

## Gender and Generational Differences in Work Life Balance among Start Up Employees in India

Devanshi A. Jogi<sup>1\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

A comparative study was carried out to see differences between the work life balance levels of different genders and generations of employees working in a startup ecosystem in India. Startup system in India has gained momentum since a decade and it is on a path of growth. Work-life balance (WLB) is a critical factor that influences the personal and professional lives of employees. Therefore, this study aims to compare the levels of WLB among different genders and generational levels in the context of the start-up ecosystem in India. This study assessed levels of WLB of 69 employees who are currently employed in a startup company. Demographic variables like Gender and Generations were considered for this study. Survey method was used for which Checkscale7 of the “The Work-life balance Checklist”, developed by Shirley Dex and Sue Bond (2005), was used, Google forms were utilized to prepare and circulate the questionnaire in order to collect data. For analysing the data t-test was conducted. The research revealed that there is a significant difference in the WLB levels of employees of different generations and Genders.

**Keywords:** *Work Life balance, Satisfaction, Start Up Culture, Employees, Gender, Generation Z, Millennial Generation*

The start-up ecosystem in India has experienced significant growth and momentum over the past decade, as evidenced by statistical data. As a result, it has become crucial for researchers in the field of industrial psychology to investigate the various aspects of this new and emerging ecosystem and understand its impact on the lives of those involved in it. Work-life balance (WLB) is a critical factor that influences the personal and professional lives of employees. Therefore, this study aims to compare the levels of WLB among different genders and generational levels in the context of the start-up ecosystem in India. By examining the interplay of gender and generational differences in WLB within this unique context, this research will contribute to our understanding of how the start-up ecosystem is shaping the work-life experiences of employees in India. The findings of this study can inform policymakers, organizational leaders, and human resource practitioners about the importance of addressing WLB in the start-up ecosystem to promote the well-being and productivity of employees.

<sup>1</sup>Post Graduate Student, KJ Somaiya college of Arts, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

\*Corresponding Author

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### **START-UP COMPANY**

According to MHB Subrahmanya, et. al. (2015) a "start-up" is typically referred to as a new business with no prior operating experience. Such new initiatives are burdened by the risk associated with being novel because they are untested and unheard of (Stinchcombe 1965; Baum 1996; Certo 2003). A start-up is the establishment of a brand-new company that operates independently and is not affiliated to any other organisations outside of the regular course of business. It essentially means that the mechanism is established to utilise it, and not that the concept itself is inherently novel (Stokes 1995). Although the term "start-up" might be fresh, "start-ups" are not particularly novel with in Indian economy or perhaps the world economy.

A report by NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) India had 50,000 startups in 2018, up from just 7,000 startups in 2008 NASSCOM (2018). A study by the Indian government's Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT, 2020) found that in 2020, India had over 41,000 recognized startups, up from around 8,000 in 2012. The same DPIIT study found that India's startup ecosystem had created over 4.2 lakh (420,000) jobs in 2020 alone. The number of unicorns (startups valued at over \$1 billion) in India has also grown significantly in the last decade. In 2021, there were 38 unicorns in India, up from just one in 2011. According to a report by KPMG (2021), India's startup ecosystem attracted a record \$11.3 billion in investments in 2020, despite the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, these statistics show that India's startup ecosystem has grown rapidly in the last decade, with a significant increase in the number of startups, unicorns, jobs created, and investments received.

It is can be concluded thus, that start-ups have risen historically for a number of causes or goals. They can be broadly categorised under five categories: a) as just a source of income; b) as a result of policy support or inducements; c) in response to the requirements of big businesses; d) recognising the broader market potentials; and e) as a result of creative solutions relying on knowledge and experience gained periodically. These goals however are not mutually exclusive most of the time, hence it can't be categorized separately.

