



A Phenomenological Exploration Impact of Work-Life Balance and its Implications for the Creativity and Productivity of Gen Z Entrepreneurs

Albertha Septya Christy*, Chatarina Yekti Prawihatmi

Universitas Katolik Soegijapranata Semarang, Indonesia

Email: alberthaseptya949@gmail.com*, yekti@unika.ac.id

Abstract Indonesian Gen Z workers face challenges in achieving a Work-Life Balance (WLB) due to digitalization, flexibility, and dynamic socio-economic interactions. The purpose of this study is to investigate how Gen Z workers understand and manage their work-related lives and how WLB affects their creativity and productivity. The methodology employed is transcendental phenomenology, which analyzes the lived experiences of Gen Z business owners (both active and passive), providing a key piece of information in the field of business psychology. Open questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are used to gather the data, which is then manually coded thematically according to Moustakas's (1994) methodology. The results indicate that WLB is a kind of self-regulation strategy that enhances intrinsic motivation and creative productivity. The three main themes discussed are (1) balance as self-regulation and productivity strategy, (2) the digital paradox between flexibility and technology, and (3) the maturity of experience in observing life balance. This integrates the theories of Resource-Based View (RBV), Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and Componential Theory of Creativity, stating that WLB is a strategic psychological approach that increases creativity and productive work.

Keywords: Creativity, Gen Z, Productivity, Transcendental Phenomenology, Work-Life Harmony

Introduction

Globalization and the advancement of digital technology have significantly impacted the Indonesian business sector (Lutfiani, Fauziyah, Oganda, Setyaningrum, & Natalia, 2025; Sutomo, 2025). Born between 1997 and 2015, Generation Z is the first generation to grow up in the digital age and is the primary driver of creative economic growth. They are referred to as digital natives who prioritize flexibility, life balance, and a strong work ethic (Global, 2023). According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (2023), Generation Z accounts for 27.9% of all Indonesians and is a crucial component of the country's digital MSME development. Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises (2024) indicates that approximately 64% of digital MSMEs in Indonesia are managed by millennials and Gen Z, with Gen Z contributing around 38% of new digital business startups in the last three years. However, research by Yunita & Nurhayati (2023) found that 72% of young digital entrepreneur experience symptoms of digital fatigue, characterized by constant connectivity, difficulty disconnecting from work, and decreased mental well-being. However, in the midst of this potential, complex issues arise in balancing the demands of both private life and business (George, 2024; Sposato & Portillo, 2025).

Within the context of business, Work-Life Balance (WLB) refers to an individual's ability to balance work and personal life without creating conflict (Grilo, Moreira, Santos, Araújo, & Ferreira, 2025; Khatri & Shukla, 2024). This has a direct impact on productivity and creativity (Sharma et al., 2022), two key factors that are essential for a business's success. However, among Gen Z workers, WLB is often criticized due to flexible work characteristics, unreliable work

hours, and high levels of digital exposure (Shao & Zhang, 2023). This situation leads to the emergence of the phenomenon of digital fatigue, repetitive stress, and motivational fluctuations that eventually disrupt business operations (Yunita & Nurhayati, 2023).

Numerous studies have shown the importance of WLB in individual work; however, the majority of them are conducted in formal settings in mature countries (Baba, Krishnan, & Goswami, 2025; Syed, Memon, & Shah, 2025). Studies in Southeast Asia, particularly among digitally savvy business people, are still relatively low (Adegun, Adedoyin, & Dunsin, 2025; Junaedi et al., 2025). For example, research by Anhar, Putra, and Sari (2024) in Indonesia suggests that work-life balance has an impact on the productivity of the young generation; however, it does not explain the psychological processes or subject-related difficulties that arise from this balance. This condition highlights a study vacuum in understanding how Gen Z workers in the country are adjusting to their new work-life balance in the context of digital business (Rattanaburi, Ketwan, & Hernandez, n.d.).

