

UNDERSTANDING THE LINK BETWEEN WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND JOB SATISFACTION IN GEN Z WORKFORCE

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction among Generation Z employees in Indonesia's e-commerce startup sector. As digital natives with unique professional values, Gen Z places strong emphasis on flexibility, mental well-being, and the seamless blending of work and personal life traits that set them apart from earlier generations. A quantitative method was utilized, employing a survey-based design and purposive sampling technique. A total of 100 Gen Z employees from various startups completed an online questionnaire consisting of 15 statements evaluating work-life balance and 25 items related to job satisfaction, using a 5-point Likert scale. The data were processed using simple linear regression through IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26, aiming to assess the relationship's strength, direction, and statistical significance between the studied variables. The findings reveal a significant and positive correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction, with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.221. This indicates that 22.1% of the variability in job satisfaction is influenced by how employees perceive their work-life balance. These outcomes highlight the need for startups to establish more adaptable and supportive working conditions aligned with Gen Z preferences. From a managerial perspective, the results advocate for HR strategies that prioritize employee wellness, lower stress levels, and improve organizational commitment. Ultimately, promoting an effective work-life balance not only enhances employee satisfaction but also plays a crucial role in talent retention and organizational sustainability, particularly within the competitive startup ecosystem.

Keywords: Generation Z, job satisfaction, startup, work-life balance

INTRODUCTION

The modern labor market is experiencing swift and substantial changes, influenced by rapid technological innovation, evolving organizational structures, and the increasing participation of Generation Z in the workforce. Commonly characterized as those born between 1997 and 2012, Gen Z represents the first cohort to grow up entirely within a digitally connected environment. This digital nativity has not only shaped their communication styles and access to information, but also profoundly influenced their values, career aspirations, and expectations from employers (Dimock, 2019). Compared to previous generations such as Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, Gen Z employees tend to prioritize different aspects of employment, favoring flexibility, meaningfulness, and personal well-being over traditional metrics such as job stability and financial compensation (Schroth, 2019; Deloitte, 2022).

As members of Gen Z increasingly enter the workforce estimated to comprise over 27% of the global labor force by 2025 their distinct preferences are reshaping the nature of work and the way organizations manage human resources. Numerous studies indicate that Gen Z workers are more attuned to mental health issues, demand work environments that support autonomy and purpose, and are more likely to advocate for work arrangements that allow them to maintain equilibrium between professional obligations and personal fulfillment (Seemiller & Grace, 2016; EY, 2021). The

COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated this shift in work values, normalizing hybrid and remote work models and emphasizing the need for organizations to design employee-centric policies that foster resilience, engagement, and well-being.

In today's dynamic work environment, the notion of work-life balance (WLB) has emerged as a central factor influencing both employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. At its core, WLB encapsulates an individual's ability to effectively manage and integrate the competing demands of their professional and personal lives, thereby reducing role strain and enhancing overall life quality (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Maintaining a balanced approach to work and non-work responsibilities has been linked to numerous beneficial outcomes, such as diminished psychological stress, decreased absenteeism, heightened job involvement, and greater employee loyalty (Allen et al., 2000; Haar et al., 2014). For members of Generation Z who are in the formative years of their careers and navigating a highly uncertain and fast-changing job landscape achieving such balance is increasingly viewed as essential rather than optional.

Despite its increasing significance, much of the existing research on WLB remains centered on older generations or treats the workforce as a homogenous group, paying limited attention to generational diversity. Prior empirical studies have largely examined the influence of WLB on job satisfaction among Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, without adequately exploring the distinct traits and work-related values that define Gen Z (Smith, 2020; Ng et al., 2010). Considering Gen Z's prioritization of mental wellness, preference for flexible work arrangements, and pursuit of purposeful employment, it is plausible that their experiences and expectations surrounding work-life balance differ significantly from those of earlier generations. The lack of focused investigation into this generational group thus presents a significant research gap particularly as Gen Z continues to enter and reshape the modern workforce in large numbers.

