



Internationalization in higher education: Motives, challenges, support options, and work study balance on WHO-5 wellbeing among international students in Hungary

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ABSTRACT

The rate at which students in universities abroad are blending their studies with work calls for an in-depth investigation to find out if indeed it is possible to balance work, studies and social life and whether it leads to the attainment of WHO-5 well-being goals. This study investigates the motives, challenges, available support options, and impact of work-study life balance on WHO-5 general well-being among international students studying in Hungary. 125 respondents obtained through random sampling in social media groups of international students were subjected to an online survey. Descriptive and regression analysis was done using SPSS while psychological well-being was measured using the WHO-5 questionnaire. Findings indicate that work-study balance significantly and positively contributed to an average WHO-5 Wellbeing index among international student workers. It was also discovered that motives for working while studying also significantly and positively affect the WHO-5 wellbeing of international students. Higher education institutions and employers should develop policies, frameworks and functioning counselling systems with critical consideration of factors that drive students to engage in employment while working abroad. Special counselling units within multicultural institutions should be established to offer real-time social support to protect international students from stressors arising from an unfamiliar environment that pushes them into depression. Timely access to counselling services will enable international students to achieve healthier WHO-5 well-being.

1. Introduction

Internationalization in higher education can be defined as significant transformations in the environment and life of higher education institutions often marked by a rise in cross-border movements that can withstand the prevailing home-country and host-country nationalization efforts (Tight, 2021).

Knight (2006); Sharipov (2020) classified internationalization into four major categories guided by mobility as follows; movement of people involving students and teaching staff exchange and study abroad programs, education programs mobility across borders, education providers mobility though physical presence across borders, and also services and projects mobility which involves international curriculum development and implementation, international research partnerships, quality assurance and management and international collaborations. While higher education institutions implement internationalization in

their systems, globalization concurrently happens to them (Ferencz et al., 2020). Through international collaborations and cooperation, higher education institutions maximize their resources to create competitive synergies (Munadi, 2020).

Achievement of Agenda 2030 and other sustainability goals will only be realized if countries of the world embrace equitable global sharing of resources through internationalization (Fredman, 2020). Higher education stakeholders across the globe are pulling resources towards integrating internationalization in higher education quality, policy development and implementation, and also in the management of internationalization discipline-specific agencies (De Wit, 2019). Garwe and Thondhlana (2022) acknowledge the role of stakeholders' ecosystem are key pillars in the conceptualization and development of effective internationalization policies.

Volkova and Plakhotnik (2023) propose that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should ensure a balance between institutional goals and

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internal stakeholder interests to gain their trust and support to attain success in internationalization goals. International students prefer to study abroad because of the excitement associated with exploring new cultures, learning foreign languages, seeking adventures in new environments, and developing their careers in international professional environments (Trujillo et al., 2020). According to Seeber et al. (2020), internationalization activities in HEIs often act as a strategy for enhancing multicultural diversity and boosting the institution's sources of revenue. Through internationalization in higher education institutions, students from all parts of the world travel to foreign countries to acquire education, skills, and international work experience.

There are two forces associated with motivations leading students to seek study opportunities abroad; These are 'push' and 'pull' factors. Push forces motivate students to leave their home country, which pull forces attract students to a particular host country (Shkoler & Rabenu, 2023). Push factors can include socio-economic, political, and security factors, among others, while pull factors are characterised by attractive benefits and incentives offered by the host institution/country.

International students working abroad as a result of hardships have developed persistence that has enabled them to adapt to the international environment and overcome challenges (Solmiano et al., 2022).

As shown in Fig. 1, International Students often find themselves inside an intricate web of challenges that range from specific types to a mixture of all the existing challenges, resulting in a complex matrix of stressful situations in the host environment that can only be addressed by professional diagnosis and appropriate working solutions.

2. Study gaps

While the study by Creed et al. (2015) investigated the work-based benefits and demands of work-study conflict among university students against the outcome of academic achievement and wellbeing, their study left a gap on work-study balance and wellbeing, which this study addresses in detail. Our study uses the WHO-5 well-being scale in contrast to their study. Hovdhaugen (2015), in their study addressing the link between work-study among university students and their rate of dropout, discovered that full-time student employees have the highest

probability of dropping out of school as compared to part-timers and students who avoid employment to focus on their studies. Although this study was addressing the issue of work-study balance, it failed to investigate whether there was a link between the drop-out rates among working students and their psychological well-being, which the current study addresses.

Previous studies by Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner (2003), Christiansen et al. (2019), and Coates (2015) indicate that a lack of good work-study balance among university students leads to poor academic performance. It can also result in an increased likelihood of students not graduating at all (Ecton et al., 2023). Elling and Elling (2000), link excellent academic achievement to students doing a moderate amount of work. All these studies, however, did not investigate the reasons behind the lack of work-study balance and students' wellbeing, which is explained in the current study. Furthermore, their study did not utilize the WHO-5 wellbeing tool, which our study uses.

Balancing work and studies has proved to be a challenging task for university students who find themselves not meeting their institutions' academic demands, ranging from comprehensive reading to preparation and completion of their assignments. A study done by Christiansen et al. (2019) exploring the experiences and motivations while balancing work and studies revealed that financial need is the major motivating factor, and that working provided nursing students at the university with a space for self-development towards attaining social and mental wellbeing. Work-study provided a satisfying feeling of achievement, boosted self-esteem, and financial security. The study, however, did not investigate the relationship between the ability to balance work, study, and social life with the WHO-5 personal wellbeing.

