

Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance in Start-Ups

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ABSTRACT

The prioritization of work and balancing act between personal and professional careers requires emotional intelligence. Most companies strongly support their employees' work-life balance through appropriate measures to improve employee loyalty towards the company to fetch better work life for better job satisfaction. This in return helps in employee well-being. A start-up is a new business venture that aims to solve a problem, meet a need, or create value by offering innovative products, services, and solutions. Start-ups are risk-takers, typically have limited resources, to accomplish the purpose, but usually have a strong focus on growth and a long-term vision. Start-ups can vary, depending on the culture, size of the company, product, and services. While a few of the start-ups may have a more relaxed approach, most of the others may require a lot of work hours from their employees. This study finds the effect of emotional intelligence (EI) on Work-life balance (WB) in start-ups in Hyderabad and how it can facilitate the work-life balance in start-ups. Empathy and motivation are factors, influencing the work-life balance of employees in start-ups in Hyderabad. While the gender and age of employees did not have a significant effect on their emotional intelligence and work-life balance, professional experience and marital status, statistically signified the same.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Work-Life Balance, Start-Ups, Employee Well-Being

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization, constant innovation and associated challenges invoked genuine issues within the life of an employee, enthusiastic insights, and adjustments were themes of intrigue in the current workplace. Particularly within any display, they must provide a benchmark in both corporate as well as personal life. Changes are fast within the workplace, in a diverse environment, and have made it troublesome for the normal individual in adjusting and supporting worldwide situations. Work-life balance defines the equilibrium between an individual's professional and personal commitments and responsibilities. It's the idea that you can have a satisfying and successful career while also having time for relationships, leisure activities, self-care, and other non-work pursuits. With the advent of technology and the fast-paced working environment, the lines between professional and personal life have blurred, leading to increased stress, burnout, and reduced overall satisfaction. In today's world, it's essential to strike an equilibrium between work and life to ensure that you can lead a healthy, fulfilling, and productive life.

The rationale of the study was to find out the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance of employees in new start-ups in Hyderabad. The conceptual model of work-life balance (Maryiln, Prava, Ghosh & Isaac, 2019), that includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills was applied on the selected new start-ups to find the work-life balance of employees.

The concept of work-life balance has been widely relevant with changing scenarios and growing emphasis on wellness and well-being in the workplace. Many employers are now recognizing the pros of having a healthy work-life for their employees, including increased job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved productivity. Additionally, employees are becoming more vocal about the need for flexible work arrangements for balancing both their personal and professional life (Reiter, 2007). There are several strategies that individuals can implement to improve their work-life balance. One of the most effective ways is to set boundaries between work and personal time. This involves developing routines and schedules that allow you to separate work from personal time. For example, you may choose to turn off your work email notifications during evenings and weekends, or you may set aside specific times each day for work and personal pursuits. Another effective strategy is to prioritize and plan your activities. This means taking the time to evaluate your commitments and

determining what's most important to you. By prioritizing your activities, you can ensure that you're spending your time on the things that matter most, rather than getting bogged down in less important tasks. In addition to these strategies, it's essential to be mindful of your workload and take steps to manage stress. This may involve delegating tasks, seeking help when you need it, and taking breaks when you need it. It is important to have self-time for unwinding, through exercise, meditation, or hobbies. Hence, work-life balance is essential for leading a healthy and fulfilling life. With the right strategies and mindsets, you can achieve a balance between your professional and personal commitments, leading to greater job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved overall well-being, since it is needed to prioritize what's most important to you, set boundaries, and be mindful of your workload and stress levels. Work-life balance depicts practices in the workplace to recognize and to support employee desires in accomplishing a balance of family demands and professional life. To realize and balance the career and personal life, the first responsibility is that of the employee but employer is also responsible professionally. Organizations are ensuring and empowering through viable consideration of employee and organizational needs. Furthermore, organizations are focussing on EI to have a better WLB for employees (Valk & Srinivasan, 2011).

