed significantly greater importance by female Gen Z QS. Females considered companies that *provided equal treatment to races, genders and disabilities* ( $p < 0.001$ ) more important than male Gen Z QS. This could be because female cohorts tend to experience higher degrees of discrimination due to their genders, which made female Gen Z QS prioritise equality of all kinds highly (Deloitte, 2021).

They also showed higher importance to *demonstration of macro and micro sustainable pledges* ( $p = 0.001$  and  $0.002$ ) that aligned with the literature on Gen Z's higher prioritisation to environmental and social responsibility (Deloitte, 2021; Pandita, 2022).

In the *Organizational Working Style* category, six (6) of ten (10) items were considered more important by females than males. They looked more favorably to companies that *engage in their creative and innovative ideas* ( $p < 0.001$ ), which may be due to a higher level of discrimination faced, where constructive suggestions were often ignored or brushed past by their colleagues (Deloitte, 2021).

Additionally, companies that *provide feedback on performance* ( $p < 0.001$ ) and *define clear expectations* ( $p < 0.001$ ) were deemed more important by female Gen Z QS than males. This proved that female Gen Z QS required high degrees of clarity within the workplace to ensure they achieved the expectations set out by their employers and higher-ups.

In the *Development and Advancement Opportunities*, only one (1) workplace expectation, companies that *provide internal training*, was viewed as more important by the female group than males. As above, female Gen Z QS may require internal training that serve as a close reference for expected work performance as reliable improvement guides.

In the *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category, only three (3) workplace expectations were significantly considered more important by female Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Particularly, female Gen Z QS ranked *provision of job security* with p-value of less than 0.001 than males. This could be explained due to females being less likely hired due to employer biases such as thinking pregnancies and familial obligations decrease productivity

(González, Cortina and Rodríguez, 2019). Comparatively, the bias leaned towards thinking males traditionally dedicate fully to their workplace and do not tend to worry about job security (González, Cortina and Rodríguez, 2019). As such, females experienced higher difficulties in finding a stable yet high-paying job, thus boosting the importance of job security.

The top three (3) effects of gender on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms were summarised in below.

Table 4.9: Summary of Effect of Ethnicity on Workplace Expectations.

Parameter	Higher Importance Workplace Expectations
Male	<i>Inconclusive</i>
Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide feedback on employee performance</li> <li>• Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas</li> <li>• Define clear expectations from employee</li> </ul>

#### 4.6.2 Inferential Test: Effect of Ethnicity on Workplace Expectations

Table 4.10 summarised the results of Mann-Whitney U Test to determine how ethnicity affected the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Only Malays and Chinese respondents were inferred as insufficient Indian respondents did not achieve the minimum CLT respondent count for inferential tests. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

$H_0$  : There is no significant inclined importance by Malay and Chinese Gen Z QS in consultant firms on workplace expectations.

$H_1$  : There is a significant inclined importance by Malay and Chinese Gen Z QS in consultant firms on workplace expectations.

In summary, there were 16 workplace expectations found to be significantly more important by either ethnicity ( $p < 0.05$ ), while 15 others showed no significant relationship ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). As such, the results supported the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

Table 4.10: Mann-Whitney U Test Results of How Ethnicity Affected Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Important Workplace Expectations	Overall Rank	Mean Rank		p-value
		Malay	Chinese	
<b>Part A - Organizational Core Values (n = 7)</b>				
2.A Treat all races equally	1	37.40	56.77	0.000*
2.A Treat all genders equally	2	38.40	56.03	0.000*
2.A Do not discriminate disabilities	7	35.09	58.50	0.000*
2.A Discourages unethical conduct	11	35.62	58.10	0.000*
2.A Has well defined visions and missions	18	37.15	56.96	0.000*
2.A Demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s)	29	38.55	55.92	0.001*
2.A Demonstrate micro sustainable pledge(s)	30	43.10	52.53	0.074
<b>Part B - Organizational Working Style (n = 10)</b>				
2.B Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment	9	40.55	54.43	0.006*
2.B Provide feedback on employee performance	13	42.35	53.08	0.033*
2.B Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas	14	40.93	54.15	0.010*
2.B Define clear expectations from employees	17	40.82	54.23	0.010*
2.B Provide flexible work hours	19	46.74	49.81	0.565
2.B Provide mental health support	20	53.20	45.00	0.118
2.B Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies	21	47.94	48.92	0.857
2.B Provide flexible work location	25	49.74	47.57	0.688
2.B Often assigns group work tasks	27	45.32	50.87	0.310
2.B Often assigns solo work tasks	31	43.95	51.89	0.147
<b>Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities (n = 8)</b>				
2.C Provide mentoring	5	39.59	55.15	0.002*
2.C Provide promotions to higher positions	8	46.07	50.31	0.404
2.C Sponsor external training(s)	15	47.85	48.98	0.828
2.C Provide internal training(s)	16	45.20	50.96	0.251
2.C Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway	22	47.07	49.56	0.644
2.C Sponsor employees' further studies	24	55.09	43.59	0.034*
2.C Provide promotions to other branches	26	54.34	44.15	0.053
2.C Provide challenging work tasks	28	38.93	55.64	0.001*
<b>Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided (n = 6)</b>				
2.D Provide job security	3	48.80	48.27	0.915
2.D Provide adequate paid leave	4	42.66	52.85	0.042*
2.D Gives periodic bonus	6	42.83	52.73	0.051
2.D Does not assign unmanageable workload	10	41.32	53.85	0.011*
2.D Provide high base salary	12	47.00	49.62	0.617
2.D Prohibit OT culture	23	55.9	42.98	0.015*



In the *Organizational Core Values* category, seven (7) items showed significantly heightened importance by Chinese Gen Z Qs in consultant firms. Among them are companies with *equal treatment to races, genders and disabilities* with importance to *well-stated visions and missions to discourage unethical conduct*, while emphasizing *pledges of macro sustainability*. This may be explained by their trust in more reputedly known large companies with higher resources, which typically display such characteristics (Rajaendram, 2022).

In the *Organizational Working Style* category, Chinese Gen Z QS considered four (4) workplace expectations more important than Malays. The behaviors of *engaging in employees' creative and innovative ideas in a healthy and supportive environment* allow them to feel appreciated for their creative contributions, as stated in the literature review (Kee and Madden, 2018). They also place higher importance on *clearer expectations* and *performance feedback* that helps their path of improvement (Kee and Madden, 2018).

The *Development and Advancement Opportunities* category had mixed inclinations. The 1<sup>st</sup> observation – Malay Gen Z QS deemed higher importance on *sponsoring their further studies* more than Chinese. This revealed that loyal Malay Gen Z QS hoped their companies would invest in their employees to pursue higher education pathways such as Degrees and Masters. They are also willing to be bonded to a company while or after they pursue their higher education, which aligns with the literature review that Gen Zs viewed education as a prerequisite (Kee and Madden, 2018).

Comparatively, Chinese Gen Z QS significantly placed higher importance on *more challenging tasks* and *mentorship provision*. This may be due to Chinese Gen Z QS are keen to be promoted and receive heavier responsibilities (Parasuraman, Greenhaus and Linnehan, 2000), while a reliable mentor provides greater impact on their path to improvement (Kee and Madden, 2018).

Mixed inclinations were found in the *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category as well. Malay Gen Z QS ranked companies that *prohibit OT culture* of higher importance while Chinese Gen Z Qs ranked *provision of adequate paid leave* and *does not assign unmanageable workload* much more

important. Both workplace expectations are different methods of achieving work-life balance, which showed an interesting contrast on how each ethnicity hoped to maintain a work-life balance.

The top three (3) effects of ethnicity on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms were summarised in Table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: Summary of Effect of Ethnicity on Workplace Expectations.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Higher Importance Workplace Expectations</b>
<b>Chinese</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat all races equally</li> <li>• Treat all genders equally</li> <li>• Do not discriminate disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>Malay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide mentoring</li> <li>• Prohibit OT culture</li> </ul>

#### **4.6.3 Inferential Test: Effect of Educational Backgrounds on Workplace Expectations**

Table 4.12 summarised the results of Mann-Whitney U Test to determine how educational backgrounds affected the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Only Diploma and Degree respondents were inferred as there were only two (2) respondents with Masters as in Table 4.1, which did not achieve the minimum respondents for inferential tests based on CLT. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

$H_0$  : There is no significant inclined importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms with Diploma and Degree on workplace expectations.

$H_1$  : There is a significant inclined importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms with Diploma and Degree on workplace expectations.

In summary, only four (4) workplace expectations were significantly preferred by either educational background ( $p < 0.05$ ), while 27 others showed no significant relationship ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). As such, the results supported the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), where there is a significant inclined importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms with Diploma and Degree on workplace expectations.

