

The subjective well-being of university students combining work and study

This paper examines the relationship between the combination of work and study with the subjective well-being of undergraduate students, using the example of students at Lomonosov Moscow State University and the National Research University Higher School of Economics.

The digitalization of work processes, the spread of hybrid and remote working, the development of flexible educational programmes with the integration of internships have significantly changed the structure of the student labour market. Combining work and study has a number of advantages – additional income, work experience, labour market research [Remenick et al., 2021]. However, students' quality of life is largely determined by their mood and well-being, so it is important to investigate how work-study combination is related to students' subjective well-being and what the mechanisms of this relationship are.

Thus, the **purpose** of my research is to identify the relationship between university students' work/study balance and their subjective well-being. To do this, I use resource conservation theory and inter-role theory [Hobfoll, 1989; Frone, 2003]. The resources used to perform roles (time, concentration, energy) are limited, which leads to conflict – a situation in which one role makes it difficult to perform another role [Creed et al., 2015]. At the same time, the simultaneous performance of roles contributes to the expansion of resources, leading to facilitation – a situation in which participation in one role improves the performance of another [Owen et al., 2018].

In turn, the parameters of subjective well-being (SW) can be divided into two components: cognitive and emotional. Cognitive indicators include a person's judgements about his/her life (e.g. life satisfaction). Emotional/affective indicators include a person's feelings about their life, their mood [Strobel et al., 2011] (e.g. level of happiness).

The first group of research hypotheses suggests a negative relationship between conflict and subjective well-being, which has empirical evidence in Butler (2007) and Cinamon (2018). The second group of hypotheses suggests a positive relationship between facilitation and subjective well-being, which also has empirical evidence [Wyland et al., 2016; Butler, 2007]. However, existing articles do not address all components of subjective well-being and the two strands of conflict and facilitation separately. Therefore, I decided to fully examine the two directions of conflict and facilitation and the two components of subjective well-being in order to get the most comprehensive picture of the relationship of work-study reconciliation with SB.

In addition, it is nowhere considered that the sample does not consider the non-employed and represents only employed students who have made the decision to enter the labour force themselves, which raises the problem of bias in the results due to self-selection into the labour force; to avoid this I used the Heckman correction.

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Furthermore, nowhere is it considered that the sample does not take into account the non-employed and only represents employed students who have made the decision to enter the labour force themselves, which causes the problem of bias in the results due to self-selection into the labour force. To avoid the bias problem, I use the Heckman correction.

Research design and methodology

The study formed a statistical instrument (questionnaire) through which a survey was conducted from 01.03.2024 to 30.04.2024. The sample obtained through the method of spontaneous selection after data cleaning was 725 students.

The main model in the study is the Structural Equation Model (SEM), which as a system allows the simultaneous use of factor analysis to estimate latent (unobserved) variables (as linear combinations of the corresponding observed variables from the survey) and to estimate regression equations involving these latent variables. The model considers bidirectional conflict and facilitation (separately the effects of work on study and study on work) and tests the hypotheses of a negative association of conflict with SB and a positive association of facilitation with SB, in addition to estimating the determinants of conflict and facilitation.

Main findings:

The results of the study partially confirmed the stated hypotheses – work-study conflict is negatively related to the cognitive and affective components of subjective well-being. However, not all hypotheses related to facilitation were confirmed in the model evaluation. Work facilitation is not related to depression and happiness, whereas study facilitation is not related to life satisfaction, is positively related to depression and is not related to happiness, which is contrary to the theory. This may be because with facilitation, workload may persist and despite better management of resources, emotional well-being may not improve and the student may experience loneliness, depression and sadness.

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