### **WORK LIFE BALANCE (WLB)**

WLB describes the capacity of individuals to pursue effectively their work and non-work lives, without disproportionate burdens from one domain diminishing the satisfactory experience of the other. A "good" WLB is described as an environment where employees feel competent of managing their job and personal obligations and, for the majority part, do so. The two most significant areas of a person's life are work and family. The quality of work and life for people and couples juggling different roles is greatly influenced by work-life balance. Organizations in India have understood the importance and relevance of Work-Life Balance policy initiatives. (A. Rashida Banu, K. Duraipandian. 2014)

According to Ransome (2007), the term "work-life balance" refers to anything that is done beyond a professional role and is typically utilised refer to a person's personal or family life. WLB is defined by Clark (2000) as being content while functioning well at home or at work. Parkes and Langford (2008) agree with Ransome (2007) and Clark (2000) that WLB refers to a person's capacity to manage obligations to work, family, and several non-job-related obligations. The WLB is again described by Hudson (2005) as a suitable degree of commitment to or "match" among a dual responsibility in an individual's life. The dual function entails both a family and an organisational responsibility.

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This study considers two other demographic variables. The variable age, is defined at two levels or generations i.e., Generation Z and Millennial generation. According to a study by Michael Dimock (2019), individuals born between 1981 and 1996 are regarded as Millennials, whereas individuals born after 1997 are part of the Generation Z or Gen Z. In this study the Ps were asked to choose their birth years from this time frame, and their responses determine what generation they belong in.

The other variable is gender and its levels are - Male, Female and others. This study will compare the levels of work life balance of individuals belonging to these demographic variables.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In a study by Shirley Dex and Sue Bond (2005) they attempted to measure WLB and its covariates and found weekly hours, occupations, gender, age and caring responsibilities to be major determinants of WLB. Working over 48 hours a week had biggest impact on work balance, in based on relative value; caring obligations and being between the ages of 36 and 45 had effects that were roughly similar in size and also had about half the impact on work-life balance as working over 48 hours each week. By controlling for other factors, managers didn't always show more work-life issues as professional employees, contradicting to prior assertions. Employees in the private sector did not consistently have a worse work-life balance compared to employees in the public sector. This could be as a result of increasing stress experienced by public sector workers as a result of numerous restructurings, internal markets, objectives, and staffing shortages.

In another study on work-life balance of women entrepreneurs by Sucheta Agarwal and Usha Lenka (2015) they stated that to combat gender-based biases and achieve work-life balance, women have turned to entrepreneurship and quit their careers. Their entrepreneurial endeavour is hampered by inadequate leadership, government training, an absence of technical understanding, family support, as well as a weak network. For working women, job and family are important components of their lives. In order to have more authority over their professional and personal lives, women entrepreneurs opt to operate their own businesses from home. Their participation in entrepreneurial endeavours aids in their recognition and confidence building. Through their entrepreneurial talents, such as efficient communication, organising, planning, leadership, and delegation abilities, women attempt to preserve a work-life balance.

In research by Muhammad Calvin Capnary (2018) they investigated how flexibility in the workplace affects loyalty and employee satisfaction with work-life balance. They sampled a millennial group of employees who worked in Indonesian startup enterprises. This study establishes a partial mediation role for work-life balance in the link between loyalty and job flexibility. In contrast, work-life balance does not serve as a mediator in the relationship among job flexibility and employee satisfaction within millennial workers in start-up businesses.

Jun-Gi Park and Jae-Sub Shim (2019) studied the impact of work-life balance on performance, job happiness, and organisational pride and how work-life balance is impacted by the organisational climate, which is comprised of autonomy, leader support, and trust. First, it was established that a supervisor's encouragement, confidence in the team, and work environment all had a good impact on work-life balance, although autonomy was not found to have such a relationship. Second, organisational pride and job satisfaction are positively

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impacted by work-life balance. This study also demonstrates the link between work-life balance and team effectiveness, as well as the association between corporate pride and job happiness.

Alfi Mufida Ahmad, Et. al., (2022) conducted a case study analysis on startup employees in Jakarta) to determine the impact of workload, work stress, and work-life balance on employee performance. They reported that Workload significantly affects the work-life balance of startup employees in Jakarta. Employees therefore experience less work-life balance as workload increases. Work-life balance significantly affects how well startup employees in Jakarta perform at work. Hence, a business's performance will increase as workers ability to manage work and private life increases. Workplace stress significantly affects how startup employees in Jakarta manage their job and personal lives. Thus, an employee will feel less stress the greater they can improve their lives. Performance is impacted by workload, stress, and work-life balance. In order for employees to function more effectively, it is vital for them to be able to balance their personal and professional life.