Table 4.12: Mann-Whitney U Test Results of How Educational Background Affected Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Workplace Expectations	Overall Rank	Mean Rank		p-value
		Diploma	Degree	
<b>Part A - Organizational Core Values (n = 7)</b>				
2.A Treat all races equally	1	43.10	50.95	0.122
2.A Treat all genders equally	2	44.10	50.50	0.213
2.A Do not discriminate disabilities	7	43.83	50.62	0.210
2.A Discourages unethical conduct	11	44.50	50.32	0.282
2.A Has well defined visions and missions	18	37.20	53.64	0.003*
2.A Demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s)	29	39.90	52.41	0.031*
2.A Demonstrate micro sustainable pledge(s)	30	46.87	49.24	0.676
<b>Part B - Organizational Working Style (n = 10)</b>				
2.B Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment	9	44.83	50.17	0.323
2.B Provide feedback on employee performance	13	49.90	47.86	0.703
2.B Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas	14	52.07	46.88	0.344
2.B Define clear expectations from employees	17	47.97	48.74	0.888
2.B Provide flexible work hours	19	49.57	48.02	0.784
2.B Provide mental health support	20	49.33	48.12	0.827
2.B Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies	21	41.23	51.80	0.068
2.B Provide flexible work location	25	51.13	47.30	0.505
2.B Often assigns group work tasks	27	46.17	49.56	0.563
2.B Often assigns solo work tasks	31	51.43	47.17	0.467
<b>Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities (n = 8)</b>				
2.C Provide mentoring	5	49.00	48.27	0.893
2.C Provide promotions to higher positions	8	46.37	49.47	0.563
2.C Sponsor external training(s)	15	40.13	52.30	0.028*
2.C Provide internal training(s)	16	43.30	50.86	0.158
2.C Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway	22	47.33	49.03	0.768
2.C Sponsor employees' further studies	24	50.27	47.70	0.656
2.C Provide promotions to other branches	26	44.73	50.21	0.324
2.C Provide challenging work tasks	28	33.47	55.33	0.000*
<b>Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided (n = 6)</b>				
2.D Provide job security	3	49.07	48.24	0.877
2.D Provide adequate paid leave	4	41.50	51.68	0.059
2.D Gives periodic bonus	6	46.93	49.21	0.674
2.D Does not assign unmanageable workload	10	49.23	48.17	0.838
2.D Provide high base salary	12	50.77	47.47	0.557
2.D Prohibit OT culture	23	47.83	48.80	0.864

An overall view Diploma holders of Gen Z QS in consultant firms do not view any workplace consideration more important than Degree holders, which remained as inconclusive.

In the *Organizational Core Values* category, Degree holders showed higher importance on companies with *well-defined vision and missions* ( $p = 0.003$ ) and *demonstrate macro sustainable pledges* ( $p = 0.031$ ). Perhaps, Degree holders regard an established company with integrity and honesty as highly important (Hatoum et al., 2022; University of Minnesota, 2015). At the same time, the longer study duration of a Degree compared to a Diploma course may have introduced green construction concepts with more impact.

Interestingly, no inclination on workplace expectations in the *Organizational Working Style* and *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* categories were found.

It is notable in the Development and Advancement Opportunities category that Degree holders deemed companies that *sponsor external training* ( $p = 0.028$ ) and *provide challenging tasks* ( $p < 0.001$ ) more important than Diploma holders. Their need for a moderate-to-high challenge rating in the workplace and eagerness for external training could stem from wanting to acquire a holistic perspective to improve their skills and work readiness (Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023), and seek opportunities to grow and improve themselves (Pandita, 2022).

The top three (3) effects of educational background on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms were summarised below.

Table 4.13: Summary of Effect of Educational Background on Workplace Expectations.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Higher Importance Workplace Expectations</b>
<b>Degree holder</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide challenging work tasks</li> <li>• Has well defined visions and missions</li> <li>• Sponsor external training(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Diploma holder</b>	<i>Inconclusive</i>

#### 4.6.4 Inferential Test: Effect of Professional Qualifications on Workplace Expectations

Table 4.14 summarised the results of Mann-Whitney U Test to determine how professional qualifications affected workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Inference excluded eight (8) respondents from “BQSM: PQS and RISM: Full Member” that did not achieve CLT requirements. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no pronounced importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms without professional qualifications and with BQSM: PvQS qualifications on workplace expectations.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a pronounced importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms without professional qualifications and with BQSM: PvQS qualifications on workplace expectations.

In summary, seven (7) aspects showed significant inclination of importance by the presence of qualifications ( $p < 0.05$ ), while 24 others had no significant relationship ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). As such, the results supported the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>), where there is a pronounced importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms without professional qualifications and with BQSM: PvQS qualifications on workplace expectations.

An overview revealed that qualifications did not affect higher importance by the presence of qualifications on *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category.

Table 4.14: Mann-Whitney U Test Results of How Professional Qualifications Affected Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Workplace Expectations	Overall Rank	Mean Rank		p-value
		None	BQSM: PvQS	
<b>Part A - Organizational Core Values (n = 7)</b>				
2.A Treat All Races Equally	1	49.94	41.44	0.066
2.A Treat All Genders Equally	2	46.76	44.35	0.607
2.A Do Not Discriminate Disabilities	7	50.38	41.03	0.055
2.A Discourages Unethical Conduct	11	46.55	44.54	0.681
2.A Has Well Defined Visions and Missions	18	44.85	46.10	0.800
2.A Demonstrate Macro Sustainable Pledge(s)	29	39.48	51.01	0.026*
2.A Demonstrate Micro Sustainable Pledge(s)	30	38.38	52.01	0.007*
<b>Part B - Organizational Working Style (n = 10)</b>				
2.B Has a Positive, Healthy, and Supportive Environment	9	50.50	40.93	0.049*
2.B Provide Feedback on Employee Performance	13	52.50	39.10	0.005*
2.B Engage in Employees' Creative and Innovative Ideas	14	49.88	41.49	0.090
2.B Define Clear Expectations from Employees	17	54.34	37.41	0.001*
2.B Provide Flexible Work Hours	19	49.10	42.20	0.178
2.B Provides Mental Health Support	20	48.48	42.78	0.259
2.B Allow Employees to Explore Entrepreneurship Tendencies	21	40.81	49.79	0.086
2.B Provide Flexible Work Location	25	46.83	44.29	0.626
2.B Often Assigns Group Work Tasks	27	42.69	48.07	0.301
2.B Often Assigns Solo Work Tasks	31	47.64	43.54	0.438
<b>Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities (n = 8)</b>				
2.C Provide Mentoring	5	51.67	39.85	0.014*
2.C Provide Promotions to Higher Positions	8	47.00	44.13	0.556
2.C Sponsor External Training(s)	15	42.91	47.87	0.321
2.C Provide Internal Training(s)	16	42.93	47.85	0.309
2.C Assist in Re-education for Alternative Career Pathway	22	46.35	44.72	0.754
2.C Sponsor Employees' Further Studies	24	37.09	53.19	0.002*
2.C Provide Promotions to Other Branches	26	45.77	45.26	0.917
2.C Provide Challenging Work Tasks	28	46.36	44.71	0.741
<b>Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided (n = 6)</b>				
2.D Provide Job Security	3	42.09	48.62	0.177
2.D Provide Adequate Paid Leave	4	41.70	48.98	0.132
2.D Gives Periodic Bonus	6	43.91	46.96	0.531
2.D Does Not Assign Unmanageable Workload	10	47.40	43.77	0.439
2.D Provide High Base Salary	12	40.56	50.02	0.061
2.D Prohibit OT culture	23	40.84	49.77	0.081

Among the *Organizational Core Values* work expectations, Gen Z QS with BQSM: PvQS qualifications favored higher importance on companies that *demonstrated macro and micro sustainable pledges* than those without qualifications. Perhaps qualification training instilled higher morality in Gen Z QS towards companies that accept environmental responsibility.

In the *Organizational Working Style* category, Gen Z QS without qualifications consider companies that create a *positive, healthy, and supportive environment* more important than those with BQSM qualifications. A possible explanation may be that those without qualifications require a more patient environment that has a higher tolerance to mistakes due to less experience and knowledge on handling work tasks (Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM), 2023).

In addition, they also ranked higher for companies that *provided feedback* ( $p = 0.005$ ) and *provided clearer expectations* ( $p = 0.001$ ) more than Gen Z QS with BQSM: PvQS qualifications. This may be similar to their requirement of more guidance and clearer instructions due to lesser knowledge and experience on the required performance, differentiated by the qualification training provided (Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM), 2019).

The workplace expectation category of *Development and Advancement Opportunities* also had higher inclination of importance on *mentorship provision* by Gen Z QS without qualifications. Meanwhile, those with BQSM: PvQS qualifications considered companies that *sponsor employees' further studies* much more important than Gen Z QS without qualifications. This is in line with the literature review of a higher preference to expand their wellspring of knowledge through constant learning (Pandita, 2022).

The top three (3) effects of educational background on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms were summarised in Table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15: Summary of Effect of Professional Qualifications on Workplace Expectations.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Higher Importance Workplace Expectations</b>
<b>No Qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define Clear Expectations from Employees</li> <li>• Provide Feedback on Employee Performance</li> <li>• Provide Mentoring</li> </ul>
<b>BQSM: PvQS Qualification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsor Employees' Further Studies</li> <li>• Demonstrate Micro Sustainable Pledge(s)</li> <li>• Demonstrate Macro Sustainable Pledge(s)</li> </ul>

#### **4.6.5 Inferential Test: Effect of Company Region on Workplace Expectations**

Table 4.16 summarised the results of Mann-Whitney U Test to determine how current employed company regions affected workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Inference excluded two (2) respondents who “Work from Home in Klang Valley” that did not achieve the minimum CLT requirement. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

$H_0$  : There is no pronounced importance by Gen Z QS in Klang Valley consultant firms and Non-Klang Valley consultant firms on workplace expectations.

$H_1$  : There is a pronounced importance by Gen Z QS in Klang Valley consultant firms and Non-Klang Valley consultant firms on workplace expectations.

In summary, there were 15 workplace expectations found to be significantly preferred by Gen Z QS in certain company regions ( $p < 0.05$ ), while 16 others showed no significant relationship ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). As such, the results supported the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) where there is a pronounced importance by Gen Z QS in Klang Valley consultant firms and Non-Klang Valley consultant firms on workplace expectations.