Moreover, in emerging economies such as Indonesia, where digital entrepreneurship and startup culture are flourishing, the integration of Gen Z employees into fast-paced and innovation-driven work environments adds another layer of complexity. Startups, while often celebrated for their flexibility and flat hierarchies, also come with challenges such as ambiguous work boundaries, high performance pressure, and lack of structured HR practices all of which can significantly influence how young employees experience work-life balance and perceive job satisfaction. Therefore, gaining insight into how work-life balance relates to job satisfaction among this generational group and within the specific context of the e-commerce industry is crucial for companies seeking to recruit, motivate, and sustain the commitment of young professionals in today's highly competitive employment landscape.

This study aims to address this research gap by investigating the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among Gen Z employees, with a particular focus on those employed in Indonesia's rapidly expanding e-commerce startup sector. The central objective of this research is to assess the extent to which perceptions of WLB influence Gen Z employees' attitudes toward their jobs, and to what degree these perceptions contribute to overall job satisfaction. By adopting a generational lens and situating the analysis within a specific industrial context, this study aspires to make both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse on generational differences in human resource management (HRM) and work values. Practically, the findings are expected to offer actionable insights for organizational leaders and HR professionals seeking to design inclusive and adaptive workplace policies that align with the priorities of the next generation of talent.

In doing so, the study underscores the strategic importance of aligning HR practices with the evolving expectations of a digitally native workforce and highlights the necessity for organizations to cultivate supportive environments that not only optimize productivity but also promote holistic employee well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

In the contemporary landscape of human resource management, the concept of work-life balance (WLB) has emerged as a pivotal area of academic inquiry and organizational concern. The accelerated pace of technological advancement, globalization, and evolving workforce demographics have profoundly reshaped the traditional boundaries between work and personal life. Employees are increasingly expected to demonstrate high levels of availability and responsiveness beyond standard working hours, thereby intensifying the demand for effective strategies that can support balance and well-being. Amidst this context, WLB is defined not merely as the equal division of time between professional and personal domains, but as the subjective perception of achieving harmony and control over competing life demands, which ultimately contributes to holistic well-being (Kim & Liu, 2023).

Work-life balance encompasses a range of dimensions including temporal flexibility, psychological detachment from work, and perceived support from organizational structures. When individuals experience alignment between their work responsibilities and personal aspirations, they are more likely to report favorable attitudes toward their job, greater emotional well-being, and higher organizational commitment. Conversely, an imbalance can result in serious consequences such as chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, reduced job involvement, and heightened turnover intention (Yao & Li, 2021). Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that employees who maintain a satisfactory level of work-life balance are more engaged, productive, and resilient in coping with work pressures (Wong et al., 2018; Haar et al., 2014).

The theoretical underpinnings of work-life balance can be traced to two major frameworks: Role Theory and Spillover Theory. Role Theory posits that individuals perform multiple roles—such as employee, parent, student, or caregiver each of which imposes distinct expectations and demands. When these roles clash or become incompatible due to limited time or energy, individuals experience role conflict, which can undermine both personal and professional well-being (Jin et al., 2016). Spillover Theory, on the other hand, explains how experiences in one domain of life, whether positive or negative, can transfer into another domain. Positive spillover, such as supportive family life enhancing workplace morale, or vice versa, can promote overall satisfaction, while negative spillover exacerbates stress and dissatisfaction (Haar et al., 2014).

Recent literature reveals that the importance of work-life balance transcends cultural and economic boundaries. In collectivist societies, such as those in many parts of Asia, where long work hours and hierarchical work environments are prevalent, work-life balance remains a significant determinant of job satisfaction and overall employee well-being (Yao & Li, 2021; Kim & Liu, 2023). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the reevaluation of work norms, making flexibility, autonomy, and well-being central themes in organizational strategy across the globe.

These shifts are especially salient with the increasing presence of Generation Z (Gen Z) in the global workforce. Gen Z, typically encompassing those born between 1997 and 2012, is distinguished by its digital fluency, openness to diversity, and prioritization of mental health and work-life integration over traditional markers of success such as income or job title (Schroth, 2019; Deloitte, 2023). This cohort expects work environments that accommodate their lifestyle needs, promote psychological safety, and support continuous learning. Gen Z employees are more likely to reject rigid workplace structures and seek employers that value well-being and purpose-driven leadership.