3. Literature review and hypothesis

3.1. Work-study-life balance and WHO-5 wellbeing

While specific studies investigating the relationship between work-study-life and psychological well-being remain scant, the work of Pološki Vokić et al. (2021) discovered that balancing studies, work, and private life is possible, and its delicate balance significantly influences

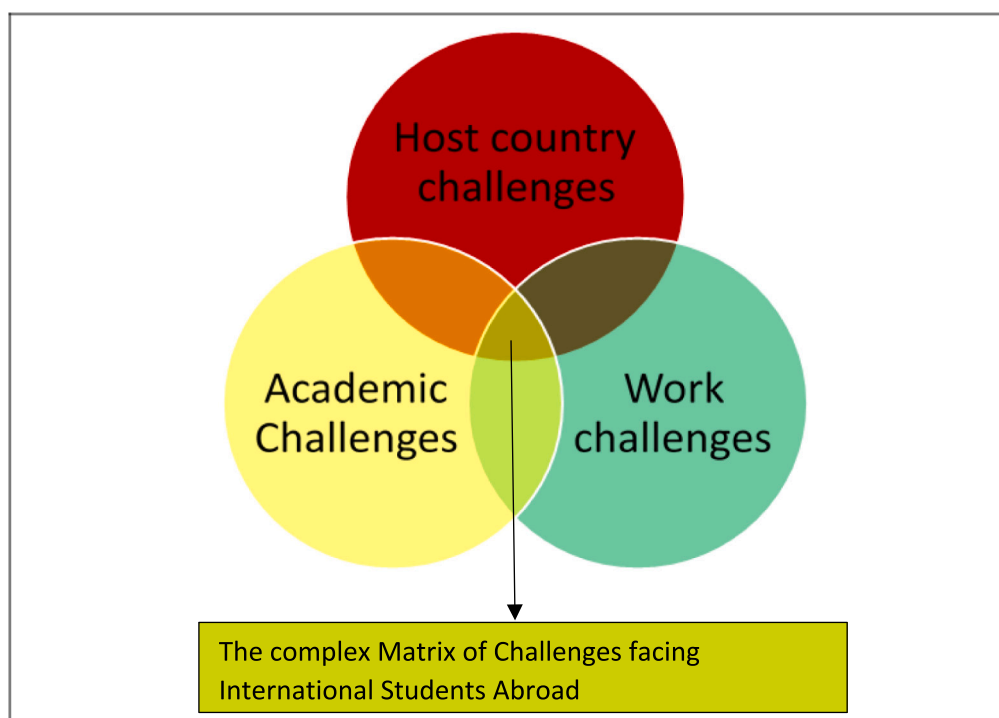


Fig. 1. Internationalization challenges affecting international students.

the achievement of Work-study-life balance and greatly contributes to emotional well-being. As much as the Work-study-life balance is a big concern among students, study-life balance matters most (Pološki Vokić et al., 2021). This study, however, does not use the WHO-5 Wellbeing framework, which includes the five indicators of well-being used in our study.

Holmes (2008) and Ford et al. (1995) observed in their studies that students engaging in job while studying ended up achieving a comparatively poor personal wellbeing a similar observation by Goldrick-Rab and Kendall (2016) and Robotham (2012) that working while studying could be detrimental to academic performance. This is seen when students fail to balance work, studies, and their social lives, ending up delaying graduation from their universities (Häkkinen, 2006).

Neyt et al. (2019) postulate that manageable working hours with less harm to students' wellbeing range from 8 to 25 h of work per week. The conflict that arises from trying to balance work, coursework, and social life is known to cause huge mental distress (Waterhouse et al., 2022). Students' reliance on work-study to support their studies is linked to rising stress levels and reduced focus on coursework and social life as the students struggle to make a living.

According to Kumar and Chaturvedi (2018), there is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance, social support, and life satisfaction among students. Their study identified stress as a negative factor affecting work-life balance and quality of life among students. This study leaves a gap for a dedicated work-study-life balance, which the current study addresses, with a dedicated WHO-5 Wellbeing scale. A key investigation by Creed et al. (2022) discovered that work-study, whether under willing flexibility or ability, contributed to burnout among students because of work-study conflict. Similarly, Grant-Smith et al. (2017) link poor student well-being to work-study placements as a result of the unpaid nature of work-integrated learning opportunities for students. Ang (2008) and Tymon (2013) found that a small fraction of students find work-study-life balance difficult compared to a majority who derive satisfaction from working because of the perceived benefits, which include work experience skills acquisition, improvement of curriculum vitae, and intercultural immersion. Faizuddin (2017) links poor well-being to financial stress among working students.

Student jobs, coursework, and social life demands coupled with regular examinations subject university students to poor psychological wellbeing because they tend to diminish their emotional health, self-esteem, and their overall productivity (Kurtz-Costes et al., 2006).

Balancing job, coursework, and life is associated with negative feelings among students towards university, whereas work-study conflict has no relationship with vigor and general well-being (Creed et al., 2015; Creed et al., 2020; Creed et al., 2023). Remenick and Bergman (2021) recommend further studies to discover how students combine work full-time or part-time with studies full-time or part-time and how this impacts their well-being.

According to Klein et al. (2002), further research should be done using a variety of measurement tools to ascertain the psychological well-being of college students' critical components of the complex and multifaceted mental health, because convergent validity between mental health measures is often low (Klein et al., 2002). There is a huge gap for researchers to study the determinants of well-being in PhD students (Stubb et al., 2011), to address the relationship between studies, work, social life, and psychological well-being of university students, because job and health are interrelated. It is from this background that we developed the following first hypothesis;

H₀₁: Balancing of work, studies, and social life abroad among international students has no significant influence on their WHO-5 Wellbeing.

3.2. Motives for working while studying abroad and WHO-5 wellbeing

Satisfaction of consumption demands among students fuels the desire to work while learning (Lairio et al., 2013; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Neyt et al., 2019). Students work to get income to meet their living

expenses (Devlina et al., 2008; Newton et al., 2021), and fund the cost of their studies (Hall, 2010; Richardson et al., 2009; Schuh & Gansemertopf, 2005).