Table 4.16: Mann-Whitney U Test Results of How Current Employed Company Region Affected Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Workplace Expectations	Overall Rank	Mean Rank		p-value
		Klang Valley	Non-Klang Valley	
<b>Part A - Organizational Core Values (n = 7)</b>				
2.A Treat all races equally	1	54.42	36.08	0.000*
2.A Treat all genders equally	2	55.42	33.98	0.000*
2.A Do not discriminate disabilities	7	50.35	44.63	0.287
2.A Discourages unethical conduct	11	51.98	41.21	0.045*
2.A Has well defined visions and missions	18	52.54	40.03	0.024*
2.A Demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s)	29	53.07	38.92	0.013*
2.A Demonstrate micro sustainable pledge(s)	30	53.52	37.97	0.005*
<b>Part B - Organizational Working Style (n = 10)</b>				
2.B Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment	9	53.56	37.89	0.003*
2.B Provide feedback on employee performance	13	51.32	42.60	0.100
2.B Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas	14	50.32	44.68	0.299
2.B Define clear expectations from employees	17	51.44	42.34	0.095
2.B Provide flexible work hours	19	52.71	39.68	0.021*
2.B Provide mental health support	20	52.45	40.23	0.026*
2.B Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies	21	47.22	51.18	0.491
2.B Provide flexible work location	25	52.25	40.65	0.042*
2.B Often assigns group work tasks	27	52.58	39.94	0.029*
2.B Often assigns solo work tasks	31	49.17	47.10	0.721
<b>Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities (n = 8)</b>				
2.C Provide mentoring	5	47.20	51.23	0.453
2.C Provide promotions to higher positions	8	48.42	48.68	0.961
2.C Sponsor external training(s)	15	43.98	57.97	0.011*
2.C Provide internal training(s)	16	47.11	51.42	0.417
2.C Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway	22	43.85	58.24	0.012*
2.C Sponsor employees' further studies	24	42.45	61.18	0.001*
2.C Provide promotions to other branches	26	49.11	47.23	0.734
2.C Provide challenging work tasks	28	53.48	38.05	0.005*
<b>Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided (n = 6)</b>				
2.D Provide job security	3	49.26	46.90	0.655
2.D Provide adequate paid leave	4	51.37	42.48	0.097
2.D Gives periodic bonus	6	50.31	44.71	0.297
2.D Does not assign unmanageable workload	10	48.42	48.68	0.959
2.D Provide high base salary	12	50.94	43.39	0.173
2.D Prohibit OT culture	23	49.62	46.16	0.539

No workplace expectations in the *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category showed significantly higher importance placed by Gen Z QS in Klang Valley or Non-Klang Valley company regions.

Nearly all workplace expectations in the *Organizational Core Values* category showed inclined importance by Gen Z QS in Klang Valley company regions. *Equal racial and gender treatment* is especially favored with p-values of less than 0.001, followed by *demonstration of micro and macro environmental pledges* and *discouragement of unethical conduct with well-defined visions and missions*. These importances may be due to the rapid urbanisation of Klang Valley that expanded the choice of companies, therefore allowing higher importance on companies with better organizational core values (Trivedi, Sareen and Dhyani, 2008).

In the *Organizational Working Style* category, Gen Z QS in Klang Valley firms showed pronounced importance on *a positive, healthy, and supportive office environment* with its p-value of 0.003, followed by *provision of flexible work hours and location, mental health support provisions* and *increased assignments in group tasks*. Research indicated a potential that those who work in Klang Valley experience higher stress due to the fast-paced lifestyle in cities, therefore they prefer the ability to choose their own working hours and location to generate a greater sense of work-life separation (Trivedi, Sareen and Dhyani, 2008; Borg, Scott-Young and Borg, 2023). A minor alignment with the literature review where Gen Zs are more inclined to group tasks was also found (Kee and Madden, 2018).

The *Development and Advancement Opportunities* category showed significant importance placed by Gen Zs in Non-Klang Valley companies on *assists in alternative career pathways* ( $p = 0.011$ ), *sponsorship to external training* ( $p = 0.012$ ) and most importantly, *further studies* ( $p = 0.03$ ). This may be explained by their higher needs for self-improvement and educational growth. By attending external training and undertaking challenging work tasks, Gen Z QS in Non-Klang Valley consultant firms can refine their pool of knowledge and challenge themselves to achieve their highest potential (Kee and Madden, 2018). Through further studies and re-education, Gen Z QS in Non-Klang Valley consultant firms can also learn more critical information

and experience that help them improve their work efficiency (Kee and Madden, 2018).

Besides, Gen Z QS in Klang Valley consultant firms indicated higher importance on companies providing *challenging work tasks* ( $p = 0.05$ ), which reflects a similar need for improvement through different methods than those in Non-Klang Valley company regions.

The top three (3) effects of current employed company region on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms were summarised in Table 4.17 below.

Table 4.17: Summary of Effect of Company Region on Workplace Expectations.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Higher Importance Workplace Expectations</b>
<b>Klang Valley Company Region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat all genders equally</li> <li>• Treat all races equally</li> <li>• Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Klang Valley Company Region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsor employees' further studies</li> <li>• Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway</li> <li>• Sponsor external training(s)</li> </ul>

#### **4.6.6 Inferential Test: Effect of Base Income on Workplace Expectations**

Table 4.18 summarised the results of Mann-Whitney U Test to determine how base income affected the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Respondents in M1 income subgroup were excluded from the analysis due to insufficient numbers to meet the minimum requirements for inferential tests, as stipulated by the CLT. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

$H_0$  : There is inclined importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms of the B1&B2 and the B3&B4 income subgroup on workplace expectations.

$H_1$  : There is an inclined importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms of the B1&B2 and the B3&B4 income subgroup on workplace expectations.

Table 4.18: Mann-Whitney U Test Results on How How Base Income Affected Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Important Workplace Expectations	Overall Rank	Mean Rank		p-value
		B1&B2	B3&B4	
<b>Part A - Organizational Core Values (n = 7)</b>				
2.A Treat all races equally	1	50.48	42.91	0.114
2.A Treat all genders equally	2	51.48	41.36	0.037*
2.A Do not discriminate disabilities	7	52.50	39.80	0.013*
2.A Discourages unethical conduct	11	50.22	43.31	0.177
2.A Has well defined visions and missions	18	48.45	46.04	0.643
2.A Demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s)	29	51.17	41.85	0.088
2.A Demonstrate micro sustainable pledge(s)	30	49.45	44.50	0.356
<b>Part B - Organizational Working Style (n = 10)</b>				
2.B Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment	9	52.59	39.66	0.011*
2.B Provide feedback on employee performance	13	52.87	39.23	0.007*
2.B Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas	14	51.53	41.30	0.048*
2.B Define clear expectations from employees	17	52.52	39.77	0.014*
2.B Provide flexible work hours	19	49.89	43.81	0.257
2.B Provide mental health support	20	48.03	46.69	0.800
2.B Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies	21	44.75	51.73	0.201
2.B Provide flexible work location	25	48.82	45.46	0.536
2.B Often assigns group work tasks	27	50.43	42.99	0.174
2.B Often assigns solo work tasks	31	45.92	49.93	0.466
<b>Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities (n = 8)</b>				
2.C Provide mentoring	5	50.12	43.46	0.187
2.C Provide promotions to higher positions	8	52.05	40.49	0.023*
2.C Sponsor external training(s)	15	53.02	39.00	0.007*
2.C Provide internal training(s)	16	50.37	43.08	0.152
2.C Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway	22	51.04	42.04	0.096
2.C Sponsor 3employees' further studies	24	51.44	41.43	0.066
2.C Provide promotions to other branches	26	52.40	39.95	0.016*
2.C Provide challenging work tasks	28	50.33	43.14	0.168
<b>Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided (n = 6)</b>				
2.D Provide job security	3	48.33	46.22	0.673
2.D Provide adequate paid leave	4	47.96	46.78	0.814
2.D Gives periodic bonus	6	48.68	45.68	0.553
2.D Does not assign unmanageable workload	10	52.40	39.95	0.012*
2.D Provide high base salary	12	47.23	47.92	0.895
2.D Prohibit OT culture	23	48.53	45.92	0.628

An overview found no pronounced importance placed by Gen Z QS in consultant firms of B3&B4 income groups on any workplace expectations.

Up to ten (10) workplace expectations were significantly considered more important by Gen Z QS of the B1&B2 income subgroups ( $p < 0.05$ ), while 21 others showed no significant relationship ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). As such, the results supported the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) where there is an inclined importance by Gen Z QS in consultant firms of the B1&B2 and the B3&B4 income subgroup on workplace expectations.

Two (2) workplace expectations in the *Organizational Core Values* category were significantly considered more important by Gen Z QS in the B1&B2 income subgroup, which are *equal treatment to genders and disabilities*. This could potentially be due to those with lower base salaries had more empathy and awareness of how companies treat those with disabilities that guided their judgement.

In the *Organizational Working Style* category, results showed Gen Z QS in the B1&B2 significantly determined four (4) aspects more important than those in higher income subgroups. Their higher tolerance to a lower income are allowed due to a *more positive, healthier and supportive environment* ( $p = 0.011$ ), where *feedback and clear expectations* ( $p = 0.007$ ,  $0.014$ ) are highly important needs for better performance, and companies that *engage with their creative and innovative ideas* ( $p = 0.048$ ) to provide better opportunities to contribute to the company.

In the *Development and Advancement Opportunities* category, only three (3) workplace expectations were much more highly ranked by Gen Z QS in B1&B2 than those in the B3&B4 income subgroup. Companies that *provide vertical and horizontal promotions* easily attract Gen Z QS with lower base incomes, who may also prefer the attractive offers of higher pay through promotions and better opportunities in overseas jobs such as Singapore (Tham, 2023; Yeap, 2024). They also favor importance of *sponsorship to external training* ( $p = 0.007$ ) which reflects their higher degree of learning needs.