In a theoretical sense, this research is grounded in three central tenets. First, the Resource-Based View (RBV) views WLB as an intangible resource that meets the VRIN (Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, Non-substitutable) criteria because it contributes to psychological stability and improves the length of excellence (Barney, 1991; Grant, 2019). Additionally, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) suggests that work-related stress can help meet basic psychological needs, including autonomy, competence, and social connections, which serve as intrinsic motivators (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Third, the Componential Theory of Creativity states that creativity is influenced by expertise, creative thinking processes, and intrinsic motivation, with the latter being significantly impacted by psychological stability that results from favorable WLB conditions (Almazrouei, Alvarez-Torres, Schiuma, & Lopez-Torres, 2025; Iqbal, Aukhoon, & Parray, 2025).

The urgency of this research lies in the critical gap between the rapid growth of Gen Z digital entrepreneurship and the lack of empirical understanding of how these young entrepreneurs experience and manage work-life balance in culturally specific contexts. While global studies have established the importance of WLB for productivity and creativity, the unique challenges faced by Indonesian Gen Z entrepreneurs—including limited access to mental health resources, cultural expectations regarding work commitment, and the absence of formal organizational structures—remain underexplored. This research is urgent because Gen Z will constitute the majority of the workforce and entrepreneurial ecosystem by 2030, and their sustainable success depends on understanding and addressing the psychological and strategic dimensions of work-life balance in the digital economy.

The relationship between WLB, creativity, and productivity can be explained by the logical theory, phenomenon, and research gap: WLB functions as a foundational element of strategic psychology (RBV), which satisfies autonomy and motivational needs (SDT), thereby facilitating the emergence of creativity and productivity (Componential Theory). The novelty of this research is threefold: First, it applies a transcendental phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences of Gen Z entrepreneurs in Indonesia, a methodological approach rarely used in entrepreneurship and work-life balance research within the Southeast Asian context (Dipoatmodjo, 2025; Rouser, 2024). Second, it distinguishes between nascent (less than 1 year) and active (more than 1 year) entrepreneurs, providing a developmental perspective on how WLB strategies evolve with entrepreneurial maturity—a dimension overlooked in previous studies.

Third, it integrates three theoretical frameworks (RBV, SDT, and Componential Theory of Creativity) to position WLB not merely as a personal wellness practice but as a strategic psychological resource that drives competitive advantage in digital entrepreneurship (Tahir, 2025; Yusof, Anvari, Fei, & Rahman, 2025). This multi-theoretical integration offers a novel conceptual lens for understanding the interconnections between balance, motivation, creativity, and sustained business performance among young digital entrepreneurs (Annalah, Aravindan, & Ahmed, 2025; Ou & Tian, 2025).

This study aims to explore two primary research questions: (1) How does Work-Life Balance manifest itself in the lived experiences of Gen Z entrepreneurs operating in the digital age? and (2) What strategies do Gen Z entrepreneurs employ to implement Work-Life Balance in ways that sustain their creativity and productivity in business endeavors? To address these questions, this study employs transcendental phenomenology, which focuses on exploring individuals' lived experiences to understand their subjective perceptions of the intersection between work and personal life. This approach is particularly important because it allows the research to capture the nuanced psychological and social dimensions of entrepreneurial practice that cannot be adequately measured through quantitative methods alone.

It is anticipated that this study will make significant contributions both theoretically and practically (Wang et al., 2025; Zhang, Hung, Dong, & Chen, 2025). Theoretically, this research extends the application of RBV, SDT, and Componential Theory of Creativity to the context of individual entrepreneurship by recognizing WLB as a strategic psychological resource that impacts creativity and productivity (Ye, Li, & Zhang, 2025). It challenges the conventional view of WLB as merely a personal wellness issue and repositions it as an intangible competitive asset in entrepreneurial strategy (Liu, 2025). Practically, the findings of this study are expected to inform educational institutions, policymakers, and business incubators in designing curricula, policies, and entrepreneurial ecosystems that are responsive to the unique needs of Gen Z entrepreneurs (Aguma, 2025; Edeh & Kappner, 2025). Specifically, the research can guide the development of mentoring programs that integrate digital literacy, time management, self-regulation, and psychological resilience training (Ge, 2025; Naeem & Mushibwe, 2025). For policymakers, this study provides evidence-based insights that can inform initiatives aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, promoting decent work and economic growth by fostering sustainable and psychologically healthy entrepreneurial practices (Peiro et al., 2025; Raman et al., 2025). Ultimately, this research seeks to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial ambition and psychological well-being, offering pathways for Gen Z entrepreneurs to thrive sustainably in the increasingly demanding digital economy (Mittal, Dhand, & Nghiem, 2025; Sahoo, Kumar, & Chandel, 2025).