Peltz et al. (2021) and Miller et al. (2008) discovered that increased working hours caused depression among working students coming from poor economic backgrounds. Students who overwork for 20 or more hours per week experience elevated stress levels, leading to poor academic performance. This workload, coupled with the pursuit of financial stability among students, leads to poor psychological well-being (Logan et al., 2016). Poor work-study balance driven by prevailing challenges in the host environment is a significant contributor to depression among students because it negatively affects sleep patterns, causing exhaustion and feelings of despair (Lederer et al., 2015). International students from low-income countries end up experiencing high levels of stress and poor psychological well-being, but access to job opportunities does not relieve them from higher stress levels abroad (Wilson et al., 2023).

According to Benjet et al. (2012), youth who are neither studying nor working, including those working only and those working while studying, have higher chances of getting psychological disorders, resorting to drug abuse, or having suicidal thoughts. Wang et al. (2024) discovered that a high number of Australian youth experienced challenges trying to balance work and study and ended up with higher depression and anxiety. Sato et al. (2020) concluded that long-hour jobs or irregular hours lead to poor psychological well-being. According to Almarzouki et al. (2022), poor psychological well-being and poor academic performance among students correlate significantly with poor sleep quality due to their tight schedules and resilience. For remote learners, there is a higher impact of study-to-life conflict on psychological well-being among students as compared with life-to-study conflict (Zainal Badri et al., 2022). Landstedt et al. (2017) in their study concluded that working while studying, coupled with financial shortage over a longer period, leads to poor psychological well-being among Australian youth who work while studying. These previous findings from scholars formed our basis for the following second hypothesis;

H₀₂: International students' motives for balancing work, studies, and social life abroad do not significantly affect their WHO-5 Wellbeing.

3.3. Questions

- i. What motivates international Students to work while studying abroad?
- ii. Which challenges do international students encounter while working and studying abroad?
- iii. What are the available support options for international students facing challenges while working and studying abroad?
- iv. Does work, study, and social life balance influence WHO-5 Wellbeing among international students while abroad?
- v. What is the effect of international students' motives of work-study- Social life balance on their WHO-5 Wellbeing?

Fig. 2 shows the conceptual framework of the study. Motives and Work-Study-life balance are the independent variables. WHO-5 Wellbeing is the dependent variable.

4. Method

4.1. Participants and procedure

Purposive sampling was used because our sample choice was deliberately determined according to their demographic characteristics, including their gender, mode of study, job category, type of work-study shift, number of working hours as well as their different nationality backgrounds which were relevant to our study as recommended by Saunders et al. (2023), Nyimbili and Nyimbili (2024) and Andrade (2021). The respondents had to be between 18 and 65 years old, actively working, and in active student status in their respective Hungarian

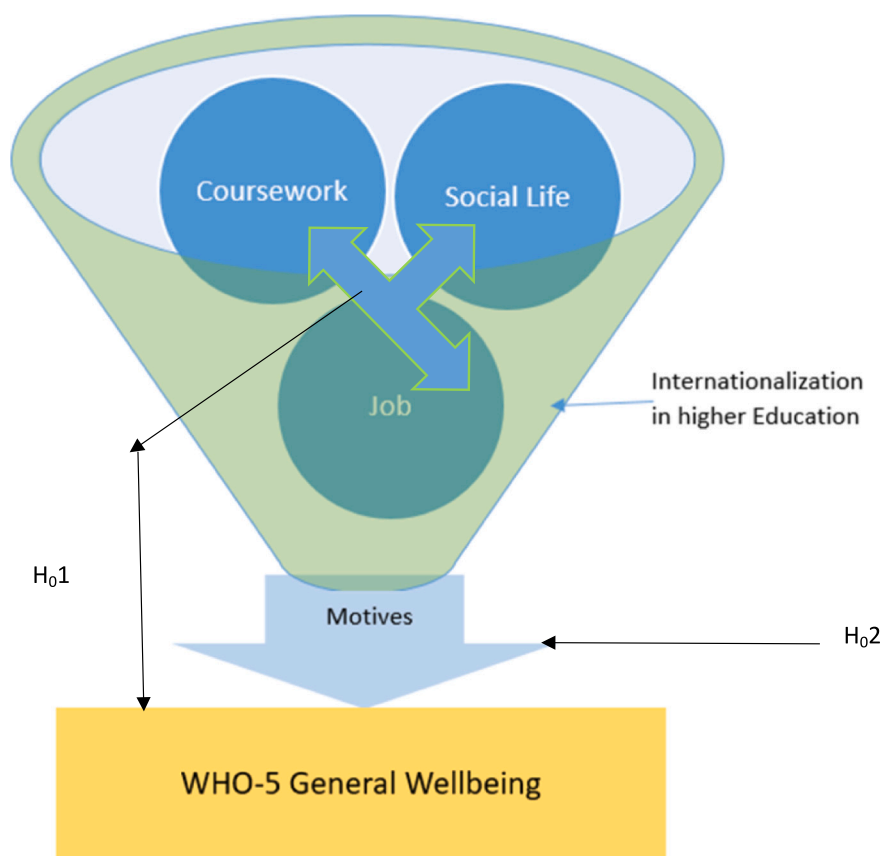


Fig. 2. Conceptual framework

public institutions at the time of participating in this study.

A G*Power analysis for a one-tailed linear multiple regression single model, fixed regression coefficient *t*-test indicated that the minimum sample size to yield a statistical power of at least 0.95 for two predictors with an alpha of 0.05 and a medium effect size ($d = 0.5$) is 24. In this study, a total of 125 respondents participated online from a target population of heterogeneous international students who were, at the time of the study, active in international students' WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook groups and who were working while pursuing their studies in Hungarian public universities. Questionnaires were designed to offer participants anonymity and confidentiality by not collecting any names or contact information. The survey questionnaire contained an introductory letter, which requested voluntary participation from the respondents, clearly explaining the nature of the study and the question areas. The letter also clarified qualifications for participation, which included age requirements, and that their participation indicates their consent to take part in the survey. There were no incentives for participation in the study. All files containing data were encrypted, zipped, and stored password-protected database according to the data protection regulation (GDPR) of the University of Debrecen. Only anonymized processed data were made available to the journal publishers for the intended research purpose.