Emotional intelligence alludes feeling of assessment and the good news is it can be imbibed. EI plays a critical part in the employee lifecycle. Some standards require assistance in assessing employee behavior, attitudes, interpersonal aptitudes, and management styles. EI has extraordinary significance among ranges of work roles, arranging, recruitment, and selection. Emotional intelligence permits individuals to get it way better and oversee feelings. It also makes a difference self and others (Keiling, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

EI and WB conceptually relate that impact an individual's overall well-being and success. When individuals have strong EI skills, they are better prepared to handle the demands of their professional and personal lives, reducing stress, and improving their ability to balance their commitments. Without emotional intelligence may lead to burnout and breakdown among individuals with low EI may struggle to manage their emotions, leading to increased stress and decreased job satisfaction. They may

also have difficulty communicating with others and setting boundaries, leading to work-life imbalance. Moreover, people with good EI are better at balancing WLB than people with low-level EI (Deepak, 2010).

Shylaja and Prasad (2017) discovered the impacts of EI on employees' WB. This study examined relationship between EI with relevance to job engagement and WB. The sample population for the study was public and private lecturers of universities in Malaysia. They found that people with high EI performed better. Bharti and Warriar (2015) insisted that employers should try to progress EI of employees. Carmeli (2003) stated that EI improves the employee work attitude, in turn will moderate the WB Struggle and improves career commitment.

Myers and Tucker (2005) concluded that emotional intelligence (EI) fosters interpersonal and intrapersonal communication skills. This study discusses EI models that include self-awareness, managing emotions, and self-motivation. This study encourages people to enhance the business curriculum by building knowledge of Emotional Intelligence. Money and Peter (2014) found that WB is a constant worry and affects Wealth, families, social obligations, spirituality, health, and other hobbies are all part of life. A perfect balance in an employee's life requires precise synchronization and juggling of the aforementioned tasks, which causes stress in the person. The majority of people in firms today experience feelings of eroding loyalty and commitment, shocking instability, restricted innovation, and estrangement between bosses and co-workers. As a result, emotions are essential to our lives. These feelings must be understood and controlled rationally. The conscious control of our own emotions is what we call emotional intelligence. The study has taken factors like self-awareness, Social Awareness, Self-management, and relationship management as a model to conduct analysis. Tausig and Fenwick (2001) stated the higher the education, more the working experience and better the confidence. Mukhtar (2012) has investigated the connection between university teachers' levels of job satisfaction, job stress, and work-life balance and found a significant correlation among job satisfaction and WB and a moderately positive nature which means an increase in work-life balance will result in job satisfaction. The research found job stress and job satisfaction to be insignificant. Hughes and Bozionelos (2015) investigated the perspectives of male workers in a profession dominated by men on WB issues. Waite and Gallagher (2000) found that EI plays a major role in WB and performance, and that employees with high EI are aware of their emotions and try to regulate. Gohm and Clore (2000) explored that EI potentially reduces burn out of employees.

Singh (2010) states that EI levels can be raised through competency programs. For the development of this aspect, Grant (2007) suggested a few training programs such as improving the level of emotional intelligence of working women. To some extent women have gotten out of the difficult situation that usually troubles their thriving prospects; however, there are certain issues yet to be faced by women such as; child-rearing, homemaking, etc.

Winn (2004) opines that no matter how much money a woman makes, how qualified she is, or what kind of job she has, some tasks, like cleaning the house and taking care of children, are thought to be inherent and inborn. Grzywacz and Marks (2010) viewed that employees with higher EI tends to have high WB. Hutagalung, Soelton and Octaviani (2020) opined about work-life balance and organizational commitment with organizational commitment as an intervening variable, and analyzed how WB and EI influence each other. Pradhan, Pattnaik and Jena (2016) found that EI, WB and job satisfaction are interlinked. Nathaya, Hidayat and Dalimunthe (2022) have concluded that employees with high EI are adaptable to any work-life balance whereas low EI employees are not much adaptable. Arar and Öneren (2021) found significant relationship between EI and WB. Kalaifarasi, Amaravathi and Soniya (2014) concluded that it is important to be aware of the EI level to aspire and achieve.

Kolasinski (2016) found that self-awareness, and self-care, are linked to WB. Baruch-Feldman and Schwartz (2002), the authors of this study examine the relationship between social support and work-related outcomes. They found that self-awareness was positively associated with job satisfaction and work productivity, which in turn could impact work-life balance. Bhattacharya (2018) Emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and work-life balance: A study among Indian IT professionals. This study investigates the impact of emotional intelligence and self-awareness on the work-life balance among Indian IT professionals. The authors found that both emotional intelligence and self-awareness positively impact work-life balance by reducing stress and improving work satisfaction.