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a transcendental design to understand the lived experience of Gen Z workers in evaluating Work-Life Balance (WLB) and its implications for creativity and productivity. The phenomenological approach is defined as focusing on the essential meaning of individual subjectivity rather than just describing visible symptoms.

The study was conducted using the purposive sampling technique with the following criteria: (1) participants must be within the Generation Z group (those aged 20 to 28), (2) they must be actively involved in at least one private business per month, (3) they must originate from the digital, creative, or service industry, (4) they must be available clearly and concisely, and (5)

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an additional expert informant, Prof. Dr. Christin Wibhowo, M.Si., Psikolog, provided triangulation.

Approximately ten Generation Z workers and one expert (business psychology) are included in the study. To maintain ethics and confidentiality, participant names are identified using an initial code.

Table 1. Research Participants

Code	Entrepreneur Status	Business Sector	Business Duration	Gender
FA	Active	Online Shop (Parfume)	2.5 years	Female
TA	Active	Online Shop (Fashion)	3 years	Female
VA	Active	MakeUp Artist	2 years	Female
PW	Active	F&B	4 years	Male
FC	Active	MakeUp Artist	3 years	Female
JV	Nascent	Online Shop (Accessories)	5 Months	Female
NP	Nascent	F&B	8 Months	Male
NG	Nascent	Eyelash Extension	4 Months	Female
JH	Nascent	Online Shop	7 Months	Female
KI	Nascent	Nail Arts	3 Months	Female

Source: Researcher's Work (2025)

Data collection for this study was carried out through two crucial primary steps. First, an open questionnaire was used to analyze the participants' initial views related to work and personal life, work efficiency, and the impact of digital technology use on their creativity and productivity. The answers to this questionnaire help researchers analyze the context of daily life and provide more realistic and contextual interview guidelines proactively.

For each participant, the second stage involved a semi-structured interview lasting between 60 and 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted flexibly, either face-to-face or by phone, depending on the circumstances and the availability of participants. The purpose of this study was to analyze the experiences of participants in managing time, dealing with work-related stress (including burnout), assessing motivation, and addressing the imbalance between their personal and professional lives. Every word was written down (with participant permission) and translated verbatim to reflect the meaning of the words.

Data analysis follows the methodology of transcendental phenomenology as explained by Moustakas (1994). The main stages in this process are: (1) epoche, also known as bracketing, is the process by which researchers identify all of the significant statements made by participants; (2) horizontalization, which is the process of identifying all significant statements made by participants; (3) clustering of meanings, which is the process of grouping the meanings of the participants into a single theme; (4) textural description, which illustrates what is being discussed by participants; (5) structural description, which explains how the problem occurred; and (6) essence synthesis, which is the essence of the Work-Life Balance (WLB) concept for Gen Z workers. The coding technique is carried out manually using thematic coding rather than using a program like NVivo, so that researchers can verify the accuracy of the data. When a new theme emerges from additional interviews, analysis is conducted methodically until the data reach saturation.

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the four criteria of trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to assess validity and reliability. Credibility is determined by using source triangulation, which involves comparing the knowledge of two business groups (active and inactive) and the results of a workshop with a

psychologist specializing in business psychology as an expert source. Additionally, member verification is conducted by presenting participants with the results of the initial interpretation to ensure accuracy. A thorough and detailed analysis of the relevant context achieves transferability. At the same time, dependability is ensured by systematic documentation, such as an audit trail for every step of the research process. To make the interpretations produced objective and verifiable, the concept of confirmability is strengthened through the use of research reflection and triangulation theories (RBV, SDT, and Componential Theory of Creativity).

Each participant is given a copy of the informed consent form, which explains the purpose of the study, its benefits, the participants' rights, and the procedures for data collection. Every participant is given a chance to express themselves freely and without fear of repercussions. To maintain anonymity, participants' identities are marked using initial codes (e.g., FA, TA, NP). Every piece of interview data is presented clearly and is used solely for academic purposes. The Master of Management program at Soegijapranata Catholic University, Semarang, has also completed this study, which was conducted in accordance with the institution's ethical guidelines for social and psychological research.