The *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category deduced higher importance to *does not assign unmanageable workload* ( $p = 0.012$ ) by Gen Z

QS in B1&B2 income subgroups. It may be due to a higher likelihood of experiencing of unbalanced workload-to-salary ratio.

The top three (3) effects of base income on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms were summarised in Table 4.19 below.

Table 4.19: Summary of Effect of Base Income on Workplace Expectations.

Parameter	Higher Importance Workplace Expectations
<b>B1 &amp; B2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide feedback on employee performance</li> <li>• Sponsor external training(s)</li> <li>• Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment</li> </ul>
<b>B3 &amp; B4</b>	<i>Inconclusive</i>

#### 4.6.7 Inferential Test: Effect of Company Size on Workplace Expectations

Table 4.20 summarised the results of Kruskal-Wallis H Test to determine how current employed company size affected the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

$H_0$  : There is no higher importance held by Gen Z QS in small, medium and large consultant firms on workplace expectations.

$H_1$  : There is a higher importance held by Gen Z QS in small, medium and large consultant firms on workplace expectations.

In summary, there were 16 workplace expectations found to be ranked more important by Gen Z QS in small, medium and large company firms ( $p < 0.05$ ), while 15 others showed no significant relationship ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). As such, the results supported the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

In the *Organizational Core Values* category, only two (2) workplace expectations ranked high importance by Gen Z QS in large consultant firms, which are *equal treatment to those with disabilities* ( $p < 0.001$ ) and *discourage unethical conduct* ( $p = 0.001$ ) significantly more than those in medium or small sized companies. The root may lie in Gen Z QS in large companies expect their employer companies to embrace a higher degree of social responsibility, honesty and integrity (Deloitte, 2021; Hatoum et al., 2022).

Table 4.20: Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results on How Current Employed Company Size Affected Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Important Workplace Expectations	Overall Rank	Mean Rank			p-value
		Small	Medium	Large	
<b>Part A - Organizational Core Values (n = 7)</b>					
2.A Treat all races equally	1	51.10	42.00	55.44	0.066
2.A Treat all genders equally	2	49.30	43.00	56.44	0.080
2.A Do not discriminate disabilities	7	56.56	34.38	57.15	0.000*
2.A Discourages unethical conduct	11	54.50	36.44	57.34	0.001*
2.A Has well defined visions and missions	18	48.89	42.16	57.77	0.056
2.A Demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s)	29	42.19	51.50	55.69	0.109
2.A Demonstrate micro sustainable pledge(s)	30	43.66	52.25	53.26	0.257
<b>Part B - Organizational Working Style (n = 10)</b>					
2.B Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment	9	50.99	34.94	62.85	0.000*
2.B Provide feedback on employee performance	13	55.67	33.75	58.79	0.000*
2.B Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas	14	55.91	34.81	57.42	0.000*
2.B Define clear expectations from employees	17	61.56	27.88	58.21	0.000*
2.B Provide flexible work hours	19	44.14	47.81	57.29	0.117
2.B Provide mental health support	20	52.77	42.28	53.26	0.155
2.B Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies	21	52.41	49.53	46.18	0.641
2.B Provide flexible work location	25	43.77	47.38	58.16	0.080
2.B Often assigns group work tasks	27	44.80	44.38	60.10	0.031*
2.B Often assigns solo work tasks	31	50.54	46.88	51.03	0.799
<b>Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities (n = 8)</b>					
2.C Provide mentoring	5	59.57	33.34	54.81	0.000*
2.C Provide promotions to higher positions	8	52.11	42.69	53.58	0.169
2.C Sponsor external training(s)	15	56.69	45.16	45.87	0.119
2.C Provide internal training(s)	16	57.66	37.97	52.19	0.004
2.C Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway	22	62.13	42.34	42.63	0.002
2.C Sponsor employees' further studies	24	48.41	58.97	40.95	0.027*
2.C Provide promotions to other branches	26	47.11	50.13	51.55	0.776
2.C Provide challenging work tasks	28	57.67	38.44	51.69	0.009*
<b>Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided (n = 6)</b>					
2.D Provide job security	3	51.54	49.44	47.26	0.779
2.D Provide adequate paid leave	4	54.00	36.69	57.65	0.002*
2.D Gives periodic bonus	6	49.71	41.69	57.32	0.047*
2.D Does not assign unmanageable workload	10	58.06	30.09	59.87	0.000*
2.D Provide high base salary	12	47.57	40.31	61.16	0.005*
2.D Prohibit OT culture	23	39.77	44.03	66.13	0.000*



Similarly, Gen Z QS in larger consultant firms deemed higher importance on a *positive, healthy, and supportive environment* ( $p < 0.001$ ) along with *feedback on performance* and *higher engagement on creative and innovative ideas*, all with p-value less than 0.001 compared to Gen Z QS in medium and small consultant firms. Perhaps, when Gen Z QS selected a large company for their employment, it was due to an assumption their company would have an established positive environment and listed expectations. However, they may have experienced a stifling of opportunities to implement creative ideas due to rigid existing systems that increased their need for innovative exploration (Perry, 2022; Indeed, 2023).

Gen Z QS in larger companies also considered *assignment of group tasks* highly important more than those in medium and small companies, perhaps encouraged. Of course, larger companies have more employees, which increased the likelihood of group assignments distributed to staff.

In comparison, Gen Z QS in small consultant firms showed favored importance on *defining clear expectations from employees* ( $p < 0.001$ ) to attain greater clarity on expected performance. This may be due to Gen Z QS in smaller consultant firms experienced more task assignments with lesser expectations, as smaller companies allow higher degrees of creative and innovative idea implementation, therefore hoped for higher degrees of directional expectations (Perry, 2022; Indeed, 2023).

In the *Development and Advancement Opportunities* category, only three (3) of eight (8) workplace expectations showed significant ranked importance. An unprecedented inclination to importance is shown by Gen Z QS in small consultant firms towards *provision of mentorship* ( $p < 0.001$ ) and *challenging work tasks* ( $p < 0.001$ ). As fewer systems are established in smaller companies, they required reliance on experience to guide their implementation of creative solutions, while engaging in a wide range of tasks (Perry, 2022; Indeed, 2023).

Additionally, Gen Z QS in medium consultant firms ranked highest on *sponsorship for further studies* more than those in large or smaller consultant firms. Perhaps they have the highest likeness for further education in the industry (Ranasinghe, Fernando and Gunarathna, 2014).

In the *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category, Gen Z QS in large companies nearly considered all workplace expectations more important than those in medium and small companies. The *prohibition of OT, not assigning unmanageable workloads* and *provision of adequate paid leave* all indicate higher importance to a work-life balance. The allocation of *periodic bonuses* and *high base salary* are potentially based on the better incentives larger companies can provide due to more resources on hand (Perry, 2022; Indeed, 2023).

The top three (3) effects of base income on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms were summarised in Table 4.21 below.

Table 4.21: Summary of Effect of Company Size on Workplace Expectations.

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Higher Importance Workplace Expectations</b>
<b>Large-sized Company</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibit OT culture</li> <li>• Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment</li> <li>• Provide high base salary</li> </ul>
<b>Medium-sized Company</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsor employees' further studies</li> </ul>
<b>Small-sized Company</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define clear expectations from employees</li> <li>• Provide mentoring</li> <li>• Provide challenging work tasks</li> </ul>

#### **4.6.8 Associational Test: Effect of Age and Work Experience on Workplace Expectations**

Spearman's Rank Correlation Test was used to determine how age and work experience affected the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Results are summarised in Table 4.22 below.

Table 4.22: Spearman's Rank Correlation Test Results on How Age and Work Experience Affect Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Workplace Expectations	Overall Rank	Age (Year of Birth)		Work Experience	
		r <sub>s</sub>	p-value	r <sub>s</sub>	p-value
<b>Part A - Organizational Core Values (n = 7)</b>					
2.A Treat all races equally	1	0.158	0.119	-0.391	0.000*
2.A Treat all genders equally	2	0.218	0.031*	-0.414	0.000*
2.A Do not discriminate disabilities	7	0.398	0.000*	-0.475	0.000*
2.A Discourages unethical conduct	11	0.234	0.021*	-0.296	0.003*
2.A Has well defined visions and missions	18	0.061	0.550	-0.319	0.001*
2.A Demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s)	29	0.002	0.987	-0.217	0.032*
2.A Demonstrate micro sustainable pledge(s)	30	-0.052	0.609	-0.174	0.086
<b>Part B - Organizational Working Style (n = 10)</b>					
2.B Has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment	9	0.299	0.003*	-0.354	0.000*
2.B Provide feedback on employee performance	13	0.394	0.000*	-0.410	0.000*
2.B Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas	14	0.381	0.000*	-0.310	0.002*
2.B Define clear expectations from employees	17	0.444	0.000*	-0.420	0.000*
2.B Provide flexible work hours	19	0.185	0.068	-0.276	0.006*
2.B Provide mental health support	20	0.119	0.244	-0.100	0.327
2.B Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies	21	0.032	0.753	-0.038	0.710
2.B Provide flexible work location	25	0.120	0.241	-0.128	0.208
2.B Often assigns group work tasks	27	0.156	0.125	-0.264	0.009*
2.B Often assigns solo work tasks	31	0.041	0.687	-0.022	0.830
<b>Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities (n = 8)</b>					
2.C Provide mentoring	5	0.202	0.046*	-0.174	0.086
2.C Provide promotions to higher positions	8	0.359	0.000*	-0.295	0.003*
2.C Sponsor external training(s)	15	0.216	0.032*	-0.224	0.027*
2.C Provide internal training(s)	16	0.147	0.148	-0.161	0.114
2.C Assist in re-education for alternative career pathway	22	0.176	0.083	-0.101	0.321
2.C Sponsor employees' further studies	24	0.239	0.018*	-0.078	0.445
2.C Provide promotions to other branches	26	0.221	0.028*	-0.302	0.003*
2.C Provide challenging work tasks	28	0.282	0.005*	-0.520	0.000*
<b>Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided (n = 6)</b>					
2.D Provide job security	3	-0.003	0.976	0.006	0.954
2.D Provide adequate paid leave	4	0.155	0.128	-0.220	0.029*
2.D Gives periodic bonus	6	0.148	0.146	-0.178	0.080
2.D Does not assign unmanageable workload	10	0.335	0.001*	-0.229	0.023*
2.D Provide high base salary	12	0.012	0.906	0.009	0.932
2.D Prohibit OT culture	23	-0.084	0.408	0.064	0.531

#### 4.6.8.1 Justification of Results: Contradictory Relationship Unique to This Research

An overview of Table 4.22 showed that the effect of age and workplace expectation had a positive relationship, but the effect of work experience and workplace expectation had a negative relationship. This is a contradictory result that requires justification, as higher age tends to result in more work experience, therefore age and work experience should both show a positive relationship to work experience.