International students were chosen because of previous scholarly studies, such as Creed et al., 2015; Hovdhaugen, 2015; Holmes, 2008; Ford et al., 1995, and Waterhouse et al. (2022), which disclosed that students abroad experience poor psychological wellbeing. The target population was also chosen from recommendations in previous studies, such as Stubb et al. (2011), Remenick and Bergman (2021), Almarzouki et al. (2022), Kurtz-Costes et al. (2006), and Benjet et al. (2012). They were also chosen because of their vulnerability to internationalization and globalization challenges in both host and home countries. Questionnaires were designed, distributed, and collected using Google Forms

shared in the identified social media groups. Data analysis was done with the aid of SPSS Statistics v27.

4.2. Measures

The survey questionnaire comprised the following sections: Demographics section, Work-Study-Social Life Balance, and WHO-5 Well-being. Descriptive statistics covered demographic information, motives for working while studying abroad, Internationalization Challenges abroad, and available support options for international students. The questions on work-study-life balance were adopted from Lowe and Gayle (2007), who developed the four categories of work-study-life balance from the works of Kember (1999), Edwards and Parry (1993), Blaxter and Tight (1994), and Morgan-Klein and Gray (2000). Cronbach's alpha was 0.854. The WHO-5 questionnaire was adopted from the World Health Organization (1998) and contained five questions measuring an individual's subjective wellbeing experienced in the past two weeks. It was designed on a Likert scale that ranged from "all the time (5) to at no time (1)". The adopted WHO-5 questionnaire covered subjective wellbeing areas on positive mood, vigor, and general interest. Cronbach's alpha was 0.894. The raw score ranged from 0 to 25, 0 representing the worst possible and 25 representing the best possible quality of life. To obtain a percentage score ranging from 0 to 100, the raw score was multiplied by 4. A percentage score of 0 represents the worst possible, whereas a score of 100 represents the best possible quality of life. It is recommended to administer the Major Depression (ICD-10) Inventory if the raw score is below 13 or if the patient has answered 0 to 1 to any of the five items. A score below 13 indicates poor wellbeing and is an indication for testing for depression under ICD-10. Monitoring change: To monitor possible changes in wellbeing, the percentage score is used. A 10 % difference indicates a significant change (Ware Jr et al., 1995). Scores above 75 suggest a higher well-being,

while scores between 50 and 75 signify moderate subjective wellbeing as compared to 50 and below, which indicate lower wellbeing. The WHO-5 questionnaire, which has been translated into over 30 languages, is credited for its reliability and as the most widely accepted tool for measuring subjective psychological well-being (Topp et al., 2015). WHO-5 wellbeing questionnaire has been vigorously tested and recommended for use in research due to the reliability of its psychometric properties and an adequate fit to the unifactorial model (Caycho-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Fung et al., 2022; Perera et al., 2020; Tito Betancur et al., 2023). Regression analysis was subjected to the hypotheses to provide clear estimates of the measure for the causal effect relationship between the independent and the dependent variables with an error estimate given by an optimization algorithm (Tyagi et al., 2022).

5. Findings

Table 1 indicates that out of 125 international student respondents, 79 were male representing 63.2 % while female participants were 46 representing 36.8 %. 114 (91.2 %) were international students on full time mode of study while 6 (4.8 %), 4 (3.2 %) and 1 (0.8 %) were on part-time, distance learning and online learning respectively. On job category, 31 (24.8 %) were working full time on the job site, while 5 (4.0 %) were doing full-time online jobs. A majority of the respondents, 73 (58.4 %), were doing part-time on-site jobs, while 5 (4.0 %) and 11 (8.8 %) were part-time online and remote/online, respectively. Most Respondents were working daytime 52 (41.6 %) while those taking night shifts were 27 (21.6 %). International students working during both day and night shifts were 46 (36.8 %).

Findings on Table 2 indicate that most respondents (34) (27.2 %) worked between 21 and 30 h, the normal working hours allowed for student jobs in Hungary. Results indicate that 28 international students (22.4 %) and 27 students (21.6 %) worked for 0–10 and 11–20 h, respectively. Students who worked between 31 and 40 h were 25 (20 %), while those who spent 41–50 h were 6 (4.8 %), as compared to those who for >51 h (5) (4 %) in a week. These statistics show that 56 % (70 students) worked for >21 h weekly.

Study findings in Fig. 3 indicate that economic challenges abroad (56 %) were the leading factor that drove international students to work while studying. This comparatively followed by economic challenges from home country (53.6 %) a similar figure to those working as a personal choice (53.6 %) 0.30.4 % worked because of family obligations while 20.8 % were motivated by friends, 6.4 % by their sponsors, 5.6 % to fulfill their hobbies while 7.2 % were prompted to work by their universities to fulfill their career obligations through internships.

Table 3 indicates that balancing coursework and job had the lowest standard deviation (1.099) and variance (1.207). Balancing coursework and social life had the second lowest standard deviation (1.108),

Table 1
Demographic results.

Demographic Results, n = 125					
		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Gender	Male	79	63.2	63.2	63.2
	Female	46	36.8	36.8	100
Mode of Study	Full time study	114	91.2	91.2	91.2
	Part time study	6	4.8	4.8	96.0
	Distance Learning	4	3.2	3.2	99.2
	Online learning	1	0.8	0.8	100.0
Job Category	Full Time On-site	31	24.8	24.8	24.8
	Full-time Online	5	4.0	4.0	28.8
	Part-Time Onsite	73	58.4	58.4	87.2
	Part-Time Online	5	4.0	4.0	91.2
	Remote/Online	11	8.8	8.8	100
Work-Study Shift	Day	52	41.6	41.6	41.6
	Night	27	21.6	21.6	63.2
	Both day and night	46	36.8	36.8	100

Table 2
Number of working hours per week.