Results and Discussion

The study results reveal a distinct difference between novice (<1 year) and experienced (>1 year) Generation Z entrepreneurs in terms of Work-Life Balance (WLB), productivity, and creativity. In the novice group, the work-life balance remains fragile. One informant revealed: "I often feel confused about whether to work on college assignments or customer orders first. If something is urgent, everything else gets delayed." This situation indicates unstable time management, resulting in work often piling up and causing stress. This phenomenon aligns with Allen & Merlo (2020), who emphasized that a lack of WLB strategies increases the risk of stress among young workers.

In contrast, active entrepreneurs are better able to maintain balance through structured strategies. They use daily schedules, set limits on the number of clients, and rely on digital apps for bookings and promotions. One informant stated: "I limit the number of clients per day to avoid burnout, so I can stay focused and maintain quality." This finding supports the study by Asbari, Purwanto, and Santoso (2020), which showed that consistent WLB management has a positive effect on entrepreneur productivity and creativity. From a Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective, the ability to regulate work rhythm and energy can be viewed as a rare and difficult-to-imitate strategic resource, providing a long-term competitive advantage.

Furthermore, the results reveal what might be termed a "digital paradox" in managing work-life balance. Digital platforms facilitate efficiency and flexibility, but they also make it harder to distinguish between personal and professional life. Many informants said that they were unable to completely disengage from their online obligations because they felt inextricably linked to their jobs. One inexperienced responder said, "I feel like my phone never stops sometimes." Customers may message at any moment, and disconnecting is challenging. This illustrates how technology has two sides, supporting and upsetting the equilibrium.

Nonetheless, seasoned company owners often use digital self-regulation techniques, including keeping personal and business accounts separate, establishing offline hours, and planning material ahead of time. These behaviors demonstrate an understanding of autonomy, which is essential to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and enables people to avoid digital fatigue and sustain intrinsic drive. According to Ryan and Deci (2020), individuals with a high degree of autonomy report higher psychological well-being and longer-lasting engagement at

work.

According to phenomenology, work-life balance is more than just a management tactic for Gen Z business owners; it is a contemplative process of self-awareness and boundary-setting that enables them to control their energy, inventiveness, and emotional stability in a digital workplace. According to the Resource-Based View (RBV) concept, WLB therefore becomes a strategic psychological resource that supports long-term entrepreneurial success and well-being.

Productivity

In terms of productivity, budding entrepreneurs tend to be volatile. They are initially enthusiastic, but motivation often wanes when faced with obstacles. One budding entrepreneur said, "At first I was really enthusiastic, but then I got tired because I had to juggle my time with studying." Productivity strategies remain simple, such as creating a daily to-do list. This situation is similar to the findings of Abioro et al. (2020), who linked burnout to low productivity among small business owners. In contrast, active entrepreneurs demonstrate more consistent productivity. They are disciplined with their time, focused on priorities, and able to multitask adaptively. One active informant explained, "I have a clear work schedule, so even though there are many orders, I can still manage them." This finding supports a study by Anhar, Putra, & Sari (2024), which found that disciplined time management is a key predictor of productivity among young entrepreneurs in the digital age.

Additional research reveals that the ability of Generation Z entrepreneurs to effectively manage their concentration, motivation, and energy throughout the day is more crucial to their productivity than simply putting in more hours. Seasoned business people have always defined productivity as a balance between recovery and efficiency. One participant said, "The results worsen if I force myself to work without rest. In fact, taking short breaks increases my productivity." This claim highlights the importance of maintaining long-term production, which requires self-control and effective time management.

Such discipline and adaptability are considered an intangible resource that enhances entrepreneurial resilience from the standpoint of the Resource-Based View (RBV). Since productivity is based on self-control and self-awareness rather than outside pressure, it becomes a strategic talent that is valued and unique. This aligns with Grant (2019), who emphasized the importance of internal psychological resources in sustaining steady performance in small businesses.