Kumar and Verma (2019) examined how self-regulation on work life had positive association with WB, and those who regulated their own behaviour and emotions were able to have higher WB. Singh and Kumari (2018) explored that self-regulation and WB regulate behavior and emotions and is mediated by job satisfaction. The authors suggested that interventions aimed at improving self-regulation skills could be beneficial for promoting work-life balance and job satisfaction among teachers. Sharma and Jyoti (2018) examined the impact of self-regulation

on work-life balance among Indian nurses. The study found that self-regulation was positively associated with work-life balance, and that individuals who were better able to regulate their behavior and emotions reported lower levels of work-family conflict. The authors suggested that interventions aimed at improving self-regulation skills could be beneficial for promoting WB and reducing work-family conflict among nurses.

Nayeem (2022) examined the Impact of emotional intelligence on students' academic performance. This study is research on the impact of emotional intelligence on student performance, where this paper explains the important aspects of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and stress management and the stress that affect the student's academic performance. This paper has identified factors like stress, empathy, and self-motivation. Using these factors, the study was conducted, and their research found positive results. Adnan (2019) opined about how WB, and happiness, influence job performance. Vasumathi, Sagaya and Poranki (2019) emphasized that EI, WB impacts stress and performance.

Veluchamy, Choudhury, Dixit and Jha (2021) expressed their views on how EI and WB can affect work stress and stated that employees need to find emotional stability so that they can perform better.

Mali, Haider and Hussain (2019) concluded that employees with high EI better manage WB while Faldu and Udaykumar (202) concluded that employers have realized the importance of WB and concluded that organizations should be focusing on framing policies to train employees so that they can achieve WB. Chigeda, Ndofirepi and Steyn (2022) found that psychosocial factors influence organizational continuance.

Reddy and Venugopal (2019) explored the impact of emotional intelligence, a critical social skill, on work-life balance among Indian employees. The study found that emotional intelligence significantly predicted work-life balance among the participants. Chauhan and Chauhan (2019), the authors examined how social skills, significantly predicted job satisfaction, which in turn, predicted WB. Raut and Bhattacharya (2019) investigated the relationship between social skills, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance among Indian information technology professionals. The study found that both social skills and EI significantly influenced WB among the participants.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design is descriptive using a quantitative method. A survey method and analysis are used to study the implication of emotional

intelligence on the work-life balance among employees in start-ups in Hyderabad. The objectives of the study were as below.

Objectives

- To explore the impact of EI on WB.
- To find out if gender influence EI & WB.
- To determine if age influence EI & WB.
- To know if experience influences EI & WB.
- To find out if marital status influence EI & WB.
- To determine the factors of EI that influence WB.

The study was among 30 start-ups in Hyderabad, using convenience sampling using the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Petrides & Furnham, 2001) and WLB questionnaire (Manupadu & Prasad, 2017). The sample consisted of 100 employees in 30 start-ups that are fairly new in Hyderabad.

The conceptual model (Fig. 1) is based on the study about sustaining a balance between the career and personal life among pharmacy professionals in Malaysia (Marylin, Praya, Ghosh & Isaac, 2019), to understand competency and also the ability to maintain a work-life balance. The dimensions under the concept of EI were self-awareness, regulation, self-motivation, empathy, social skills, and how it affected WB. From the available literature review, the hypotheses were constructed as below:

- H_0 : EI has no impact on WB.
- H_0 : Gender does not influence EI & WB.
- H_0 : Age does not influence EI & WB.
- H_0 : Experience does not influence EI & WB.
- H_0 : Marital status does not influence EI & WB.
- H_0 : Factors of EI do not influence WB.

DATA ANALYSIS

Among the sample respondents, 60% were male and 40% were female employees among the sample population of start-ups in Hyderabad; with a mix of married, unmarried, and single status, from the age group of twenty to forty-one and above with experience ranging from zero years to more than four years.

H_0 : Gender does not have any influence with EI & WB.