Number of working hours per week.					
Working hours Per Week	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	0–10	28	22.4	22.4	22.4
	11–20	27	21.6	21.6	44.0
	21–30	34	27.2	27.2	71.2
	31–40	25	20.0	20.0	91.2
	41–50	6	4.8	4.8	96.0
	51+	5	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

variance (1.228). Balancing job with social life had a comparatively higher standard deviation and variance (1.182 and 1.397, respectively) while a balance for all three (job, coursework, and social life) had a standard deviation of 1.143 and 1.306 variances, despite one respondent missing.

Table 4 shows the extent to which international students balancing job and studies have attained the given WHO-5 indicators of Wellbeing in their past two weeks.

As shown in Table 5, a Pearson correlation coefficient was performed to study the relationship between the independent variables, Work-study-balance and Motives, with the dependent variable, WHO-5 Well-being. The scale for interpreting the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was as follows: Strong positive (0.50 to 1.00), Moderate positive (0.30 to 0.49) and weak positive (0.10 to 0.29). For Negative strength the following was used; Strong, negative (−0.50 to −1.00), Moderate negative (−0.30 to −0.49) and weak negative (−0.10 to −0.29). Findings show a moderate significant positive relationship between Work-study-balance and WHO-5 personal wellbeing $r ([125]) = [0.473]$, $p = [< 0.01]$ and a comparatively weak significant positive relationship between Motives and WHO-5 Well-being $r ([125]) = [0.262]$, $p = [< 0.01]$.

Model summary results in Table 6 indicate that a unit change in Work-study-balance and motives for employment among international students significantly ($p < .001$) and positively explains 27.2 % change in their WHO-5 Well-being. A Durbin-Watson of 1.978 in the summary confirms that the correlation outcome was normal.

Results in Table 7 show a collective significance of motives and work-study-life balance on WHO-5 Well-being at $(F (2,122) = 24.132, p < .001, R^2 = 0.272)$.

As shown in Table 8, respondents predicted that WHO-5 Well-being is equal to $-0.408(\text{constant}) + 0.432(\text{Motives}) + 0.643(\text{Work Study Life balance})$. Results further show that motives ($t = 3.183, p = .002$) and work-study-life balance ($t = 6.044, p < .001$) play significant roles in contributing to the WHO-5 Wellbeing of international students working and studying abroad.

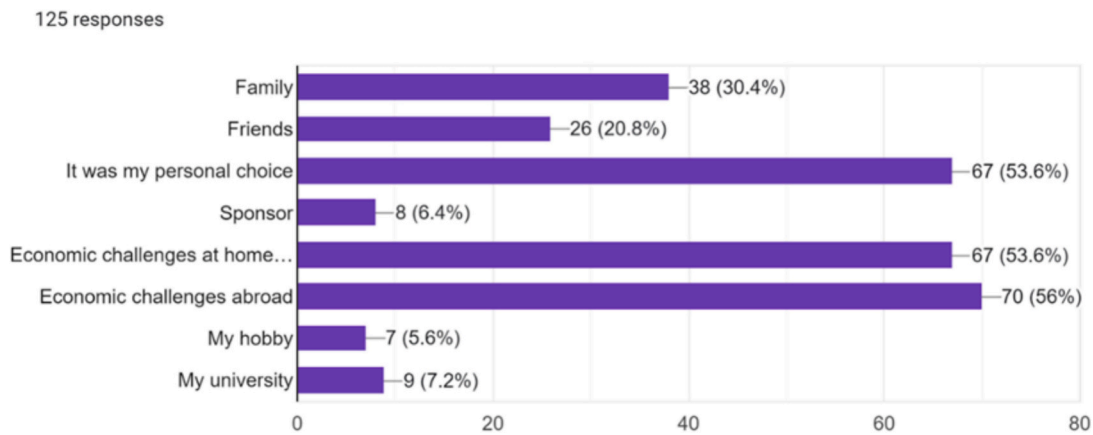


Fig. 3. Factors motivating students to work while studying abroad.

Table 3
Work-study-life balance.

Descriptive Statistics		Balancing Course work and job.	Balancing Course work and Social Life.	Balancing Job and Social Life.	Balancing Job, Course work and Social Life
N	Valid	125	125	125	124
	Missing	0	0	0	1
Mean		3.78	3.74	3.50	3.36
Median		4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00
Mode		4	4	4	3
Std. Deviation		1.099	1.108	1.182	1.143
Variance		1.207	1.228	1.397	1.306
Kurtosis		-0.691	0.120	-0.571	-0.657
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.430	0.430	0.430	0.431
Minimum		1	1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5	5
Percentiles	25	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
	50	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00
	75	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

6. Discussion

6.1. Challenges affecting international students

The Findings in Fig. 4 indicate that the majority of international students (59.2 %) are facing physical and mental exhaustion as a result of working while studying in an attempt to address internationalization challenges while abroad. This is followed by those developing stress symptoms (46.4 %). The students leading a dull social life because of a lack of time stood at 45.6 %, while a similar percentage (45.6 %) were earning meagre pay and compensation for their work. 37.6 % of the respondents considered student jobs as disruptive and unfavorable to their studies. Concerning their health and safety while working and studying, 33.6 % faced challenges. 24.8 % faced immigration challenges, while 18.4 % faced violations of their rights to student jobs. A similar percentage (18.4 %) experienced interruptions from coursework and work place demands. 17.6 % of the respondents were either occasionally late for work or attending lessons while 16.8 % faced violation of their contractual rights where some were dismissed from work or their pay deducted as a punishment arising from inability to meet job targets or quality demands. As 9.6 % were bullied at the workplace, 8.8 % were denied leave they requested, while 7.2 % encountered challenges accessing national insurance benefits as a result of being a working student. International student workers facing discrimination at their workplace stood at 29.6 %.