Furthermore, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) paradigm posits that entrepreneurs who are intrinsically motivated by curiosity, autonomy, and personal significance can achieve high levels of productivity. "I feel more productive when I enjoy what I am doing, not just when chasing deadlines," one informant said. This demonstrates that autonomy and self-satisfaction, not only workload, are strongly related to productivity.

According to phenomenology, productivity in this research is the ability to maintain rhythm and motivation in the face of digital pressure. Being productive, according to Generation Z entrepreneurs, entails not only completing work quickly but also maintaining the mental stability necessary for creativity and innovation to thrive. In this way, productivity serves as both a result of work-life balance and a measure of self-regulated balance.

Creativity

The creative aspect also exhibits a distinct pattern. Novice entrepreneurs generate

numerous new ideas, inspired by social media trends or influencers, but often struggle with implementing them. One novice informant stated, "I have many product ideas, but I have not been able to implement them because I do not have enough capital." This aligns with research by Davidsson (2015), which confirms that ideas alone are insufficient without the ability to execute and resources. In contrast, active entrepreneurs focus more on applied innovation. They can modify products based on customer feedback, experiment with digital promotional strategies such as storytelling, and foster community collaboration. One active informant explained, "If there is a new trend, I try to adapt it to my product to stay relevant." This finding supports the Componential Theory of Creativity (Amabile, 1996), which emphasises the importance of environmental support, self-regulation, and intrinsic motivation in realising creativity.

Beyond these descriptive distinctions, the phenomenological study reveals that the interplay of motivation, emotional stability, and work-life balance drives innovation in Generation Z entrepreneurs. For new business owners, exposure to popular culture and social media often sparks their creativity on the spur of the moment, but it usually stays conceptual. "I get inspired by TikTok trends and other shops, but I do not always know how to turn them into something new for my business," said one inexperienced informant. This suggests that outside factors influence ideation and depend more on imitation than on introspection.

Active entrepreneurs, on the other hand, characterize innovation as an adaptable and self-reflective process. They often include experimentation, internal reflection, and feedback into their day-to-day operations. According to one active informant, "I make quick changes to the product in response to client input. When I solve actual difficulties, I feel more creative." This change illustrates how applied creativity, driven by internal motivation and learning, has replaced reactive creativity, which is influenced by external trends.

The Componential Theory of Creativity (Amabile, 1996; Amabile & Pratt, 2016) posits that intrinsic motivation, domain-relevant abilities, and creative thought processes are all essential for creativity to flourish. The current research confirms that the psychological foundation that allows concepts to be developed into fundamental inventions is intrinsic motivation, which is fostered by autonomy and emotional equilibrium. According to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), creative perseverance is critically dependent on competence and autonomy. Work-life balance puts entrepreneurs in a better position to appreciate life on an intrinsic level, which encourages long-term innovation.

Additionally, creativity serves as an intangible strategic asset that produces long-term competitive advantage within the framework of the Resource-Based View (RBV). Creative skills are uncommon, non-replaceable, and ingrained in the entrepreneur's learning style and thinking, in contrast to financial resources. As a result, creativity becomes a strategic psychological resource that is necessary for the longevity of a business endeavor when it is bolstered by equilibrium and internal drive.

From a phenomenological perspective, creativity is the result of self-controlled equilibrium and internal drive. It involves more than just coming up with fresh ideas; it involves using introspective awareness and emotional fortitude to turn balance into creativity.

A summary of these differences can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Differences between Nascent Entrepreneurs and Active Entrepreneurs

Aspect	Nascent Entrepreneurs (<1 Year)	Active Entrepreneurs (>1 Year)
Work-Life Balance	Unstable schedules; frequent stress;	Structured schedules; client

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Aspect	Nascent Entrepreneurs (<1 Year)	Active Entrepreneurs (>1 Year)
	reliance on external support; difficulty separating roles	limitation; use of digital apps for reservations, promotion, and finance
Productivity	Fluctuating; high enthusiasm at start but declines quickly; simple strategies (to-do list)	Consistent; disciplined; focus on priorities; adaptive multitasking
Creativity	High ideation; inspired by social media trends; limited execution due to lack of resources	Applied creativity; product and packaging innovation; storytelling and collaborative digital promotion

Source: Researcher's Work (2025)