In a study, J.P. Verdana & A. Satrya (2022) used burnout, work-life balance, and job satisfaction variables to examine the turnover intention of the employees of a start-up company. Work-life balance was proven to have a favourable and significant relationship with job satisfaction. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that work-life balance as well as job satisfaction operate as mediators for burnout and the intention of employees to leave their present startup. But the study didn't find a definite or meaningful relationship amongst burnout and work life balance toward intention to leave one's job.

Khoirunnisa Amalia, J., & Parwoto, P. (2022) in their study, measured work life balance, Job burnout and employee happiness for Startup company employees in Jakarta. They reported that working from home has a substantial negative impact on job burnout but a significant beneficial impact on work-life balance and employee satisfaction.

In a study, Prachita Patil and Yogesh Deshpande (2021) identified perception of women entrepreneurs toward employees with reference to WLB between startups and established women entrepreneurs. Compared to established women entrepreneurs, startups are much more effective and capable of maintaining appropriate WLB. The present situation, which is accelerating in the initial stages of an entrepreneurial stage, seems to be the rationale why established women entrepreneurs are less able to manage their WLB than new female entrepreneurs who are starting out with enthusiasm. Some other findings were that women who work in pairs are more productive than those who work alone or with a spouse. Women who work with partners may manage their obligations more evenly than single women since they have a solid link, share a common interest, and understand one another.

Suganya, K. (2019) studied the Factors Affecting Work Life Balance among Post Graduate Students in Sri Lanka. The study's findings indisputably demonstrate the Eastern Province's postgraduate students' high level of work-life balance.

The focus of Sánchez-Hernández, M. I. (2019)'s study was the attention on the study of WLB practices in best place to work (BPW), organizations that are a benchmark in human resources management. The new employee generations, according to them, are looking for WLB practices that allow them to carry out their duties well. The results of this study demonstrate the importance of WLB initiatives as workplace motivators for the Millennials and Generation Z, supporting the relevance of WLB for the youngest generations. This work

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is crucial for all organisations, including BPW, as it quantifies the strength of the Millennials and Generation Z in these businesses and shows that they currently make up nearly half of the workforce (42.9%).

A study by Pulevska Ivanovska Lidija, et. al., (2017) aimed to understand the main aspects of work –life balance and stressing the practical aspects of future professionals in the struggle to face a satisfied professional and personal life, mainly focusing on the newest generation Z. The results show that members of generation Z have a fairly high feeling of their own worth and appreciate flexibility at work, a good salary, working different shifts, and diversity at work, including diversity of viewpoints, gender, and culture. The researchers also claim that work-life balance is a strategy that the most prosperous firms have adopted, so both the individual and the organisation should exert effort to get the greatest outcome. As a result, work-life initiatives are win-win situational instruments for employers and employees because they successfully achieve and fulfil both the organisational goals and the personal demands of the employees.

Francis A (n.d) in an BBC article, stated that generation Z is expecting more from the job in terms of compensation, time off, flexibility to work remotely, and social and environmental responsibilities after observing older workers suffer from burnout, time poverty, and economic uncertainty at the workplace. Many of these principles were millennial desires, however for Generation Z, they've turned into demands, and if their demands aren't fulfilled, they're likely to quit their employers.

The rationale for conducting such a study is multi-fold. Firstly, there is a dearth of research on the work-life balance of different generations and genders in the Indian startup ecosystem. This study can contribute to the literature by understanding the difference in WLB in different generational and gender groups and upon further investigation, can also provide insights into the challenges and opportunities facing startups in India.

Secondly, Blind's (2019) survey found that 53% of startup employees work more than 50 hours per week. Hence, startup companies are often associated with long work hours, high workloads, and a culture that demands employees to be available 24/7. Therefore, this research can provide realistic idea of the same and can help to test if this is actually true and if these factors cause disturbances in WLB of employees.

Thirdly, the study can help startups to develop policies and practices that support employees' work-life balance and improve their overall well-being, which can enhance employee retention, productivity, and organizational performance.

### ***Hypothesis***

*This study hypothesizes that (H1) –*

1. There is a significant difference in The Work Life Balance scores of Male employees of the Millennial Generation and Female Employees of The Millennial Generation.
2. There is a significant difference in The Work Life Balance scores of Male Employees of the Millennial generation and Male Employees of The Generation Z.
3. There is a significant difference in The Work Life Balance scores of Male Individuals from The Millennial Generation and Female Individuals of The Generation Z.
4. There is a significant difference in The Work Life Balance scores Female Individuals from The Millennial Generation and Male Individuals of The Generation Z.