A supplementary associational test was conducted on the strength and directional relationship between age and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms, as shown in Table 4.23. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between age and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between age and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

The results in Table 4.23 showed that the relationship between age and work experience of this research's participants was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), with a coefficient of  $-0.798$  that indicated a strong negative correlation. This meant the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) was accepted, where older Gen Z QS in consultant firms had lesser work experience, and vice versa. However, the results still require further testing.

Table 4.23: Spearman's Rank Correlation Test on the Relationship between Age and Work Experience of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Relationship between Demographic Factors of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms	Work Experience	
	r <sub>s</sub>	p-value
Age	$-0.798$	$0.000^*$

As such, an additional supplementary associational test was conducted on the strength and directional relationship between age and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms, as shown in Table 4.24. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

$H_0$  : There is no relationship between age and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

$H_1$  : There is a relationship between age and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

The results showed that the relationship of age and educational background is significant ( $p = 0.110$ ). This meant the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected as the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted, where there is a relationship between age and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms, shown by a coefficient of  $-0.162$  that indicated a very weak negative correlation. This proved that in this research, Gen Z QS in consultant firms who are older have lesser educational backgrounds.

Table 4.24: Spearman's Rank Correlation Test on the Relationship between Age and Educational Background of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Relationship between Demographic Factors of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms	Educational Background	
	$r_s$	p-value
Age	$-0.162$	$0.011^*$

Furthermore, an additional supplementary associational test was conducted on the strength and directional relationship between work experience and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms, as shown in. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

$H_0$  : There is no relationship between work experience and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

$H_1$  : There is a relationship between work experience and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

The results showed that the relationship of work experience and educational background is significant ( $p = 0.045$ ). This meant the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted ( $H_1$ ), where there is a relationship between work experience and educational backgrounds of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. The coefficient of  $-0.194$  indicated a very weak negative correlation, where in this research, Gen Z QS in consultant firms with higher educational background have lesser work experience. This aligned with the literature review that Gen Zs are more likely to work later in life as they invest more years in education (Parker and Igielnik, 2020).

Table 4.25: Spearman's Rank Correlation Test on the Relationship between Work Experience and Educational Background of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms.

Relationship between Demographic Factors of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms	Educational Background	
	$r_s$	p-value
Work Experience	<i>-0.194</i>	<i>0.045*</i>

To further cement the justification, a supplementary associational test was conducted on the strength and directional relationship between base income with work experience and educational background of Gen Z QS in consultant firms separately, as shown in Table 4.27.

Table 4.26: Spearman's Rank Correlation Test on the Relationship between Base Income to Work Experience and Age of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms Separately.

Relationship between Demographic Factors of Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms	Base Income	
	$r_s$	p-value
Work Experience	<i>0.797</i>	<i>0.000*</i>
Age	<i>-0.779</i>	<i>0.000*</i>

Between base income and work experience, Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

- H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between base income and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.
- H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between base income and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

The results showed that the relationship of base income and work experience is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This meant the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted (H<sub>1</sub>), where there is a relationship between base income and work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. The coefficient of 0.797 indicated a strong positive correlation, where in this research, Gen Z QS in consultant firms with higher base income have higher work experience. This result is logical.

Between base income and age, two other hypothesis statements were generated:

- H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between base income and age of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.
- H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between base income and age of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

The results showed that the relationship of base income and age is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This meant the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted (H<sub>1</sub>), where there is a relationship between base income and age of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. The coefficient of -0.779 indicated a strong negative correlation, where in this research, older Gen Z QS in consultant firms have lower base income. This result is also logical.

In short, the contradictory negative relationship between age and work experience towards the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms is unique to this research, as most older respondents had higher educational backgrounds which resulted in lesser work experience. In contrast, most younger respondents had lesser educational backgrounds but sought employment earlier, hence acquiring higher work experience.

Table 4.27: Summary of Justification of Contradictory Relationship that is Unique to This Research.

	Older Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms	Younger Gen Z QS in Consultant Firms
<b>Educational Background</b>	Higher	Lesser
<b>Work Experience</b>	Lesser	More
<b>Base Income</b>	Lower	Higher

#### 4.6.8.2 Analysis: Effect of Age on Workplace Expectations

This section analysed the correlation of age on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between age and the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between age and the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

In summary, a total of 14 workplace expectations had a significant correlation with the ages of Gen Z QS in consultant firms ( $p < 0.05$ ), while 17 others did not show significant associations with age ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). As such, the results supported the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>).

In the *Organizational Core Values* category, three (3) of seven (7) workplace expectations had a significant correlation with ages of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. A correlation coefficient of 0.218 proved a weak positive correlation between age and *treat all genders equally*, while a coefficient of 0.398 proved weak positive correlation between age and *do not discriminate disabilities*. This meant that older Gen Z QS in consultant firms slightly



preferred companies that give equal treatment to genders and those with disabilities than their younger counterparts, possibly explained that as employees grow older, the impact of discriminatory bias by companies that hamper the possibility of receiving higher pay or promotions is much greater.

Results also showed that older Gen Z QS considered companies that *discourage unethical conduct* higher with a coefficient of 0.234, which meant older Gen Z QS were slightly more concerned of the negative impact an unethical company can bring to the employees.

In the *Organizational Working Style* category, older Gen Z QS viewed aspects such as *clear expectations defined by companies* moderately more important, where a coefficient of 0.444 proved moderate positive correlation. This may be due to older Gen Z QS experienced harder work tasks, which requires a higher degree of understanding employer expectations to complete tasks more effectively. That would also explain the weak positive correlation ( $r_s = 0.394$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) where older Gen Z QS slightly considered companies that *provide feedback on employee performance* more important than their younger counterparts.

Additionally, the coefficient of 0.381 and p-value of less than 0.001 proved a weak positive correlation, where older Gen Z QS in consultant firms slightly ranked companies that *engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas* more important than their younger counterparts. This may be due to older Gen Z QS wanting to prove their capability and contribute to their companies more by suggesting creative solutions (Pandita, 2022).

In the *Development and Advancement Opportunities* category, the workplace expectation where companies *provide higher position promotions* received the highest coefficient of 0.359 and lowest p-value of less than 0.001 categorically, which proved a weak positive correlation with age. This meant older Gen Z QS in consultant firms considered companies with vertical promotion opportunities slightly more important than younger Gen Z QS in consultant companies, perhaps due to their need for higher pay that comes with higher positions. It would also explain why *provide challenging work tasks* received the next highest coefficient of 0.282 and 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest p-value of 0.005 categorically, which proved a weak positive correlation with age. This

meant older Gen Z QS in consultant firms considered challenging tasks slightly more important than their younger counterparts.

In the *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category, only one (1) workplace expectation of *does not assign unmanageable workload* with a coefficient of 0.335 and p-value of 0.001 indicated a weak positive relationship, where older Gen Z QS in consultant firms preferred companies manageable workloads more important than their younger counterparts. This may be due to older employees are viewed as more competent by their employers, therefore experienced more unmanageable workloads assigned to them.

#### **4.6.8.3 Analysis: Effect of Work Experience on Workplace Expectations**

This section analysed the correlation of work experience on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Two (2) hypothesis statements were generated:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between work experience and the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between work experience and the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

In summary, a total of 18 workplace expectations had a significant correlation with the work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms ( $p < 0.05$ ), while 13 others did not show significant associations with work experience ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). As such, the results supported the alternative hypothesis (H1).

In the *Organizational Core Values* category, six (6) of seven (7) workplace expectations showed a significant correlation with work experience of Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

The workplace expectations *do not discriminate disabilities* ( $r_s = -0.475$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) showed moderate negative correlation and had the strongest relationship with age categorically. Then, the expectation *treat all genders equally* ( $r_s = -0.414$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) showed moderate negative correlation and had

the 2<sup>nd</sup> strongest relationship with age categorically. Following that, *treat all races equally* ( $r_s = -0.391$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) showed weak negative correlation and had the 3<sup>rd</sup> strongest relationship with age categorically.

Evidently, Gen Z QS in consultant firms with lesser work experience moderately and slightly considered companies that practice holistic equality in the workplace more important than Gen Z QS with more work experience. This may be due to those with less working experience are more passionate about social causes (Kee and Madden, 2018).

In the *Organizational Working Style* category, *define clear expectations from employees* were most correlated categorically with coefficient of  $-0.420$  and p-value of less than  $0.001$  that proved a moderate negative correlation. This indicated that Gen Z QS with lesser work experience pronounced companies that define clear expectations moderately more important than those with more work experience. This could be a consequence of lesser experience employees had a lower understanding of expectations by their employers compared to those with more experience.