6.2. Available support options for international students

International students working while studying abroad resort to a variety of options for support. Findings in Fig. 5 indicate that, as a result of internationalization challenges, most students in foreign countries (60 %) seek support from their family and friends. 34.4 % resort to help from colleagues at the workplace, while 29.6 % visit their respective student-job recruitment agencies for support. An alarming discovery indicates that 24 % keep the problems to themselves and do not have a trusted support option to address their challenges. Online search for solutions serves 12 % of the respondents, while 10.4 % prefer seeking help from the students' advocacy organizations. Embassies provide an option for 5.6 % of the international students to address their challenges arising from being in a foreign country. Study findings disclose that trade unions are an alternative solution to 3.2 % of the respondents facing challenges working and studying abroad. A similar percentage (3.2 %) resort to community legal services to address their work-study-related challenges. Cao et al. (2021) discovered that Chinese international students prefer co-national friends as their main source of social support, followed by support from fellow international students, university/tutors, and host students. According to Wadsworth (2003) and Lin (2008), working students seek support from their college supervisors, workmates, their families, spouses, and peers.

6.3. WHO-5 wellbeing

As shown in Table 4, Scoring for the WHO-5 questionnaires involved totalling the cumulative percentage of the responses (I feel cheerful and in good spirits WHO-5 = 11.552) + (I feel active and vigorous WHO-5 = 12.032) + (My daily is full things that interest me WHO-5 = 10.592) + (I wake up feeling fresh and rested WHO-5 = 9.088) + (I feel calm and relaxed WHO-5 = 11.456). Findings indicate that respondents had a personal wellbeing index of 54.72 % (raw score = 13.68), which indicates a relatively low personal wellbeing.

The relatively low WHO-5 well-being among working students found in this study supports earlier findings by Browne et al. (2017), Alharbi and Smith (2018), Cemalcilar and Falbo (2008), and Shadowena et al. (2018), which link poor psychological well-being to a lack of work-study balance among students.

6.4. H₀1 balancing of work, studies, and social life abroad among international students has no significant influence on their WHO-5 wellbeing

On the effect of work-study-life balance as evident in Table 8, on WHO-5 Wellbeing findings shown in Table 8 (t = 6.044, p < .001) indicate that it significantly and positively influences the dependent

Table 4
Impact of balancing jobs, studies, and social life on WHO-5 wellbeing.

To what extent has balancing job and studies enabled you to achieve the following WHO-5 indicators of Wellbeing in the last two weeks?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Cumulative Who-5 Scores
I feel cheerful and in good spirits	At no time[0]	6	4.8	4.8	4.8	0
	Some of the time[1]	19	15.2	15.2	20.0	19
	Less than half the time[2]	19	15.2	15.2	35.2	38
	More than half the time[3]	36	28.8	28.8	64.0	108
	Most of the time[4]	29	23.2	23.2	87.2	116
	All of the time[5]	16	12.8	12.8	100.0	80
	Total	125	100.0	100.0		361
	Average WHO-5				11.552	2.888
I feel active and vigorous	At no time[0]	6	4.8	4.8	4.8	0
	Some of the time[1]	16	12.8	12.8	17.6	16
	Less than half the time[2]	18	14.4	14.4	32.0	36
	More than half the time[3]	35	28.0	28.0	60.0	105
	Most of the time[4]	31	24.8	24.8	84.8	124
	All of the time[5]	19	15.2	15.2	100.0	95
	Total	125	100.0	100.0		376
	Average WHO-5				12.032	3.008
My daily is full things that interest me	At no time[0]	13	10.4	10.4	10.4	0
	Some of the time[1]	20	16.0	16.0	26.4	20
	Less than half the time[2]	26	20.8	20.8	47.2	52
	More than half the time[3]	25	20.0	20.0	67.2	75
	Most of the time[4]	21	16.8	16.8	84.0	84
	All of the time[5]	20	16.0	16.0	100.0	100
	Total	125	100	100		331
	Average WHO-5				10.592	2.648
I wake up feeling fresh and rested	At no time[0]	20	16.0	16.0	16.0	0
	Some of the time[1]	23	18.4	18.4	34.4	23
	Less than half the time[2]	28	22.4	22.4	56.8	56
	More than half the time[3]	23	18.4	18.4	75.2	69
	Most of the time[4]	19	15.2	15.2	90.4	76
	All of the time[5]	12	9.6	9.6	100	60
	Total	125	100	100		284
	Average WHO-5				12.272	
I feel calm and relaxed	At no time[0]	7	5.6	5.6	5.6	0
	Some of the time[1]	16	12.8	12.8	18.4	16
	Less than half the time[2]	22	17.6	17.6	36.0	44
	More than half the time[3]	35	28.0	28.0	64.0	105
	Most of the time[4]	32	25.6	25.6	89.6	128
	All of the time[5]	13	10.4	10.4	100	65
	Total	125	100	100		358
	Average WHO-5				2.864	

Table 5
Pearson correlations.

Correlations		Work Study Life	Motives	WHO-5 Well-being
Work Study Life	Pearson Correlation	1	0.040	0.473**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.662	0.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	112.555	3.487	73.869
	Covariance	0.908	0.028	0.596
	N	125	125	125
Motives	Pearson Correlation	0.040	1	0.262**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.662		0.003
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	3.487	69.138	32.111
	Covariance	0.028	0.558	0.259
	N	125	125	125
WHO-5 Well-being	Pearson Correlation	0.473**	0.262**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.003	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	73.869	32.111	216.475
	Covariance	0.596	0.259	1.746
	N	125	125	125

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

variable, hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding supports earlier findings by Pološki Vokić et al. (2021), Kumar and Chaturvedi (2018), and Creed et al. (2022), who discovered a significant

relationship between work-study-life balance and psychological well-being.