Discussion

Work-Life Balance as a Strategic Resource

These findings have important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study confirms the relevance of the Resource-Based View (RBV) in the context of young entrepreneurship: WLB and self-regulation can be viewed as valuable and difficult-to-imitate intangible capital. Furthermore, these findings strengthen the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which suggests that autonomy in managing schedules increases intrinsic motivation, and support the Componential Theory of Creativity in explaining how ideas can develop into innovations when supported by a conducive environment. Practically, the research findings recommend the importance of mentoring programs for aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly in terms of time management, self-regulation, and idea execution skills. For active entrepreneurs, the key to sustainability lies in striking a balance between workload and the quality of innovation. Educational institutions, business incubators, and policymakers can design training modules that integrate WLB, productivity, and creativity skills based on digital literacy to support the sustainability of Generation Z businesses in this dynamic era.

Beyond its practical application, work-life balance (WLB) can also be viewed as a form of strategic self-awareness, where business owners intentionally manage their mental energy to achieve long-term success. According to phenomenology, this self-control reflects how people perceive, adjust to, and internalize the balance between their personal and professional lives. Maintaining balance for Generation Z entrepreneurs involves more than just allocating time equitably; it also entails striking a balance between autonomy, emotional stability, and a sense of purpose.

The combination of RBV, SDT, and the Componential Theory of Creativity offers a thorough explanation of this phenomenon. WLB is a unique and important resource that contributes to competitive advantage by improving consistency and flexibility, according to the RBV framework. According to SDT, competence and autonomy that come from balancing promote internal motivation, which permits persistence and desire. The Componential Theory further describes how psychological health and intrinsic motivation create an environment conducive to creativity. Work-life balance functions as a strategic psychological framework that connects resilience, creativity, and motivation in this way. Entrepreneurs who practice boundary-setting and introspective awareness turn the balance into a source of innovative and fruitful energy. WLB is thus an entrepreneurial ability—an internalized talent that connects well-being with sustainable company success in the digital age, rather than just a personal choice.

Productivity and Motivation

These results also demonstrate how entrepreneurial experience is a kind of growth. The biggest obstacle for aspiring business owners is converting their passion into sustainable output and practical innovation, which calls for improved WLB tactics and resource management abilities. Active entrepreneurs, on the other hand, demonstrate how their cumulative experience allows them to turn WLB into a strategic asset that fosters applied innovation and steady output. This developmental gap supports the claim that entrepreneurship involves developing intangible skills, such as self-control, balance, and resilience, in addition to ideas and effort.

From a phenomenological perspective, intrinsic drive and the rhythm of balance are intimately related to the productivity of Generation Z entrepreneurs. Numerous inexperienced business owners say that when faced with operational stress or academic obligations, their enthusiasm tends to wane. "I was really excited at first, but then I felt tired because I had to divide my time between classes and orders," one informant said. This claim illustrates how inconsistent energy and disjointed attention can lead to lower productivity and consistency.

Active entrepreneurs, on the other hand, view productivity as a deliberate application of self-control and effective time management. According to one seasoned responder, "I always create a clear schedule and follow it. It enables me to do more work without becoming exhausted." This proves that self-awareness and deliberate structuring, rather than working more hours, are the keys to sustainable production. This capacity is an intangible resource, a blend of self-control, reliability, and flexibility that offers a competitive edge in the context of the Resource-Based View (RBV). Entrepreneurs are leveraging psychological capital as a strategic advantage by incorporating work-life balance into their daily routines.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) states that when competence and autonomy are met, productivity is maintained. Intrinsic motivation increases when people believe they have control over their time and can accomplish meaningful objectives, resulting in increased engagement and persistence (Ryan & Deci, 2020). According to the research, Generation Z business owners who strike a balance between independence and self-control report greater job satisfaction and consistent performance.

According to phenomenology, productivity in this research can be viewed as a dynamic manifestation of the balance between emotional stability, structure, and motivation. Maintaining mental and emotional clarity, which is essential for creativity and invention to persist sustainably, is more important than efficiency or production. In this way, a good work-life balance is both the result and the measure of productivity.