Additionally, the workplace expectation *provide feedback on employee performance* had the 2<sup>nd</sup> strongest relationship with work experience categorically, where coefficient of  $-0.410$  and p-value of less than  $0.001$  proved a moderate negative correlation. This meant Gen Z QS with lesser work experience ranked companies that provided feedback on their performance moderately more important than those with more work experience. This is perhaps due to lesser experience employees have higher intention of learning than those with more experience.

Furthermore, the workplace expectation *has a positive, healthy, and supportive environment* with coefficient of  $-0.354$  and p-value of  $0.000$  proved a weak negative correlation with work experience. This meant Gen Z QS lesser work experience considered companies that has a more healthy work environment slightly more important than those with more work experience. This could reflect their need for a supportive environment that is more conducive to learning the ropes in the company as they have lesser experience.

In the *Development and Advancement Opportunities* category, companies that *provide challenging work tasks* held a coefficient of  $-0.520$  and

p-value of 0.000 that proved moderate negative correlation. This meant Gen Z QS with lesser work experience rated companies that provided challenging work tasks moderately more important than those with more work experience. This may be due to their higher expectations of self-improvement that can be achieved through engagement with difficult work tasks.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> strongest correlation was found in workplace expectation *provide promotions to other branches*, where coefficient of -0.301 and p-value of 0.000 proved a weak negative correlation. As such, it concluded that Gen Z QS with lesser work experience posited companies that provided horizontal promotions slightly more important than those with more work experience. This may be due to the trend of Malaysian Gen Zs who hope to find work internationally that has better incentives (Tham, 2023; Yeap, 2024).

In the *Benefits and Remuneration Provided* category, there is a weak negative correlation between work experience and companies that *does not assign unmanageable workloads*, which indicated that Gen Z QS with lesser work experience considered a manageable workload slightly more important than those with more work experience. Possibly, employees with lesser work experience understand they require more time to learn the ropes in the company, thus require their employers to not assign unmanageable workloads that hamper their learning curve.

Besides, there is a weak negative correlation between work experience and companies that *provide adequate paid leave* ( $r_s = -0.220$ ,  $p = 0.029$ ). This finding suggested that Gen Z with lesser work experience, prioritised better work-life balance in the workplace compared to their more seasoned counterparts. This inclination may be influenced by the prorated system used by companies to allocate paid leave, where employees who have been with the company longer accrue more paid time off compared to newer hires (CentralHR, 2023).

#### 4.6.8.4 Summary of Associational Test

The top three (3) correlations of age and work experience on workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms were summarised in Table 4.28 below.

Table 4.28: Summary of Age and Work Experience on Workplace Expectations.

Parameter	Significant Correlations
<b>Older Age (Positive Relationship)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define clear expectations from employees</li> <li>• Do not discriminate disabilities</li> <li>• Provide feedback on employee performance</li> </ul>
<b>Lesser Work Experience (Negative Relationship)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide challenging work tasks</li> <li>• Do not discriminate disabilities</li> <li>• Treat all genders equally</li> </ul>

#### 4.7 Descriptive Test: Effective Retention Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Gen Z QS

Section D of the questionnaire allowed the respondents to rate the attractiveness of 12 different retention strategies companies can employ. The results are summarised as in Table 4.29 below.

In short, eight (8) strategies were considered *Extremely Attractive* and highly recommended for employers to provide. Other than that, one (1) strategy are considered *Quite Attractive*, two (2) strategies are considered *Attractive* while only one (1) strategy was considered *Unattractive* to Gen Z QS in consultant firms.

Companies that *provide regular promotion and growth opportunities* were ranked 1<sup>st</sup> overall, received the highest mean of 4.72 and a median of 5.00, which is considered *Extremely Attractive*. This proved that Gen Z QS when they considered turnover options, were most concerned about whether their employer companies would promote them or provide personal improvement value.

Table 4.29: Effective Retention Strategies for Gen Z QS.

<b>Retention Strategies</b>	<b>Overall Rank</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Attractiveness</b>
4. Provides regular promotions and growth opportunities	1	4.72	5.00	Extremely Attractive
4. Provides job security	2	4.66	5.00	Extremely Attractive
4. Provides regular bonuses	3	4.56	5.00	Extremely Attractive
4. Provides training and development opportunities	4	4.55	5.00	Extremely Attractive
4. Provides high base salary	5	4.53	5.00	Extremely Attractive
4. Creates a healthy work environment	6	4.51	5.00	Extremely Attractive
4. Provides mentors	7	4.47	5.00	Extremely Attractive
4. Practice equality to all genders, races and disabilities	8	4.44	5.00	Extremely Attractive
4. Avoid assigning unmanageable workloads	9	4.46	4.50	Quite Attractive
4. Builds a collaborative culture in workplace	10	4.35	4.00	Attractive
4. Allow flexibility in work times and work locations	11	4.19	4.00	Attractive
4. Ignores their impact to the environment	12	2.24	2.00	Unattractive

Companies that *provide job security* were ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> overall, received the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest mean of 4.66 and a median of 5.00, which is considered *Extremely Attractive*. This proved that Gen Z QS when they considered turnover options, were secondly most concerned on the job stability provided by their employer company.

Companies that *provide regular bonuses* were ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> overall, received the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest mean of 4.56 and a median of 5.00, which is considered *Extremely Attractive*. This proved that Gen Z QS when they considered turnover options, were thirdly most concerned with the consistency of bonuses given by their employers, which indicated the yearly performance of their consultant firms.

In contrast, companies that *ignores their Impact to the Environment* were ranked last overall, received a mean of 2.24 and median of 2.00, which is considered *Unattractive*. While Gen Z QS does not require companies to directly demonstrate macro and micro sustainable pledges, it does not mean they encourage companies that ignores their environmental duties to minimise impact to the world. In fact, they are willing to boycott enterprises that intentionally cause harm to the environment (Deloitte, 2021).

The significant findings for most effective retention strategies were summarised in Table 4.30 below.

Table 4.30: Summary of Most Attractive Retention Strategies.

Attractiveness	Retention Strategies
<b>Extremely Attractive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides regular promotions and growth opportunities</li> <li>● Provides job security</li> <li>● Provides regular bonuses</li> <li>● Provides training and development opportunities</li> <li>● Provides high base salary</li> <li>● Creates a healthy work environment</li> <li>● Provides mentors</li> <li>● Practice equality to all genders, races and disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>Unattractive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ignores their impact to the environment</li> </ul>

#### 4.8 Summary

In summary, the data collected from respondents were considered acceptable.

Measure of Central Tendency was used. The five (5) workplace expectations considered *Extremely Important* by Gen Z QS in consultant firms were *treat all races equally, treat all genders equally, provide job security, provide adequate paid leaves, and provide mentors*. These five (5) workplace expectations were considered *Somewhat Achieved* by consultant firm employers. The eight (8) workplace expectations that were ranked *Somewhat Neglected* by consultant firm employers were *demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s), provide mental health support, provide flexible work hours, provide flexible work location, provide promotions to other branches, assist in re-education for alternative career pathway, sponsor employees' further studies, and prohibit OT culture*. Eight (8) *Extremely Attractive* retention strategies for Gen Z QS were established, which are *regular promotions and growth opportunities, job security, regular bonuses, training and development opportunities, high base salary, healthy work environment, mentors, and equality to genders, races and disabilities*.

Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis H Test were used. Females showed higher importance on *feedback, engage in creative and innovative ideas, and clear expectations* more than males. Chinese showed pronounced importance on *equality to races, gender and disabilities*, while Malays showed pronounced importance on *mentors and prohibition of OT culture*. Gen Z QS with Degrees ranked higher importance on *challenging work tasks, well-defined visions and missions, and external training* more than Diploma holders. Gen Z QS without professional qualifications considered *clear expectations, feedback and mentoring* more important, while Gen Z QS with PvQS qualifications considered *sponsor to further studies, demonstration of macro and micro sustainable pledge(s)* more important. Those in Klang Valley companies determined greater importance on *equality to gender, races and healthy environment*, while those in Non-Klang Valley companies determined greater importance on *sponsorship to further studies, external training and assistance in alternative career pathway*. Gen Z QS in the B1&B2 income subgroup ranked higher importance to *feedback, external*



*training* and a *positive environment* more important than Gen Z QS in B3&B4 income subgroup. Those in large-sized companies considered *prohibition of OT culture, healthy environment* and *high base salary* more important, those in medium-sized companies considered *sponsor for further studies* more important while those in small-sized companies considered *clear expectations, mentorship, and challenging work tasks* more important.

Spearman's Rank Correlation Test was used. Unique relationship of participants where older Gen Z QS showed significantly lesser work experience was justified due to lengthier educational background. Older Gen Z QS showed positive relationship with *clear expectations, equality to disabilities* and *feedback*, while Gen Z QS with lesser work experience showed negative relationship with *challenging work tasks, equality to disabilities* and *gender equality*.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of objectives achieved, research contributions, limitations and recommendations. All objectives set out in this research were achieved using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test, Measures of Central Tendency, Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis H Test and Spearman's Rank Correlation. The contributions provided by this research were explored. The limitations and recommendations of this research were outlined for future researchers of similar topics.

#### 5.2 Achieved Objectives

The aim of this study was to examine the workplace expectations of Gen Z QS in consultant firms of the Malaysian construction industry and suggest improvements for companies to retain their workforce. All objectives set out in this research was achieved. The data collected by 98 respondents across Malaysia were analysed with a reliability test, Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis and deemed more than acceptable reliability.