6.5. *H₀₂: International students' motives for balancing work, studies, and social life abroad do not significantly affect their WHO-5 wellbeing*

On the effect of motives for work-study-life balance on WHO-5 among students, findings ($t = 3.183, p = .002$) indicate that motives for work-study-life balance significantly affected the dependent variable as shown in Table 8. These findings confirm earlier discoveries that international students face a host of psychological challenges abroad (Dovchin, 2020; Wu et al., 2015), however, there are hardly any studies investigating the direct relationship between motives for work-study-balance and WHO-5 Well-being. A related study by Polenne (2024) discovered that immigrants whose motives were work and study experienced a higher subjective well-being, in contrast to those who immigrated to join their families, which supports our finding. Other closely related studies by La Rosa and Luna (2012) and Martinez et al. (2012) show that students who are facing financial challenges are motivated to take up work-study jobs, but find themselves experiencing poor mental health. Other scholars, such as Martinez et al. (2012), also attributed poor psychological well-being to effects from challenges faced by international students rather than from motives for work-study-balance.

Table 9 shows the hypothesis testing summary and conclusions.

Table 6
Model summary.

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.532 ^a	0.283	0.272	1.12756	0.283	24.132	2	122	0.000	1.978

^a . Predictors: (Constant), Work Study Life, Motives.

^b . Dependent Variable: WHO-5 Well-being.

Table 7
ANOVA with work-study-balance and motives for balancing work while studying as independent variables.

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	61.364	2	30.682	24.132	0.000
	Residual	155.111	122	1.271		
	Total	216.475	124			

a. Dependent Variable: WHO-5 Well-being

b. Predictors: (Constant), Work Study Life, Motives

7. Conclusion

Our study investigated challenges affecting international students, available support options, and the effect of motives for work-study life balance on WHO-5 well-being. The study also investigated the effect of work-study-balance on WHO-5 well-being among international

students. Study findings show that a majority of international students are grappling with poor WHO-5 wellbeing because of a myriad of challenges abroad. These include exhaustion, stress, lack of time to socialize, poor pay from their work-study jobs, disruption of course work, health and safety concerns, immigration hurdles, violations of student-jobs rights, lateness for both lessons and work, bullying, and national insurance issues. The majority of international students prefer seeking support from their families, workmates, and job placement agencies. While a small percentage of students search for solutions to their problems online, students' advocacy organizations, embassies, trade unions, and community legal services, an alarming reality shows that a significant percentage of international students keep their problems to themselves. We argue that these challenges are the direct contributors to poor WHO-5 well-being. We also postulate that motives for balancing work, studies, and life have a significant effect on WHO-5 wellbeing. Similarly, work-study-life balance has a significant effect on WHO-5 well-being. We suggest that higher education institutions should establish a social support system to address the challenges that international students are facing. HEIs should consider establishing counselling

Table 8
Coefficients.

Coefficients													
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0 % Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
		1	(Constant)	-0.408	0.595		-0.686	0.494	-1.586	0.770	0.262	0.277	0.244
	Motives	0.432	0.136	0.244	3.183	0.002	0.163	0.701	0.473	0.480	0.463	0.998	1.002
	Work Study Life	0.643	0.106	0.464	6.044	0.000	0.432	0.853					

a. Dependent Variable: WHO-5 Well-being

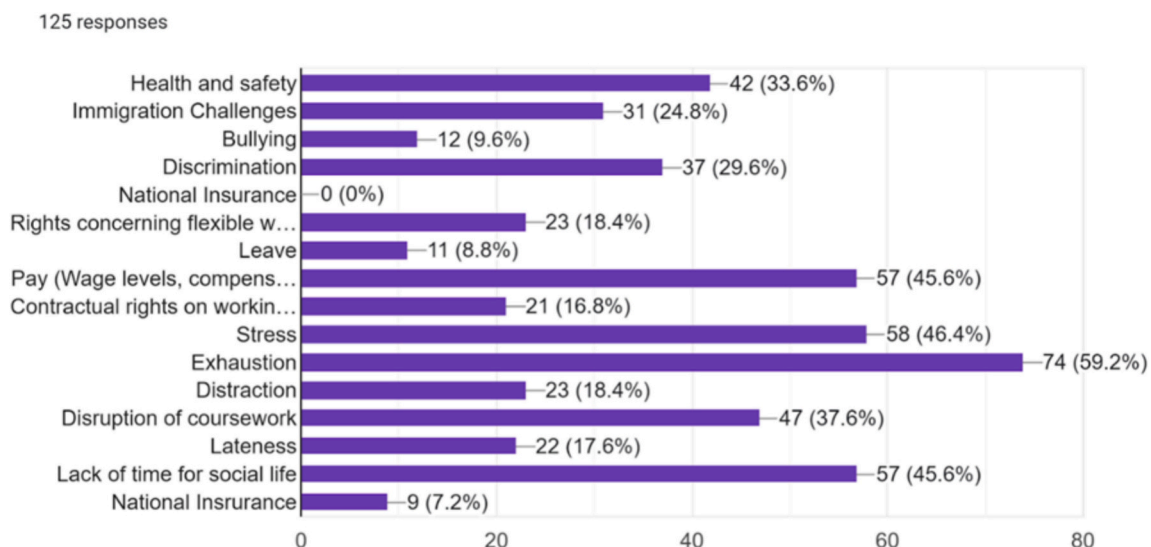


Fig. 4. Challenges while working and studying abroad.

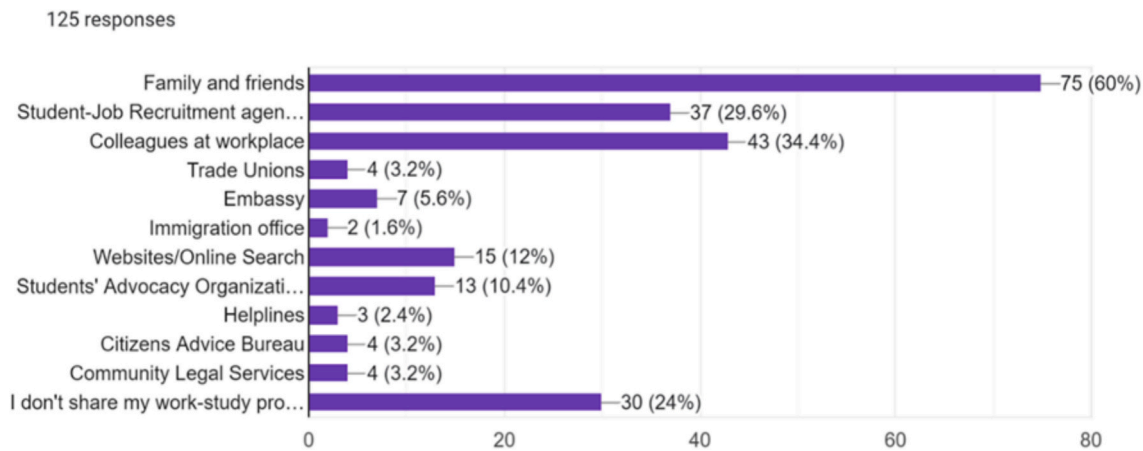


Fig. 5. Available support options.

