

# Responsible Transformation of Education Through Engineering Students' Perceptions of Well-Being\*

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Higher education institutions are committed to continuous enhancement of educational programs to ensure alignment with student needs and expectations. Nevertheless, there remains an insufficient grasp of students' perceptions of well-being dimensions, limiting institutions' ability to create responsible supportive environments. The study aims to offer deeper understanding of engineering student's perspectives on the relevance and impact of key components influencing their well-being. Based on literature review insights and the identified research gap, the OECD Better Life Index dimensions were applied at the micro-level to examine students' perceptions. The study included 276 first-year undergraduate engineering students enrolled at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences. Descriptive statistics were used to assess the perceived importance of individual dimensions, while the Mann-Whitney test identified potential gender related differences and correlation analysis explored relationships among dimensions. The analysis highlighted that personal and professional advancement are seen as having significant importance, while there is high unawareness on importance of civic engagement and social responsibility. The findings highlight both what students seek and the areas where higher education institutions need to respond by helping students understand the importance of less prioritized dimensions and offering them engaging opportunities. This study makes a meaningful contribution by clarifying how young people perceive various well-being dimensions and aligning these insights with strategic approaches that higher education institutions can implement, therefore offering practical guidance and recommendation for fostering higher student engagement.

**Keywords:** well-being; student perception; engineering student's engagement; OECD; Better Life Index; responsible education

## 1. Introduction

The academic community demonstrates continuous interest in the theoretical and practical implications of the concept of human well-being. For a considerable period, both scholars and national-level institutions showed shared commitment to indicating assessment and evaluation methods of human well-being [1]. Well-being encompasses how individuals feel and function within different personal and

social contexts, reflecting their overall perception and life satisfaction [2]. Although a universally accepted definition is still lacking, well-being is widely recognized as a complex, multidimensional construct integrating different elements [3]. Understanding how well-being varies across different age groups and educational backgrounds can significantly contribute to advancements of existing frameworks and practical solutions [3].

Maintaining well-being among young people is

crucial, as it affects both academic success and social involvement in later adult life [4]. Supportive environments, including access to social resources, contribute to enhanced well-being among students, which, in turn, fosters greater academic engagement, persistence and overall performance. Driven by these findings, there has been an increasing focus on gaining deeper understanding of factors influencing student well-being [5], with the aim of establishing and shaping educational environment that fosters personal growth [6].

Despite the established agreement on the importance of student well-being, there is still no clear consensus on its definition and influencing components [6, 7]. The disagreement surrounding the definition of student well-being has hindered development of appropriate strategies within higher education institutions [5], which continue to lack understanding of key factors that are shaping it. Some researchers prioritize a more specific and detailed definition of student well-being [8], whereas other scholars align student well-being with a broader and more generalized context [5]. Although research has shown that students acknowledge distinct differences between academic and other life domains, all areas of life affect their overall well-being, thus necessitating consideration of multiple dimensions [5].

The primary goal of this study is to explore engineering student's perceptions of the importance of various dimensions influencing their well-being, by using the OECD Better Life Index (BLI) framework. The study seeks to provide and offer higher education institutions with evidence-based recommendations for fostering a supportive and responsible educational environment that promotes student well-being. The research is guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1.* How do engineering students perceive the importance of the OECD BLI well-being dimensions?
- RQ2.* Are there significant gender differences in engineering students' perceptions of the OECD BLI well-being dimensions?
- RQ3.* Are there statistically significant relationships between the OECD BLI well-being dimensions based on engineering students' perceptions?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Frameworks on Well-Being

Well-being refers to the personal and social aspects of an individual's life, based on how they feel and function, therefore shaping their perception of life as a whole [2]. Early research defined well-being as a single-item construct associated

with different individual dimensions [9], yet it is now widely regarded as multidimensional [3], which makes its exploration considerably more complex. Consequently, attempts to conceptualize and understand the determinants of well-being have resulted in the emergence of various theoretical frameworks that offer insights into its underlying nature.

According to Diener's Subjective Well-Being Theory (SWB), subjective well-being represents the outcome of individuals' cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives [10]. This indicates that well-being arises from the interplay between affective responses to life situations and cognitive assessments of personal life satisfaction [10], together determining overall life satisfaction. Similarly, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes that the fulfillment of competence, autonomy and relatedness, as three essential psychological needs, contributes to an individual's level of motivation, thereby promoting their well-being [11]. On the other hand, the PERMA model suggests that positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment are five core elements influencing well-being [12]. Compared to previous theories, which target limited psychological facets, the PERMA model encompasses multiple psychological dimensions, offering a broader framework for understanding well-being of an individual.