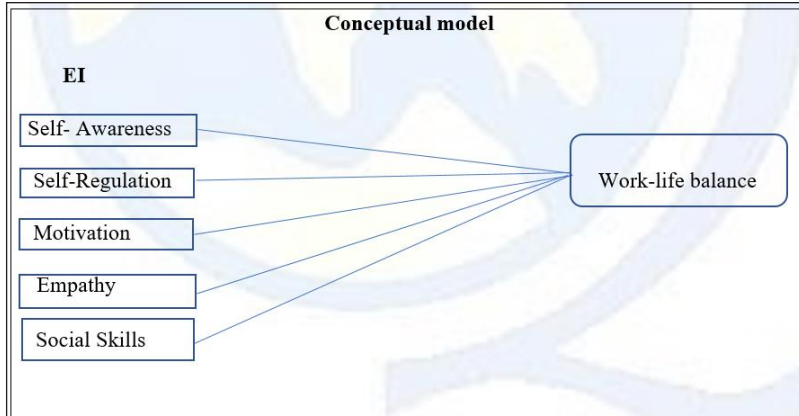


Fig. 1: Impact of EI on WLB among Pharmacy Professionals in Malaysia (Marylin, Praya, Ghosh & Isaac, 2019)

Table 1: Gender, EI & WB Levenes Test of Equality

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
WLB	Based on Mean	1.349	6	92	.244
	Based on Median	.388	6	92	.885
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.388	6	78.936	.884
	Based on trimmed mean	1.263	6	92	.282

a. Dependent variable: WB, Design: Intercept+Gender+EI+Gender*EI.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Table 2: Dependent Variable: WB

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1.372 ^a	7	.196	.630	.730	.046
Intercept	275.223	1	275.223	884.452	.000	.906
Gender	.508	1	.508	1.631	.205	.017
EM	.819	3	.273	.877	.456	.028

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender * EM	.890	3	.297	.954	.418	.030
Error	28.628	92	.311			
Total	814.00	100				
Corrected Total	30.00	99				

a. R Squared = .046 (Adjusted R Squared = -.027).

It was revealed through analysis that Gender, EI and WB was not statistically significant at $p = 0.418$ $p > 0.05$, hence gender does not influence an employee's EI & WB (Table 1 & 2).

H_0 : Age does not have any influence with EI & WLB.

Table 3: Levenes Test

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
WB	Based on Mean	1.464	12	83	.154
	Based on Median	.703	12	83	.744
	Based on Median & adjusted df	.703	12	67.347	.743
	Based on trimmed mean	1.050	12	83	.413

Dependent variable: WB; Design: Intercept+EI+Age+EI*Age.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Table 4: Dependent Variable: WB

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	6.819 ^a	16	.426	1.526	.110	.227
Intercept	220.668	1	220.668	790.103	.000	.905
EI	.643	3	.214	.768	.515	.027
Age	1.153	4	.288	1.032	.396	.047

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
EI * Age	2.874	9	.319	1.143	.342	.110
Error	23.181	83	.279			
Total	814.00	100				
Corrected Total	30.000	99				

a. R Squared = .227 (Adjusted R Squared = .078).

The analysis showed that Age with EI & WB is not statistically significant at $p = 0.342$ $p > 0.05$, hence age does not influence EI & WB (Table 3 and 4).

H_0 : Marital Status does not have any relation with EI & WB.

Table 5: Levenes Test

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
WB	Based on Mean	6.049	9	89	.000
	Based on Median	1.352	9	89	.222
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.352	9	42.126	.241
	Based on trimmed mean	4.515	9	89	.000

Dependent variable: WB, Design: Intercept+EI+Marital Status+EI*Marital Status.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Table 6: Dependent Variable: WB

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	7.055 ^a	10	.706	2.737	.006	.235
Intercept	240.504	1	240.504	932.885	.000	.913
EI	2.086	3	.695	2.697	.051	.083

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Marital status	2.688	2	1.344	5.213	.007	.105
EI* Marital status	6.186	5	1.237	4.799	.001	.212
Error	22.945	89	.258			
Total	814.000	100				
Corrected Total	30.000	99				

a. R Squared = .235 (Adjusted R Squared = .149).

Marital Status with EI & WB is statistically significant at $p = 0.001$ $p < 0.05$, hence Marital status influences EI & WB (Table 5 and 6).

H_0 : Experience does not have any relation with EI & WB.