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5. There is a significant difference Work Life Balance scores of Female Individuals from The Millennial Generation and Female Individuals of The Generation Z.
6. There is a significant difference in The Work Life Balance scores of Male Individuals from The Generation Z and Female Individuals of The Generation Z.

### *The Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) –*

1. There is no significant difference in The Work Life Balance scores of Male employees of the Millennial Generation and Female Employees of The Millennial Generation.
2. There is no significant difference in The Work Life Balance scores of Male Employees of the Millennial generation and Male Employees of The Generation Z.
3. There is no significant difference in The Work Life Balance scores of Male Individuals from The Millennial Generation and Female Individuals of The Generation Z.
4. There is no significant difference in The Work Life Balance scores Female Individuals from The Millennial Generation and Male Individuals of The Generation Z.
5. There is no significant difference Work Life Balance scores of Female Individuals from The Millennial Generation and Female Individuals of The Generation Z.
6. There is no significant difference in The Work Life Balance scores of Male Individuals from The Generation Z and Female Individuals of The Generation Z.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Sample*

A total of 69 respondents to the survey form, who are all currently working in start-up companies formed the sample for this study. This sample is be further divided in two demographic variables – Gender and Generations. Four groups were thus formed – Male employees of Generation Z, Female employees of Generation Z, Male employees of Millennial generation, Female employees of Millennial generation.

Participants (Ps) who are currently employed in a start-up ecosystem were shared the Checkscale7 of the “The Work-life balance Checklist”, developed by Shirley Dex and Sue Bond (2005), as a google form. This scale is described in detail further in the later sections. We use the checkscale7 because, this scale consists of items relevant of the whole sample irrespective of the of their marital status and other family factors like – children, nuclear family, joint family, living alone etc.

Along with the Ps responses to the items of the scale, other demographic details are gathered including age and gender whose effects on WLB will be studied. According to a study by Michael Dimock (2019), individuals born between 1981 and 1996 are regarded as Millennials, whereas individuals born after 1997 are part of the Generation Z or Gen Z. In this study the Ps were asked to choose their birth years from this time frame, and their responses determine what generation they belong in.

The other variable is gender and its levels are - Male, Female and others. To compare the means of all these groups, T test statistics is used.

### *Tools*

In this study the scale - The Work-life balance Checklist by Sue Bond and Shirley Dex (2005) was used. Checkscale7 of this Work-life balance Checklist was used. This scale

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consisted of 7 items excluding 3 items from the full scale which were only relevant to people with families. The checkscale7 followed 3-point Likert scale for its answers and for Answers agreeing with the statement (A) scored three; those who disagreed (C) scored one, and those who indicated this was sometimes a problem (B) scored two. Checkscale7 had a possible range from 5 to 21 with the mean of 11.4. A high score indicates a work life imbalance that requires attention a score around the mean indicates that the person is not entirely happy with their work-life balance, but in a good position not to let the situation get out of control and lastly, low score indicates a sense of control over work life balance and being able to set healthy boundaries.

### RESULTS

There were 69 respondents who answered the survey. Out of which 1 did not meeting the inclusion criteria and hence, was discarded. The total participants were therefore 68. The data collected was downloaded and analysed using the statistical tool of SPSS software package. Table 1.1 shows the groups and their mean levels of Work Life Balance.

**Table 1.1 - Descriptive Statistics**

Groups	Mean
Female Generation Z	13.0
Female Millennial	11.0
Male Generation Z	16.5
Male Millennial	14.5

As can be seen from the Table 1.1, the mean WLB score of Female employees of generation Z is 13, Female employees of Millennial generation is 11, Male employees of generation Z is 16.5 and Male employees of Millennial generation is 14.5.

In order to understand the differences between means of these groups, A T test analysis was conducted using SPSS software.