Multiple global surveys, including those conducted by McKinsey & Company (2022) and Deloitte (2023), reinforce that Gen Z views work-life balance as a fundamental condition for employment rather than an aspirational benefit. When organizations fail to address their expectations such as by maintaining inflexible schedules, discouraging remote work, or ignoring mental health issues Gen Z employees are willing to disengage or pursue alternative career opportunities. This generational shift necessitates a rethinking of human resource policies to ensure they are inclusive of Gen Z values, especially in high-turnover industries like technology, e-commerce, and start-ups.

Although numerous studies have examined the link between work-life balance and job satisfaction in general populations, empirical investigations specifically targeting Gen Z remain

scarce. Given their unique preferences and values, it is essential to explore how WLB influences job satisfaction in this group to guide effective talent management and organizational sustainability.

Therefore, grounded in both theoretical and empirical insights, this study puts forward the following hypothesis:

H1: Work-life balance has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction among Generation Z employees.

This hypothesis reflects the expectation that as Gen Z employees experience greater harmony between their work and personal lives, they will exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, which in turn may lead to improved performance, retention, and engagement outcomes for organizations.

RESEARCH METHODS

To achieve the research objective of analyzing how work-life balance (WLB) affects job satisfaction among Generation Z professionals in Indonesia's e-commerce startup sector, this study employed a quantitative research design. The quantitative approach was deemed appropriate because it allows for systematic data collection and objective measurement of relationships between variables, enabling researchers to generate statistically valid insights and generalizations about the population being studied (Creswell, 2014). By quantifying perceptions and attitudes through numerical data, this method ensures a high degree of reliability and replicability both essential qualities in rigorous academic research.

Population and Sampling Procedure

This study focused on a target population consisting of Generation Z individuals typically identified as those born between the years 1997 and 2012 who are actively working within the Indonesian e-commerce startup sector. E-commerce startups were chosen as the organizational context due to their fast-paced, digitally intensive work environments that demand flexibility, innovation, and adaptability attributes that align with the preferences and values of Gen Z employees (Deloitte, 2023). These firms often operate with lean teams, high digitalization, and unconventional work structures, making them an ideal setting for exploring the challenges and advantages of achieving work-life balance among young workers.

A purposive sampling method was employed in this research, wherein participants were deliberately chosen based on predefined criteria aligned with the specific aims of the study, making it a form of non-probability sampling. In this case, only respondents who met the criteria of (1) being within the Gen Z age range, and (2) currently employed in an e-commerce startup, were invited to participate. This deliberate selection strategy ensured that the sample accurately reflected the target demographic for the study and minimized the inclusion of irrelevant or non-representative respondents.

Sample Size and Data Collection

A total of 100 respondents participated in this study. This sample size was considered sufficient for conducting simple linear regression analysis, which requires a minimum number of observations to yield statistically meaningful results while maintaining model validity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Moreover, the relatively focused nature of the research centered on a specific age group within a defined sector justified the sample size in terms of depth and specificity rather than breadth alone.

Data were collected using an online questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms. The choice of a digital data collection platform was informed by the digital fluency and high internet penetration among Generation Z. Additionally, this method enabled easy access to geographically dispersed respondents and ensured time efficiency for both participants and the researcher. The online format also minimized logistical costs and was consistent with sustainable research practices.

The questionnaire was divided into two major sections. The first section consisted of 15 items designed to measure work-life balance, drawing from validated scales in the literature (e.g., Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). The second section comprised 25 items measuring job satisfaction, based on established instruments such as the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) by Spector (1985), adapted to the startup context. Responses to all questionnaire items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with values ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This scaling method was selected due to its clarity, user-friendliness, and effectiveness in capturing subtle variations in participants' levels of agreement.

Data Analysis Technique

The quantitative data obtained in this study were carefully processed and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26, a standard statistical tool commonly used in social science research. To explore the direct effect of the independent variable work-life balance (WLB) on the dependent variable job satisfaction, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. This method was selected because it effectively identifies the direction, strength, and significance of the relationship between two continuous variables, allowing for interpretations related to causation and predictive influence.

