

## Students' well-being: Impacts of studying out-EU and perceived autonomy on the psychological quality of life

Barbara Bucki<sup>1</sup>, Senad Karavdic<sup>1</sup>, Chrysoula Karathanasi<sup>1</sup>, Michèle Baumann<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> INSIDE. Institute for Health and Behaviour. University of Luxembourg (Luxembourg)

**Introduction:** With an increasing number of university students in preparation of their entrance in the labor market, the wellbeing of the postgraduates became a priority for many universities. Despite numerous studies on this topic, respective relationships of wellbeing and other psychosocial factors still remain unclear.

**Aims:** (1) to assess Psychological Quality of Life of postgraduates who study in *Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (GDL)*, *EU* and *non – EU countries*; (2) to analyze its associations with their socio-economic, health and employability related cofactors.

**Method:** All masters' students registered at the Centre for Documentation and Information on Higher Education (CEDIES) database in GDL were contacted by mail to participate at an online questionnaire (in English or French) measuring:

1. Psychological Whoqol-bref (6 items) (dependent variable)
2. Wellbeing attributes: Quality of Life Autonomy, Health Satisfaction, and Penn state worry questionnaire (Worries).
3. Employability attributes: Search for Work Self Efficacy scale (SWSES), Career Goals setting.
4. Perceived financial situation and socio-demographic characteristics.

Respondents who did not mention the country of their studies were excluded from the analysis.

Bivariate tests and correlations were performed for association analyses between the variables. Only significant relationships ( $p < 0.05$ ) were used in the multiple linear model.

**Results:** 490 participants were volunteers from which 13.5% study in Luxembourg, 77.8% in an *EU country* and 8.7% in a *non-EU country*. Majority were women, with exception for those studying in *non-EU countries* who were mainly men. Participants studying in *GDL* were older than those studying abroad.

Natives of Luxembourg were prevalent with higher percentages among those who study in a *non EU-country*. Those studying in *non-EU* showed significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) higher Psychological Quality of Life ( $M = 76.8$ ;  $SD = 12.8$ ) than those in *GDL* ( $M = 74.5$ ;  $SD = 12.6$ ) respectively in *EU* ( $M = 71.4$ ;  $SD = 15.3$ ).

While participants differ in their QoL-Autonomy score there isn't any significant difference in their career goals setting, Search for work self efficacy, Health satisfaction, Worries and Perceived financial situation across the country of study.

Table 2: Impact of confounding factors on Psychological Quality of Life

		Psychological Quality of Life [0-100]				
		B	SE	L95 <sup>1</sup>	U95 <sup>1</sup>	p <sup>2</sup>
Intercept		25.43	7.67	10.31	40.55	***
Country of Study	GDL	-2.09	2.53	-2.88	7.07	*
	EU	-2.21	2.11	-6.36	1.93	
	Non-EU	0				
Perceived Financial Situation		-0.41	0.53	-1.45	0.63	ns
Positive Employability Attributes	Search for Work Self-efficacy	5.71	1.25	3.26	8.17	***
	Career Goals	1.45	1.12	-0.75	3.64	ns
Wellbeing Attributes	QoL-Autonomy	5.25	1.03	3.23	7.26	***
	Health Satisfaction	3.99	0.66	2.69	5.29	***
	Worries	-1.89	0.21	-2.29	-1.15	***

<sup>1</sup> Confidence Intervals; <sup>2</sup> Significant p-value: \*:  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*:  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*:  $p < 0.001$ ; ns=not significant; Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=46.5%

**Conclusion:** Better psychological quality of life mobilized the capability of students to study abroad, which is related to better wellbeing attributes. However this relationship remains true only for students studying in Non-EU countries. Implementing workshops to increase individual self-efficacy towards a future employment may improve and/or maintain wellbeing of academics and limit so, respective social inequalities.

Table 1: Relationships between socio-demographic characteristics, Employability, Health attributes and Psychological Quality of Life.

		Psychological quality of life [0-100]					
		GDL		EU country		Non-EU country	
		Mean (SE)	p <sup>1</sup>	Mean (SE)	p <sup>1</sup>	Mean (SE)	p <sup>1</sup>
Gender	Male	76.5 (1.8)	ns	70.4 (1.1)	ns	78.8 (2.3)	ns
	Female	72.8 (2.4)		71.9 (1.0)		73.3 (3.7)	
Age categories	18-24 years	76.0 (2.6)	ns	71.9 (1.4)	ns	78.5 (3.3)	ns
	25-35 years	73.9 (2.4)		70.6 (1.0)		74.2 (2.7)	
	> 35 years	72.9 (2.8)		75.0 (2.9)		86.1 (2.7)	
Nationality	GDL	73.8 (2.0)	ns	71.2 (0.9)	ns	78.9 (1.8)	ns
	EU	74.6 (2.1)		71.4 (1.3)		70.8 (6.0)	
	Non-EU	77.0 (7.3)		89.5 (2.0)		75.0 (6.3)	
Employment status	Yes	76.2 (2.3)	ns	71.3 (1.2)	ns	81.2 (3.0)	ns
	No	73.4 (2.0)		71.4 (1.0)		74.4 (2.5)	
Type of lodging	Alone	81.2 (3.6)	ns	70.4 (1.4)	ns	79.3 (2.6)	ns
	Not alone	73.8 (1.6)		72.1 (0.9)		74.2 (2.9)	
		r <sup>2</sup>	p <sup>1</sup>	r <sup>2</sup>	p <sup>1</sup>	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup>
Financial situation	(1-6)	-0.097	ns	0.009	ns	0.338	*
Search for Work Self-Efficacy	(1-5)	0.331	*	0.378	***	0.363	*
Career Goals	(1-5)	0.020	ns	0.120	*	0.192	ns
QoL-Autonomy	(1-5)	0.489	***	0.452	***	0.430	***
Health Satisfaction	(1-5)	0.329	***	0.432	***	-0.481	***
Worries	(3-15)	-0.412	***	-0.525	***	0.444	***

<sup>1</sup> Significant p-value: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; <sup>2</sup> Pearson's correlation; ns=not significant

**Correspondence:**

University of Luxembourg, Faculty LSHASE -Research unit INSIDE,  
 Institute Health & Behaviour - Campus Belval, Maison des Sciences Humaines.  
 L-4366 Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg  
[senad.karavdic@uni.lu](mailto:senad.karavdic@uni.lu)