**Table 1.2 – T test Statistics**

		Paired Samples Test					Significance			
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Male_GenZ - Female_Genz	-3.81818	9.10069	1.94027	-7.85320	.21684	-1.968	21	.031	.062
Pair 2	Male_GenZ - Male_Millennial	-3.26316	6.95894	1.59649	-6.61726	.09095	-2.044	18	.028	.056
Pair 3	Female_Genz - Female_Millennial	-1.06667	4.74291	1.22462	-3.69321	1.55987	-.871	14	.199	.398
Pair 4	Male_GenZ - Female_Millennial	-6.00000	7.91924	2.04474	-10.38553	-1.61447	-2.934	14	.005	.011
Pair 5	Female_Genz - Male_Millennial	-1.42105	2.67324	.61328	-2.70951	-.13259	-2.317	18	.016	.032
Pair 6	Male_Millennial - Female_Genz	1.42105	2.67324	.61328	.13259	2.70951	2.317	18	.016	.032

The table 1.2, presents the results of a paired samples test for six pairs of employee groups, including the mean, standard deviation, standard error mean, and 95% confidence interval of the difference for each pair.

For pair 1, Male Employees of the Generation Z and Female Employees of the Generation Z, the mean difference is -3.81818 with a standard deviation of 9.10069 and a standard error mean of 1.94027. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranges from -7.85320 to 0.21684. The one-sided p-value is 0.031 and the two-sided p-value is 0.062.

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For Pair 2, Male Employees of the Generation Z and Male Employees of Millennial Generation, the mean difference is -3.26316 with a standard deviation of 6.95894 and a standard error mean of 1.59649. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranges from -6.61726 to 0.09095. The one-sided p-value is 0.028 and the two-sided p-value is 0.056.

For Pair 3, Female Employees of the Generation Z and Female Employees of the Millennial Generation, the mean difference is -1.06667 with a standard deviation of 4.74291 and a standard error mean of 1.22462. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranges from -3.69321 to 1.55987. The one-sided p-value is 0.199 and the two-sided p-value is 0.398.

For Pair 4, Male Employees of the Generation Z – Female Employees of the Millennial Generation, the mean difference is -6.00000 with a standard deviation of 7.91924 and a standard error mean of 2.04474. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranges from -10.38553 to -1.61447. The one-sided p-value is 0.005 and the two-sided p-value is 0.011.

For Pair 5, Female Employees of the Generation Z – Male Employees of the Millennial generation, the mean difference is -1.42105 with a standard deviation of 2.67324 and a standard error mean of 0.61328. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranges from -2.70951 to -0.13259. The one-sided p-value is 0.016 and the two-sided p-value is 0.032.

For Pair 6, Male Employees of the Millennial Generation - Female Employees of the Generation Z, the mean difference is 1.42105 with a standard deviation of 2.67324 and a standard error mean of 0.61328. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranges from 0.13259 to 2.70951. The one-sided p-value is 0.016 and the two-sided p-value is 0.032.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that there are statistically significant differences in the paired data points for Pair 1, Pair 2, Pair 4, Pair 5, and Pair 6, as indicated by the two-sided p-values being less than the significance level of 0.05. However, there is no statistically significant difference in the paired data points for Pair 3, as the two-sided p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05.

Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected, however the null hypothesis 5, couldn't be rejected. The alternate hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 can be accepted at 0.05 significance levels.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of the paired samples T test provide valuable insights into generational and gender differences in work-life balance. The significant differences observed in several pairs suggest that there are distinct variations in the perception or experience of work-life balance among different groups.

However, it is worth noting that in Pair 3, Female Employees of the Generation Z and Female Employees of the Millennial Generation, no significant difference was observed in work-life balance scores. This implies that there may be similarities in how female individuals perceive and manage their work-life balance, regardless of their generational affiliation. This can be explored further perhaps with a larger sample and a deeper analysis of this population. These findings suggest that age and gender are important factors to consider in understanding work-life balance dynamics.



## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paired samples T test results reveal significant differences in work-life balance perceptions among different age and gender groups. This suggests that both age and gender may influence individuals' perceptions and management of work-life balance. These findings have implications for employers, policymakers, and organizations in developing targeted strategies to support diverse work-life balance needs. Further research is needed to better understand the underlying reasons for these differences and inform effective interventions.

### *Limitations and Future Suggestions*

The sample size for the current study was 68, which is lesser. Hence future researchers can try to validate this finding by carrying out this study along a bigger sample that is more representative of the population in question.

Future researchers can also validate this finding by using a different tool that measures WLB. Some more variables can be added to study as well, for e.g., Work setting, marital status, family situation, experience etc. to further increase the understanding of the situations that play a role in WLB of these Employees.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

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