Table 9
Hypothesis testing summary results.

Null Hypothesis	Statistical Test	P-Value	Statistical Conclusion	Practical Conclusion
H ₀ 1: Balancing of work, studies, and social life abroad among international students has no significant influence on their WHO-5 Wellbeing.	ANOVA	0.000	0.000 < 0.001 Reject	Work-Study-Life significantly and positively contributed to the WHO-5 Wellbeing index among international students working and studying abroad H ₀ 1 is thus rejected.
H ₀ 2: International students' motives for balancing of work, studies, and social life abroad do not significantly affect their WHO-5 Wellbeing.	ANOVA	0.000	0.002 < 0.001 Reject	Findings show that motives positively and significantly affect the WHO-5 wellbeing of international students working and studying abroad. H ₀ 2 is thus rejected.

support services targeted at addressing pre-arrival and post-arrival challenges. To address the poor WHO-5 wellbeing better, regular counselling sessions should be made readily available where counselling departments can use the interactions to improve their policy and practice. We recommend the creation of a conducive environment to welcome international students and give them a home away from home. This will reduce their anxiety, homesickness and give them hope towards attaining their goals while studying abroad. Further strategies include psychological well-being awareness campaigns and improvement of the curriculum to accommodate flexibility and active job placement targeting international students.

8. Limitations of the study

This study agrees with the previous scholars that the WHO-5 tool for measuring personal wellbeing has shortcomings, such as its bias towards only positive aspects of emotions, which excludes measurements for unpleasant or painful experiences. This leaves out hedonic items, which are key components of hedonistic/utilitarian theory. The WHO-5 tool also relies on subjective opinions of respondents, which are often influenced by prevailing emotional circumstances. This leaves a gap for debate on the objectivity of the tool. To address this shortcoming, this

study gave opportunity to respondents to share their objective circumstances, which were presented as motivating factors driving them to work while studying. Another limitation of the study was the small sample used, which was also difficult to obtain, since human beings find it difficult to share their problems with anyone, especially if the information being asked is linked to their psychological well-being.

9. Recommendation for further research

- i. There is need for similar research on work-study-social life balance and psychological wellbeing using tools other than WHO-5.
- ii. Research should be carried out to study the contribution of internationalization in Higher education to socio-economic Wellbeing of international students from other parts of the world.
- iii. A similar study should be carried out using secondary data from different sources to ascertain the WHO-5 wellbeing of international students who are working while in active student status in their institutions.

Current research themes

1. Daniel Kibet Koech
Internationalization Strategies and Globalization in Higher Education
Internationalization strategies and Globalization in Higher Education
Multi-cultural diversity
Internationalization and Globalization challenges in Higher Education institutions.
Educational Guidance and Counselling support for foreign students
Vocational Guidance and counselling in a multicultural environment
Personal guidance and counselling for international students
International students Wellbeing
Work-Study and Social Life Balance
Social Protection Centres
ICT and Wellbeing of International Students
Internationalization in Higher Education and Mental Wellbeing Abroad
2. Esayas Demissie Degago
Current Research Theme: Organizational psychology/behavior.
3. Lavender Awino Okore
Stakeholder Management & Policy | Strategic Counselling | Co-creation Strategy Expert| Education Quality Assurance Consultant| Management Studies Researcher/Organizational Behavior.
4. Dr. Edina Molnár
Psychological aspects of workplace wellbeing in social and health-care institutions.

A pivotal area of organizational psychology that encompasses all aspects of positive employee behavior is wellbeing at work. Promoting employee wellbeing benefits both the social/healthcare organization and its employees. Stress may be avoided and productive workplaces where people can flourish are created through promoting wellness. A key facilitator of employee engagement and organizational effectiveness is good health, vitality and wellbeing and wellness. Workplace wellbeing incorporates all facets of working life, from the physical environment's quality and safety to employees' attitudes towards their jobs, their working environments, the culture at work, and work organization. To ensure that employees are safe, healthy, satisfied, and engaged at work, metrics for workplace wellbeing are intended to complement OSH measurements. The higher the wellbeing of employees at work, the lesser they burnout, procrastinate, disengage, resist change, and take ownership of work.

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Social Media Interventions on Study-Abroad Challenges among StipediumHungaricum Scholars at Selected Public Universities in Hungary.

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CRedit authorship contribution statement

Daniel Kibet Koech: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Esayas Demissie Degago:** Writing – review & editing, Software, Methodology. **Lavender Awino Okore:** Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation. **Edina Molnár:** Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Software, Resources, Project administration, Funding acquisition.

Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. The introductory part of the questionnaires informed the participants of the purpose and scope of the study. Respondents were requested to voluntarily participate in the study and that filling the questionnaires and submitting their responses was a confirmation that they had given consent to the researchers to use their data in the study.

Consent for publication

All authors provide consent for the publication of this manuscript, including any accompanying images or data contained within the manuscript. We confirm that we have been allowed to view the manuscript before publication, and understand that once published, it cannot be removed from the published record except in exceptional circumstances.

Compliance with ethical standards

This Study complies with the ethical standards of the United Ethical Review Committee for Research in Psychology (EPKEB), Reference

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All authors certify that they have no conflict of interest to declare and that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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