##### 5.2.1 Objective 1: To Identify The Workplace Expectations Of Employed Gen Z Qs In Consultant Companies

This research identified the most considered workplace expectations by Gen Z QS in consultant companies when they searched for employment firms, as summarised in Table 4.5. The descriptive test, Measure of Central Tendency was used. Nearly all workplace expectations listed were considered *Extremely Important* (median = 5.00) or *Important* (median = 4.00), except *assign solo group tasks* that received a median of 3.00 which was considered *Neutral*, which suggests that while it's not a top priority, it is also not a significant concern for Gen Z QS.

As in Table 4.5, Gen Z QS in consultant companies consider factors related to *racial equality, gender equality, job security, adequate paid leave*

and mentoring as the five (5) *Extremely Important* workplace expectations (median = 5.00). These aspects are most crucial for attracting and retaining Gen Z QS in consultant firms. The other 23 factors were considered *Important* (median = 4.00), indicating a wide range of expectations that companies should address to meet the needs of Gen Z QS employees.

### 5.2.2 Objective 2: To Interpret The Effect Of Gen Z QS's Demographic Aspects On Their Workplace Expectations

This research interpreted the effect of different demographic factors that affected the preference of Gen Z QS in consultant firms, as summarised in **Error! Reference source not found..** The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to study the effect of gender (male and female), ethnicity (Malay and Chinese), Educational Background (Diploma and Degree), professional qualifications (none and BQSM: PvQS), and company region (Klang Valley and Non-Klang Valley). The associational test, Spearman's Rank Correlation Test, was used to study the correlational effect of age (older and younger), work experience (lesser and more), current employed company size (smaller and larger) and base income (lower and higher). The strength of correlation varied from weak ( $r_s = 0.202$ ) to moderate ( $r_s = 0.520$ ) for all significant relationships.

No conclusive inclination on importance workplace was inferred on males, while females prioritized higher importance on *feedback, creative and innovative engagement, and clear expectations* more than males. Chinese indicated higher importance on *equality of all aspects*, while Malays indicated higher importance on *mentoring and prohibition of OT culture*. Degree holders were inclined to rank *challenging work tasks, well-defined visions and mission, and sponsored external training* more important than Diploma holders, while no conclusive inclination of importance was found for Diploma holders. Gen Z QS without professional qualifications pronounced higher importance on *clear expectations, feedback and mentoring*; while those with BQSM: PvQS pronounced *sponsored further studies and demonstration of micro and macro sustainable pledges* of higher importance than those without qualifications. Gen Z QS in Klang Valley firms indicated higher importance on *equal racial and gender treatment and a supportive environment* than those in Non-Klang

Valley firms; while the latter indicated higher importance on *sponsored further studies, alternative career pathways aids and sponsored external training*. Those in lower income subgroups B1&B2 ranked *feedback, sponsored external training* and a *supportive environment* more important, but no conclusive inference could be extracted for B3&B4 income subgroups.

Comparatively, Gen Z QS in large companies ranked higher importance on *prohibition of OT, supportive environment* and *higher base salary*; medium companies *greatly issued importance on sponsored further studies*; while small companies ranked higher importance on *clear expectations, mentoring* and *challenging work tasks*.

Finally, age showed a positive correlation with *clear expectations, equality to disabilities and feedback*; while work expectation showed a negative correlation with *challenging work tasks, equality to disabilities and gender*.

### **5.2.3 Objective 3: To Assess The Extent To Which Workplace Expectations Are Met In The Context Of Gen Z QS Working In Consultant Companies**

This research assessed the extent to which workplace expectations were met by employers of Gen Z QS in consultant firms, summarised in Table 4.7. The results showed that five (5) very important workplace expectations were *Somewhat Achieved* by Gen Z QS in consultant firms, three (3) workplace expectations were considered *Neutral* in achievement by employers, while eight (8) important workplace expectations were *Somewhat Neglected* by employers.

Expectations that were considered *Neutral* achievement by employers are *discrimination to disabilities, creative and innovative idea engagement* and *discovery and experimentation of entrepreneurship tendencies*. The eight (8) workplace expectations, *macro sustainable pledge, mental health support, flexible work time and locations, promotions to other branches, alternative career pathways aid, sponsorship of further studies and prohibition of OT* were considered *Somewhat Neglected* by employers. In fact, the five (5)

workplace expectations considered *Somewhat Achieved* are *equal treatment to race and gender, mentoring, job security and adequate paid leave*.

#### **5.2.4 Objective 4: To Propose Employee Retaining Strategies For Consultant Companies To Retain Their Gen Z QS Workforce**

This research compiled the most attractive retention strategies ranked by Gen Z QS in consultant firms for employers to retain their workforce, as summarised in Table 4.30. Descriptive test, Measure of Central Tendency was used. Eight (8) strategies were considered *Extremely Attractive*, one (1) strategy considered *Quite Attractive*, two (2) retention strategies were considered *Attractive* while only one (1) strategy was considered *Unattractive*.

The eight (8) most attractive retention strategies were *regular promotions and growth opportunities, job security, regular bonuses, provision of training and development opportunities, high base salary, healthy work environment, mentors, and equality to genders, races and disabilities*. The least attractive retention strategy was *ignores their impact to the environment*.

### **5.3 Research Contributions**

Accurate assumptions of general Gen Z and QS workplace expectations were proven as applicable to Gen Z QS in consultant firms. The prioritisation of *high base salary* and *provision of adequate paid leaves* are indeed workplace requirements for Gen Z QS to acquire a higher earning potential and maintain a work-life balance (Kee and Madden, 2018; Deloitte, 2021). At the same time, they value companies that gives *equal treatment to race and gender* and provide a fair work environment to all (Deloitte, 2021). Gen Z QS are definitely pursuing more education, as such contributing to them working later in life compared to previous generations (Parker and Igielnik, 2020). In fact, *promotion and growth opportunities* were proven as an *Extremely Attractive* retention strategy for general QS and the Gen Z QS cohort to provide loyalty to a company (Siti Nur Aishah Mohd Noor and Nadzirah Zainordin, 2018).

This research also provided additional insight to the workplace expectations of Malaysian Gen Z QS in consultant firms. The workplace expectation *assign solo work tasks* were deemed as a *Neutral* importance workplace expectation in determining a Gen Z QS's employment. It held no

swaying power to determine one's employment choice to a company. This explained the contradicting research where solo and group work tasks had varied responses and preferences by Gen Z in construction industries in general (Iorgulescu, 2016; Hatoum et al., 2022; Pandita, 2022).

This research also proved that not all general Gen Z assumptions were applicable to the specific Malaysian Gen Z QS cohort. While Gen Z QS prioritise and champion social causes, their requirements for companies to take up environmental responsibility such as *demonstrate micro and macro sustainable pledge(s)* were less harsh and demanding (Deloitte, 2021; Pandita, 2022). This is reflected by Gen Z QS' empathy to understand that SMEs lack resources to perform macro sustainable efforts such as net-zero carbon emissions. Additionally, the entrepreneurial tendencies of Malaysian Gen Z's were not pronounced in Gen Z QS in consultant firms, but are indirectly visible through their hope of employers engaging with creative and innovative ideas (Kee and Madden, 2018; Hatoum et al., 2022).

Specifically, the niche topic of workplace expectations of Malaysian Gen Z QS in consultant firms was tackled and established. The importance of understanding the specific needs preferred by subgroups cannot be denied, where the profession-specific individuals in the same generation can show different workplace expectations than its general stereotype (Dimock, 2019). Hence, this research also functions as a baseline of exploring the workplace expectations of different industries and occupations within the same generational cohort.

Moreover, employers can provide better offers tailored to different demographic groups to suit preferred workplace needs to reduce high turnover rates. The exploration of higher important placed on *feedback, engagement in creative and innovative ideas*, and *clear expectations* by females more than males allows companies to adjust their working style to provide female Gen Z QS with better person-career fit and promote company loyalty (Van der Heijden and De Vos, 2015). Companies can also provide Gen Z QS with Degrees to tackle more *challenging tasks* by providing *external training* and utilising their *well-defined visions and missions* as guides to lead projects. Small-sized companies can also confidently promote their opportunities for

*challenging work tasks with mentors* that can provide *clear expectations* to guide employees on tackling difficult decisions while working for the company.

Greater awareness of the different aspects of improvement can be explored by companies while they attract new employees. The eight (8) workplace expectations *demonstrate macro sustainable pledge(s), provide mental health support, provide flexible work hours, provide flexible work location, provide promotions to other branches, assist in re-education for alternative career pathway, sponsor employees' further studies, and prohibit OT culture* are overall ranked *Somewhat Neglected* by the 98 participants of this research. If companies can leverage their resources to manage these workplace expectations to their benefit, it will pose as an advantage when attracting and retaining Gen Z QS employees. This is also applicable to the three (3) workplace expectations considered *Neutral* achievement by respondents, which were *equality to disabilities, engagement with employees' creative and innovative ideas, and exploration of entrepreneurship tendencies*.

Furthermore, significant retention strategies were ranked and recommended for employers to utilise and retain their workforce. Issues such as net outflow of employees due to older generations retiring can be mitigated by attracting and retaining Gen Z QS with eight (8) *Extremely Attractive* retention strategies, which are *regular promotions and growth opportunities, job security, regular bonuses, training and development opportunities, high base salary, healthy work environment, mentors, and equality to genders, races and disabilities*. Companies are able to match benefits provided by overseas opportunities to combat the trend of Gen Z QS seeking international work opportunities (Tham, 2023; Yeap, 2024).

#### **5.4 Limitations and Recommendations of Research**

While this research provided considerable contributions, some limitations were unavoidable in the process of completing all objectives.