Table 7: Levene Test

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
WB	Based on Mean	1.648	11	86	.100
	Based on Median	.388	11	86	.957
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.388	11	60.091	.956
	Based on trimmed mean	1.061	11	86	.402

Dependent variable: WB; Design: Intercept+EI+Experience+EI*Experience.

From Table 7, tests that the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Table 8: Dependent Variable: WB

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected model	9.040 ^a	13	.695	2.853	.002	.301
Intercept	216.363	1	216.363	887.768	.000	.912
EI	1.296	3	.432	1.772	.158	.058

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Experience	1.383	3	.461	1.892	.137	.062
EI * Experience	3.923	7	.560	2.299	.034	.158
Error	20.960	86	.244			
Total	814.00	100				
Corrected Total	30.00	99				

a. R Squared = .301 (Adjusted R squared = .196).

Analysis revealed that Experience with EI & WB are statistically significant at $p = 0.034$ $p < 0.05$, hence Experience influences EI & WLB (Tables 7 and 8).

Further analysis was carried out to find out, which of the factors of EI, influenced WB.

Table 9: H_0 : Self-Awareness Does Not Have Any Influence with WB

ANOVA					
WB					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.567	3	.189	.617	.606
Within Groups	29.433	96	.307		
Total	30.000	99			

From Table 9, $F(3,96) = .617$, $p = .606$, $p > 0.05$ hence Self-awareness is statistically not significant to WB (Table 8).

Table 10: H_0 : Motivation Does Not Have Any Influence with WB

ANOVA					
WB					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.754	4	.939	3.397	.012
Within Groups	26.246	95	.276		
Total	30.000	99			

It was found that, $F(4,95) = 3.397$, $p = 0.012$, $p < 0.05$, hence Motivation is statistically significant to WB (Table 9).

Table 11: H_0 : Self-Regulation Does Not Have Any Influence with WB

ANOVA					
WLB					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.265	4	.316	1.045	.388
Within Groups	28.735	95	.302		
Total	30.000	99			

From Table 11, it is revealed that $F(4,95) = 1.045$, $p = .388$, $p > 0.05$, hence Self-regulation is statistically not significant to WB.

Table 12: H_0 : Empathy Does Not Have Any Influence with WB

ANOVA					
WB					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.270	4	.817	2.905	.026
Within Groups	26.730	95	.281		
Total	30.000	99			

It was clear from Table 10, that $F(4,95) = 2.905$, $p = .026$, $p < 0.05$, hence empathy is statistically significant to WLB.

Table 13: H_0 : Social Skills Does Not Have Any Influence with WB

ANOVA					
WLB					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.437	3	.146	.473	.702
Within Groups	29.563	96	.308		
Total	30.000	99			

Table 13 shows that $F(3,96) = 0.473$, $p = .702$, $p > 0.05$, hence Social skills are statistically not significant to WLB.

DISCUSSION

The internal consistency was tested using Reliability Statistics and the Cronbach alpha showed a value of 0.781. An alpha of .781 suggests that the set of items or measures being evaluated have good internal consistency and Cronbach's alpha that values above .70 is acceptable (Leo Cronbach, 1951). Gender and Age is not a criteria for progress in EI but experience and Marital status has an effect on the progress of EI and in turn WB as per this study. The descriptive statistics showed that the mean for self-awareness (3.88) and Motivation (3.88) was the highest, followed by self-regulation (3.80), social skills (3.78), and empathy (3.74). The regression analysis showed that EI statistically predicts WB (44%) among employees in start-ups in Hyderabad. This study points out that employers especially from start-ups should focus more on improving the emotional intelligence among employees and in turn the work-life balance.

CONCLUSION

Start-ups strive for their purpose with minimum employees. Work pressure is high to meet targets, find funding, to create a niche in the market and competition is also high. This study revealed that EI statistically predicts WB (44%) among employees in start-ups in Hyderabad. The demographics showed that there is a mix of fresh and experienced employees. Empathy and Motivation from employers will enable the start-up employees to work better with a work-life balance, manage their work-related stress and perform.

SCOPE OF FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was carried out among employees in start-ups in Hyderabad. Future studies may be carried out in other cities, and other sectors. The study can be carried out as a cross sectional or longitudinal study. Further research can be carried out in different sectors. New factors can be identified for the study and how they impact EI and WB along with cross-cultural differences in the relationship between EI and WB.

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