The analysis procedure began with descriptive statistics to summarize the distribution and central tendency of the data. Subsequently, diagnostic evaluations were carried out to confirm that the essential assumptions of regression analysis, such as the normality of residuals and homoscedasticity, were not violated. After ensuring these assumptions were met, the regression model was applied to assess how much of the variation in job satisfaction could be explained by perceptions of work-life balance among Generation Z employees in the e-commerce startup sector.

Several key indicators were analyzed in the regression output, including the coefficient of determination (R^2), which reflects the percentage of variability in the dependent variable that is accounted for by the independent variable. This metric served to evaluate the predictive capacity of WLB. In addition, the regression coefficient (β) was interpreted to understand both the magnitude and the direction of the effect. A positive β would indicate that a higher perception of work-life balance corresponds to an increase in job satisfaction. Statistical significance was determined through the t-value and the associated p-value, with significance commonly assessed at the 5% level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

This analytical framework was deliberately aligned with the overarching aim of the research: to produce empirical evidence regarding the influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction within a specific generational and organizational setting. By focusing on Generation Z employees in startup e-commerce firms an emerging and relatively understudied demographic the study responds to a critical gap in current organizational behavior literature.

The insights gained through this analytical process hold practical significance for both academic researchers and organizational decision-makers. They offer a data-driven foundation for the formulation of human resource strategies aimed at improving employee well-being and retention. Specifically, the regression findings provide actionable recommendations for startups seeking to create more supportive, flexible, and appealing work environments tailored to the expectations of Generation Z, a cohort increasingly prioritizing personal fulfillment and balance in their professional lives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 displays the outcomes of the descriptive analysis conducted using the responses from 100 Generation Z employees working in the e-commerce startup sector. The descriptive data offer an initial overview of the patterns within the dataset and provide insight into the central tendencies for the two main variables examined in this study: work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction (JS).

Table 1. Result of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maksimum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Work-life Balance	37	53	44.54	4.046
Job Satisfaction	62	89	76.01	6.876

The analysis revealed that the participants' work-life balance scores varied between 37 and 53, with an average score of 44.54 and a standard deviation of 4.05. This suggests that most participants viewed their work-life balance positively, with some differences in perception across individuals. The relatively small standard deviation indicates that respondents generally felt similarly about their ability to manage work and personal commitments, implying a fairly consistent experience across this group of young professionals.

In terms of job satisfaction, the scores ranged from 62 to 89, with a mean value of 76.01 and a standard deviation of 6.88. The broader range and higher variability in job satisfaction scores, as compared to work-life balance, could reflect differing experiences related to work conditions, such as compensation, career development, the working environment, or interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

Based on the results, Generation Z employees working in Indonesia's e-commerce startup sector tend to express moderate to high levels of both work-life balance and job satisfaction. These results reflect a reasonable baseline perception of how well they can balance personal responsibilities with professional obligations and how satisfied they feel with their current roles.

Furthermore, the variation observed especially in job satisfaction scores suggests the importance of exploring other factors that may shape these attitudes. Understanding how perceptions of work-life balance relate to levels of job satisfaction can offer valuable insights into how companies might enhance job satisfaction through improved work-life initiatives, especially in fast-paced startup settings.

These initial outcomes serve as a valuable foundation for subsequent inferential analysis to further investigate the extent to which work-life balance influences job satisfaction, which remains the central focus of this study.

Classical Assumption Tests

Before conducting the simple linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction (JS) among Generation Z employees in Indonesia's e-commerce startup sector, it was imperative to validate that the dataset satisfied the classical assumptions underlying the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression method. These assumptions are foundational to ensuring that the estimates produced by the regression model are both unbiased and efficient, and that the hypothesis testing results are statistically valid.

This study specifically focused on assessing two key assumptions: (1) normality of residuals and (2) homoscedasticity (absence of heteroscedasticity). The following subsections explain the rationale, methods, and outcomes of these diagnostic tests in detail.

Normality Test

The assumption of normality concerns the distribution of the residuals (errors) generated by the regression model. For parametric statistical tests such as the t-test used to assess the significance of regression coefficients to produce accurate and interpretable results, the residuals should be approximately normally distributed. This is particularly crucial for relatively small samples, as violations of this assumption can result in biased confidence intervals and p-values, ultimately affecting the conclusions of the study.