The 1<sup>st</sup> limitation occurred due to the criteria of Gen Z QS in consultant firms only gathered fresh graduates with work experiences of less than six years. As seen in Table 4.1, many of the respondents may have just

graduated from institutions and not eligible for managerial positions. As such, the results may not accurately reflect the entirety of Malaysian Gen Z QS in consultant firms. Additionally, with lesser work experience, there may be a bias to less realistic workplace expectations. The research could be refined if done in the future where more Gen Z QS in consultant firms have more work experience after longer employment.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> limitation occurred as the final sample size of respondents gathered were considered small. As in Cochran's formula, the required respondent sample size was 384 for this research. In total, only had 98 respondents participated, which only reflects a small circle Gen Z QS in consultant firms in Malaysia. This could be improved by extending the data collection period to invite more participants.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> limitation occurred as the final demographic group of respondents with different ethnicities were considered limited. For example, as in literature review, Malaysia's demographic is 62% of the population are Malays, roughly 21% are Chinese, 6% are Indians. However, only 2 Indians participated in this research. As such, certain demographic groups were not represented and inferenced on the preferred workplace expectations. This could be improved by extending the data collection period to include demographic profiles of all kinds.

The 4<sup>th</sup> limitation occurred where the demographic group of single and married participants were not inferenced on which workplace expectations were more important to Gen Z QS. It is expected that married participants and single participants to show different significance to different workplace expectations as they lead distinct lives with unique priorities. This could be improved by extending the data collection period to include enough participants to achieve the minimum CLT requirement of 30 respondents to allow inferential test.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Questionnaire

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# UNDERSTANDING THE WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS OF GENERATION Z QUANTITY SURVEYORS IN CONSULTANCY SERVICES WITHIN THE MALAYSIAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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Dear Sir/Madam/Miss,

Good day, I am Loa Jia Wen, a final year student of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). I am undertaking the Bachelor of Science (Honours) Quantity Surveying at the Department of Surveying under Lee Kong Chian Faculty of Engineering and Science (LKCFES). I am currently conducting my final year project, titled “Understanding the Workplace Expectations of Generation Z Quantity Surveyors in Consultancy Services within the Malaysian Construction Industry”.

To be eligible for this survey, you must fulfill all the criteria below:

- i. Born between the years 1997 - 2012 (Generation Z)
- ii. currently work as a Quantity Surveyor in Malaysia
- iii. currently employed by a consultant firm

The objectives of this research are:

- i. To identify the workplace expectations of employed Generation Z Quantity Surveyor in consultant companies.
- ii. To interpret the effect of Generation Z Quantity Surveyor’s demographic aspects on their workplace expectations.
- iii. To assess the extent to which workplace expectations are met in the context of Generation Z Quantity Surveyors working in consultant

- iv. companies.
- v. To propose employee retaining strategies for consultant companies to retain their Generation Z Quantity Surveyor workforce.

This questionnaire consists of four (4) primary sections:

- Section A: Demographic Information
- Section B: Workplace Expectations of Gen Z QS
- Section C: Expectations met by Consultant Employers
- Section D: Retaining Strategies

It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire. Your participation is highly appreciated. All information provided will be kept strictly confidential and used solely for research purposes. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at loajiawen@lutar.my through email. Thank you for your kind cooperation and participation.

Regards,

Loa Jia Wen

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#### **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

I understand that by participating, identification related information such as names and emails will not be collected.

- Yes

Are you born between the years 1997 - 2012 (Generation Z)?

- Yes
- No

Do you currently work as a Quantity Surveyor related job in Malaysia?

- Yes
- No

Are you currently employed by a QS consultant firm?



- No
- Yes

Please select your year of birth:

- 1997
- 1998
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012

Please select your gender:

- Male
- Female

Please select your ethnicity:

- Malay
- Chinese
- Indian
- Other: (Please Input)

Please input your educational background:

- Diploma

- Degree
- Masters
- Phd
- Other: (Please Input)

Please input your work experience as a consultant firm QS .

- Less than 1 year
- No more than 2 years
- No more than 3 years
- No more than 4 years
- No more than 5 years
- No more than 6 years
- No more than 7 years
- More than 7 years

Please select any professional qualifications that you have:

- None
- RICS: AssocRICS
- RICS: MRISM
- BQSM: QST
- BQSM: PvQS
- BQSM: PQS
- BQSM: CQS
- RISM: Full Member
- Other: (Please Input)

Please select your marital status:

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Other: (Please Input)

If you are working from home, please select your current workplace region. If not, please select "N/A (Not Applicable)".

- Perlis
- Kedah
- Penang
- Perak
- Selangor
- Negeri Sembilan
- Malacca
- Johor
- Kelantan
- Terengganu
- Pahang
- Kuala Lumpur
- Putrajaya
- Sabah
- Sarawak
- Labuan
- N/A (Not Applicable)

If you are working in your company's office, please select your current company's region. If not, please select "N/A (Not Applicable)".

- Perlis
- Kedah
- Penang
- Perak
- Selangor
- Negeri Sembilan
- Malacca
- Johor
- Kelantan
- Terengganu
- Pahang

- Kuala Lumpur
- Putrajaya
- Sabah
- Sarawak
- Labuan
- N/A (Not Applicable)

Please select your company's size. (Ex: 5QS + 1HR + 1Boss = 7 workers)

- Micro (1-4 full time workers)
- Small (5-29 full time workers)
- Medium-sized enterprise (30-75 full-time workers)
- Large-sized enterprise (76 or more full time workers)

Please state your current base income:

- Less than RM2,560
- RM2,561 - RM3,439
- RM3,440 - RM4,309
- RM4,310 - RM5,249
- RM5,250 - RM6,339
- RM6,340 - RM7,689
- RM7,690 - RM9,449
- RM9,450 - RM11,819
- RM11,820 - RM15,869
- RM15,870 and above

## **SECTION B: WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS OF GEN Z QS**

### **Part A – Organizational Core Values**

“I think it is important that my employer company...”

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 – Agree	5 – Strongly Agree
Has well defined visions and missions					
Discourages unethical					

conduct.					
Demonstrates macro sustainable pledge(s) such as net zero carbon emission goals.					
Demonstrates micro sustainable pledge(s), such as donating to non-profit environmental organizations.					
Treats all races equally.					
Treats all genders equally.					

### Part B – Organizational Working Style

"I think it is important that my employer company..."

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 – Agree	5 – Strongly Agree
Provide flexible work hours.					
Allow flexible work locations (work from home, etc).					
Has a positive, healthy, and supportive work environment.					
Provide mental health support.					
Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas.					
Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies.					

Define clear expectations from employees.					
Provide feedback on employee performance.					
Often assigns solo work tasks.					
Often assigns group-based work tasks.					

### Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities

"I think it is important that my employer company..."

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 – Agree	5 – Strongly Agree
Provide mentoring.					
Provide internal training for work readiness.					
Sponsor employees to attend external training.					
Assist employees' re-education for alternative career pathways.					
Sponsor employees' to further their studies (Degree, PhD, Masters).					
Provide promotions to higher positions.					
Provide promotions to branches in other locations (such as another state or overseas).					
Provide challenging work tasks.					

### Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided

"I think it is important that my employer company..."

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 – Agree	5 – Strongly Agree
Provides job security.					
Prohibits OT (OverTime) culture.					
Does not assign unmanageable workloads.					
Provide high base salary.					
Gives periodic bonus (every year, etc).					
Provide adequate amount of paid leave.					

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### SECTION C: EXPECTATIONS MET BY CONSULTANT EMPLOYERS

#### Part A: Organizational Core Values

"My current employer company ensured that they..."

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 – Agree	5 – Strongly Agree
Has well defined visions and missions					
Discourages unethical conduct.					
Demonstrates macro sustainable pledge(s) such as net zero carbon emission goals.					
Demonstrates micro sustainable pledge(s),					

such as donating to non-profit environmental organizations.					
Treats all races equally.					
Treats all genders equally.					

### Part B – Organizational Working Style

"My current employer company ensured that they..."

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 – Agree	5 – Strongly Agree
Provide flexible work hours.					
Allow flexible work locations (work from home, etc).					
Has a positive, healthy, and supportive work environment.					
Provide mental health support.					
Engage in employees' creative and innovative ideas.					
Allow employees to explore entrepreneurship tendencies.					
Define clear expectations from employees.					
Provide feedback on employee performance.					
Often assigns solo work tasks.					
Often assigns group-based					



work tasks.					
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### Part C - Development and Advancement Opportunities

"My current employer company ensured that they..."

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 – Agree	5 – Strongly Agree
Provide mentoring.					
Provide internal training for work readiness.					
Sponsor employees to attend external training.					
Assist employees' re-education for alternative career pathways.					
Sponsor employees' to further their studies (Degree, PhD, Masters).					
Provide promotions to higher positions.					
Provide promotions to branches in other locations (such as another state or overseas).					
Provide challenging work tasks.					

### Part D - Benefits and Remuneration Provided

"My current employer company ensured that they..."

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 – Agree	5 – Strongly Agree
Provides job security.					
Prohibits OT (OverTime) culture.					

Does not assign unmanageable workloads.					
Provide high base salary.					
Gives periodic bonus (every year, etc).					
Provide adequate amount of paid leave.					

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#### SECTION D: RETAINING STRATEGIES

"My current employer company ensured that they..."

	1 – Extremely Unattractive	2 - Unattractive	3 - Neutral	4 – Attractive	5 – Extremely Attractive
Practices equality to all genders, disabilities and races.					
Provides high base salary.					
Provides job security.					
Provides mentors.					
Allows flexibility in work times and work locations.					
Provide regular promotions and growth opportunities.					
Builds a collaborative culture in workplace.					
Creates a healthy work environment (mental and physical).					
Provides regular					

bonuses.					
Provides training and development opportunities.					
Avoids assigning unmanageable workloads.					
Ignores their impact to the environment.					

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**You've completed the questionnaire!**

Thank you for participating in this survey. Please click the "Submit" button below to complete this questionnaire!

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