Creativity and Supportive Environment

This study concludes that WLB is a crucial yet intangible asset that directly impacts the productivity and creativity of Generation Z businesses. The research offers a comprehensive explanation of how balance, motivation, and environmental support interact to influence entrepreneurial outcomes, integrating Resource-Based View (RBV), Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and the Componential Theory of Creativity. Practically speaking, the findings underscore the critical need for targeted interventions, including governmental assistance, digital-based training, and mentoring, to support Gen Z entrepreneurs in sustaining their businesses in the fiercely competitive digital market.

The phenomenological research also shows that self-reflective motivation and psychological equilibrium, in addition to external inputs, are key factors in the emergence of innovation among Generation Z entrepreneurs. Numerous inexperienced business owners reported that while they are motivated by digital trends or influencers, their ideas often remain

unrealized due to a lack of funding or mental exhaustion. "I have many product ideas from social media, but I cannot always make them real because I lack capital and time," one participant said. This represents the early phases of creative inquiry, when there is considerable ideation, but contextual constraints limit its scope.

Active entrepreneurs, on the other hand, see creativity as an ongoing process of practical invention and adaptation. To stay relevant in the market, they regularly try new product changes, marketing strategies, and partnerships. According to one source, "I do not directly copy new trends when I see them. To make it seem genuine, I modified them to fit the aesthetic of my product." This mindset illustrates how innovation shifts from imitation-based ideation to thoughtful, value-driven invention as entrepreneurial maturity increases.

This change is explained by the Componential Theory of Creativity (Amabile, 1996), which holds that intrinsic drive, creative thinking abilities, and domain knowledge combine to produce creativity. The results of this research demonstrate that intrinsic motivation increases when work-life balance promotes emotional stability and autonomy, creating the psychological underpinnings required for continuous creative production. According to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), this process demonstrates how competence and autonomy serve as catalysts to transform personal curiosity into innovative perseverance.

According to the Resource-Based View (RBV), creativity is an intangible strategic resource that gives businesses a sustainable competitive edge in the digital market. It is precious, distinctive, and irreplaceable. Entrepreneurs who incorporate drive, balance, and self-control into their creative processes create unique skills that set their businesses apart from the competition.

According to phenomenology, creativity is the result of self-awareness and equilibrium, a condition in which businesspeople convert emotional harmony into inventiveness. Being creative for Gen Z businesses is more than just coming up with ideas; it also means turning introspection and equilibrium into real value. This embodied creative experience highlights the importance of supportive settings and mental health in sustaining entrepreneurial innovation. From a practical standpoint, the results suggest that ecosystems incorporating mentoring, digital literacy, and psychological support are conducive to creativity. Therefore, comprehensive entrepreneurial education that fosters balance, intrinsic motivation, and reflective creativity as interdependent drivers of company sustainability should replace skill development as the focus of policies and educational programs.

Conclusion

Based on the transcendental phenomenological analysis of Indonesian Gen Z entrepreneurs, this study concludes that Work-Life Balance (WLB) functions not merely as a time-management tactic but as a form of strategic psychological self-regulation. This self-regulation enables entrepreneurs to maintain intrinsic motivation, emotional stability, and creative energy, which in turn sustains productivity and innovation in their digital business operations. The research identifies a clear developmental trajectory: nascent entrepreneurs struggle with unstable boundaries and digital fatigue, whereas active entrepreneurs leverage structured strategies and self-awareness to transform WLB into an intangible strategic resource. By integrating the Resource-Based View, Self-Determination Theory, and the Componential Theory of Creativity, the study theoretically repositions WLB as a critical psychological capital that bridges personal well-being with competitive advantage, emphasizing that sustainable entrepreneurial success in the digital economy is as much about managing internal psychological

resources as it is about external business acumen.

For future research, it is recommended to expand upon this study's findings by employing a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative depth with quantitative breadth to empirically test the relationships between WLB, intrinsic motivation, creativity, and productivity on a larger scale. Furthermore, conducting cross-cultural comparative studies within ASEAN countries (e.g., Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines) would be highly valuable to investigate how differing cultural norms, social support systems, and economic policies influence the perception and practice of work-life balance among Gen Z entrepreneurs. Such research would enhance the generalizability of the findings and contribute to a more nuanced, contextually aware theoretical model of WLB as a universal yet culturally moderated dimension of entrepreneurial success.

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