To verify the normality assumption, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was conducted using the unstandardized residuals derived from the regression output. This test, which is non-parametric

in nature, is frequently employed to evaluate whether a dataset significantly deviates from a theoretical normal distribution.

Table 2. Result of Normality Test

Unstandardized Residual	Sig.
Kolmogorov Smirnov Test	0.200

According to the results presented in Table 2, the significance value (p-value) was found to be 0.200, which exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.05. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the residuals are normally distributed. This outcome suggests that the residuals approximate a normal distribution, thereby fulfilling the normality assumption and justifying the application of parametric statistical procedures in the regression analysis.

Heteroscedasticity Test

A fundamental requirement in ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is the assumption of homoscedasticity, which stipulates that the residuals should exhibit constant variance across all values of the predictor variable. When this assumption is violated resulting in heteroscedasticity the reliability of the regression output is compromised, particularly in terms of biased standard errors that can distort p-values and weaken the validity of statistical conclusions.

To evaluate the presence of heteroscedasticity in the dataset, the Glejser test was utilized. This diagnostic technique involves performing a regression of the absolute residual values on the predictor variable in this case, work-life balance to determine whether the independent variable significantly influences the magnitude of residual dispersion. A p-value above the conventional 0.05 threshold is interpreted as evidence that heteroscedasticity is not present.

Table 3. Result of Heteroscedasticity Test

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.000	3.810		0.525	0.601
	Work-life Balance	0.067	0.085	0.079	0.788	0.433

As displayed in Table 3, the p-value for the work-life balance variable is 0.433, which clearly exceeds the accepted level of significance. Based on this result, the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity is upheld, indicating that the residuals maintain a consistent variance regardless of the values of the independent variable. This outcome affirms that the assumption of homoscedasticity has been satisfied, ensuring the robustness of the regression analysis.

In conclusion, the classical assumption tests for normality and heteroscedasticity demonstrate that the data satisfy key requirements for valid regression analysis. The residuals from the regression model are normally distributed, and no evidence of heteroscedasticity was detected. These results provide a sound basis to proceed with the regression analysis to explore the impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction among Generation Z employees in e-commerce startups.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

To investigate the effect of work-life balance on job satisfaction among Generation Z professionals employed in Indonesia's e-commerce startup industry, this research utilized a simple linear regression technique. This method was deemed appropriate for assessing the extent, direction, and statistical relevance of the relationship between the predictor variable (work-life balance) and the outcome variable (job satisfaction). As a standard analytical tool in social sciences,

simple linear regression is particularly effective for examining the direct impact of a single independent variable on a dependent variable.

The analysis produced a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.470, indicating a moderate yet positive association between work-life balance and job satisfaction. In other words, individuals who perceive a more balanced integration between their professional and personal responsibilities tend to report higher satisfaction with their jobs. Moreover, the R-squared (R^2) value was calculated at 0.221, signifying that roughly 22.1% of the variation in job satisfaction levels among respondents can be accounted for by differences in their perceived work-life balance. While this figure shows a meaningful proportion of explained variance, it also implies that other factors outside of the current model may contribute to job satisfaction, warranting further investigation.

The regression equation derived from the analysis can be expressed as:

$$\text{Job Satisfaction} = 40.466 + 0.798 (\text{Work} - \text{life Balance}) \quad (1)$$

Within the context of the regression model, the constant value of 40.466 signifies the predicted level of job satisfaction when the work-life balance score is assumed to be zero, serving as an indicative baseline of satisfaction in the absence of perceived balance. Additionally, the unstandardized coefficient of 0.798 suggests that for each additional unit in the work-life balance score, job satisfaction is anticipated to increase by approximately 0.798 points. This upward trend highlights the constructive influence of a well-maintained work-life balance on elevating the job satisfaction of Generation Z employees.

To test the significance of the relationship, a t-test was conducted on the regression coefficient. The t-value was found to be 5.265 with a corresponding p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$), which is highly significant. This confirms that the effect of work-life balance on job satisfaction is not due to chance and that the relationship holds strong empirical support. Moreover, the intercept was also statistically significant ($t = 5.970$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that job satisfaction exists at a baseline level even in the absence of perceived work-life balance.

These results carry meaningful relevance for organizational leadership, especially within the dynamic and high-pressure environment of e-commerce startup companies. Considering the notable impact of work-life balance on employee satisfaction, it is advisable for employers to adopt strategic initiatives and workplace frameworks that support the integration of professional and personal life. This includes offering flexible working arrangements, fostering supportive work environments, managing workloads, and providing resources for personal well-being. Such initiatives can contribute to increased job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and improved organizational commitment particularly for Generation Z employees, who are known to prioritize life quality and personal fulfillment alongside career advancement.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the R^2 value of 0.221 indicates that 77.9% of the variation in job satisfaction remains unexplained by the model. This highlights the need for future research to explore additional predictors of job satisfaction, such as organizational culture, leadership styles, intrinsic motivation, or career development opportunities. Future studies could also benefit from more advanced statistical approaches, such as multiple regression or structural equation modeling (SEM), to build a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of job satisfaction in this generational and industrial context.

Table 4. Result of Correlation and Coefficient Determination

Model	R	R Square
1	0.470	0.221

Table 5. Result of Correlation and Coefficient Determination

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	40.466	6.778		5.970	0.000
	Work-life Balance	0.798	0.152	0.470	5.265	0.000

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer strong empirical evidence supporting the pivotal role of work-life balance in shaping job satisfaction among Generation Z employees within the e-commerce startup sector in Indonesia. This outcome not only aligns with but also expands upon a substantial body of literature in organizational behavior and human resource management, which emphasizes the beneficial impact of work-life balance on employee attitudes and outcomes (Allen et al., 2021; Haar et al., 2014). In fast-growing and often high-stress environments such as startups where unpredictability, extended working hours, and high performance expectations are the norm the capacity to sustain a healthy division between professional duties and personal life is revealed to be an essential determinant of employees' psychological well-being and job contentment.

The results affirm theoretical perspectives such as the Work-Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000) and the Role Theory, both of which posit that when employees are able to navigate and maintain clear boundaries between work and personal domains, they experience reduced inter-role conflict, lower stress levels, and enhanced emotional resilience. This harmonious interaction between roles, in turn, fosters greater job satisfaction by enabling employees to meet their personal and professional goals simultaneously. In the case of Generation Z individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s the importance of this equilibrium becomes even more pronounced given their upbringing in an era of hyper-connectivity, economic uncertainty, and shifting societal values regarding mental health and work-life integration (Schroth, 2019; McKinsey & Company, 2022).

Generation Z is distinguished by its strong inclination toward workplace flexibility, purpose-driven employment, and mental health advocacy. Unlike older generations who may have prioritized financial stability or hierarchical advancement, Gen Z employees value autonomy, meaningful work, and psychological safety (Seemiller & Grace, 2016; Smith, 2020). This generational outlook is reflected in the findings of this study, which underscore that the perception of a supportive work-life balance significantly contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction. Given their digital nativity and the blurred boundaries between work and life exacerbated by remote work technologies, Gen Z employees are particularly sensitive to organizational practices that disregard personal well-being in favor of productivity at all costs.

From a practical standpoint, these insights call for an urgent re-evaluation of human resource policies in startups, which often emphasize speed, innovation, and resource efficiency at the expense of employee well-being. To attract, retain, and motivate Gen Z talent, startup leaders and HR practitioners must prioritize the creation of environments that enable sustainable work-life integration. Initiatives such as flexible work schedules, the option to work remotely, digital wellness programs, and access to mental health resources are no longer optional but increasingly expected by this workforce. Moreover, fostering an organizational culture that acknowledges the importance of personal time, encourages downtime, and promotes open conversations about burnout and stress can significantly enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions (Kooij et al., 2020; Haar et al., 2019).

These recommendations are particularly crucial in the startup ecosystem, where employees are often required to adapt rapidly, take on multifaceted roles, and manage high workloads with minimal resources. While such environments can be exciting and offer rapid career development,

they can also become breeding grounds for stress and disengagement if employees feel overwhelmed or unsupported. Thus, implementing and reinforcing work-life balance strategies not only enhances individual outcomes such as job satisfaction and mental well-being but also contributes to organizational effectiveness through increased employee retention, engagement, and productivity.

On a theoretical level, this study contributes meaningfully to the literature by shedding light on an underexplored demographic Generation Z workers within the startup sector. While numerous studies have documented the positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction across various populations (Allen et al., 2021; Haar et al., 2014), few have examined this dynamic within the high-intensity context of digital startups and among a generation with distinct expectations of work. By focusing on this specific intersection, the current research offers nuanced insights that highlight the critical importance of generational identity in shaping organizational behavior outcomes.

Furthermore, the study underscores the need for generationally informed HR strategies. As Gen Z becomes a dominant force in the workforce, organizations must shift from one-size-fits-all approaches to more personalized, flexible, and inclusive practices that reflect the values, expectations, and psychological profiles of this new generation. Future research could build upon these findings by incorporating other potentially influential factors, such as leadership style, organizational justice, psychological contract fulfillment, and opportunities for growth and development all of which have been shown to interact with work-life balance in shaping employee attitudes.

In conclusion, the study not only confirms the positive impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction among Gen Z employees in startups but also highlights the broader implications for organizational policy and future research. As companies navigate the future of work in a post-pandemic era, those that proactively support employee well-being and adapt to the evolving expectations of younger workers will likely enjoy greater success in cultivating engaged, satisfied, and high-performing teams.

CONCLUSION

This research set out to empirically explore how work-life balance influences job satisfaction among Generation Z professionals employed within the fast-paced and often high-pressure setting of e-commerce startups. The results provide strong evidence that a well-maintained balance between work and personal life contributes significantly and positively to employees' job satisfaction. In particular, individuals who experience a greater sense of balance between their occupational duties and personal commitments are more likely to report enhanced satisfaction in their roles. The coefficient of determination (R^2) obtained was 0.221, indicating that work-life balance explains roughly 22.1% of the variation in job satisfaction levels. Although this underscores the substantial role of work-life balance in shaping employee contentment, it also points to the presence of additional influencing variables that merit deeper exploration in future studies.

From a practical perspective, the findings underscore the urgent need for organizations particularly e-commerce startups, which frequently operate under high-pressure conditions to implement human resource policies that actively support a balanced lifestyle. Such policies may include flexible work hours, hybrid or fully remote work arrangements, mental health support, wellness initiatives, and a company culture that respects employees' personal time. As Generation Z increasingly enters the workforce with clear expectations for flexibility, autonomy, and meaningful work, aligning organizational practices with these preferences can significantly improve employee satisfaction, reduce burnout, lower turnover rates, and enhance overall employee commitment and retention.

While this study offers meaningful contributions, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that may affect the breadth of its applicability. Firstly, the research was conducted with a

relatively small sample size, comprising only 100 Generation Z employees working in e-commerce startups. Such a limited respondent base may constrain the generalizability of the results to other sectors or a wider demographic of Gen Z professionals. Secondly, the cross-sectional nature of the study design presents challenges in establishing causal relationships or understanding how the interplay between work-life balance and job satisfaction may shift over time. The exclusive reliance on self-reported data also introduces potential bias, including tendencies toward socially desirable responses or subjective interpretations of questionnaire items.

To overcome these constraints, future investigations should consider expanding the sample to include a more varied population across different industries and regions. Employing a longitudinal approach could provide deeper insights into temporal changes and evolving patterns between the studied variables. Furthermore, incorporating additional constructs such as occupational stress, workplace culture, leadership quality, opportunities for advancement, or individual psychological resilience could help illuminate the complex mechanisms that shape job satisfaction among Generation Z workers. Broadening the analytical framework in this way would support the development of more effective strategies to engage, retain, and support younger employees in an ever-evolving organizational landscape.

In conclusion, this study affirms that fostering a healthy work-life balance is not merely a desirable attribute of modern organizations but a strategic imperative, particularly in fast-paced, talent-driven sectors such as e-commerce. Organizations that invest in creating supportive environments where employees can harmonize their work and personal lives are likely to reap the benefits in the form of increased employee satisfaction, engagement, and long-term organizational success.

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