While these three theoretical frameworks are valuable for understanding subjective well-being, it is important to note that they focus predominantly on internal psychological factors and explore how these factors shape an individual's well-being. However, these theories pay little attention to the broader social and economic conditions and its effects. Applying these theories to specific groups, such as student population, may not capture the full scope of well-being, as students tend to perceive their well-being in a holistic manner [5] that extends beyond the dimensions identified and addressed by SWB, SDT or PERMA. Therefore, applying frameworks that consider young people's well-being not only in psychological terms but also in the context of broader social and everyday life conditions is particularly important. Understanding young people's views on the importance of these dimensions can provide valuable guidance for institutional practices aimed at promoting overall youth well-being.

### 2.2 OECD's Perspective on Defining Well-being

The OECD framework for measuring well-being was introduced in 2011 by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to offer a more comprehensive representation of the well-being of the population [13]. As a

response to the challenges of measuring well-being, the OECD has developed the OECD Better Life Index [14] which is based on the conceptual understanding of well-being and dimensions defined by the OECD's well-being framework. Specifically, the OECD Better Life Index encompasses 11 dimensions, which can be divided into two primary categories: material living conditions and quality of life.

The material living conditions group is comprised of three dimensions: income, jobs and housing, while the quality of life group includes eight dimensions: education, safety, community, life satisfaction, civic engagement, health, environment and work-life balance. Each of the 11 dimensions is represented by one to four indicators, which determine its value. The OECD Better Life Index features a total of 24 indicators, with the majority relying on statistical data from official databases, while a smaller subset reflects subjective perceptions, gathered through surveys administered by organizations investigating individuals' opinion. The index allows cross-country comparisons of well-being dimensions, encompassing 35 OECD member countries and 3 non-OECD countries [15, 16]. Unlike the Human Development Index (HDI), which gives a single overall index value, the BLI does not offer comprehensive value, since each dimension's relative importance is considered to vary depending on the perspective of the observer [17].

Although the OECD BLI considers various social, economic and multidimensional aspects of individual well-being, it is mainly centered on the national-level analysis of dimensions, with a clear preference for macro-analyses over micro-analyses. While the OECD Better Life Index predominantly utilizes national-level statistical data, it can be argued that it, compared to some theories, does not sufficiently address and involve subjective, individual perceptions, when evaluating certain dimensions.

By focusing on the subjective perspectives and micro-level, this research aims to analyze students' perceptions of well-being dimensions using the comprehensive OECD BLI framework, therefore offering recommendations that can guide higher education institutions in creating a supportive academic environment.

### 2.3 Well-being Dimensions in Student Population

#### 2.3.1 Student Wellness and Sense of Belonging

The concept of student wellness is integral to the cultivation of lifelong wellness, which significantly enhances the individual's overall health [18], encompassing both emotional and physical aspects

[19]. Physical activity, aside from its health benefits, significantly influences an individual's ability to cultivate discipline and persistence [20] and by promoting better physical health it exerts a positive effect on individuals' life satisfaction [21]. This way the development of self-efficacy is encouraged [20], which is considered an essential element for academic success. On the other hand, mental health represents an essential factor of individual's ability to navigate stressful and unpredictable situations [22]. Evidence suggests that mental health difficulties can negatively impact both academic performance and the outcomes students achieve during their higher education [23]. The social stigma associated with mental health issues has a considerable impact on students' readiness to seek assistance from qualified professionals who can offer appropriate support [24]. The prevalence of mental health problems among students is now one of the main challenges that higher education institutions face and must address [25]. Mental health is significantly influenced by the sense of belonging students experience in university [26], which simultaneously boosts their motivation and determination throughout their academic journey [27]. The sense of belonging that individuals experience in the university community is not only an important factor of academic performance but is also associated with a positive influence on their overall well-being [28].

#### 2.3.2 Academic Engagement and Career Readiness

The importance of career readiness and academic engagement to students' well-being is well recognized, with their influence extending significantly to academic success and subsequent career development [29]. Active participation in both curricular and extracurricular activities, along with the application of acquired knowledge to practical situations, are key components of academic engagement that contribute to students' growth and development [29]. As the educational environment has been shown to play an important role in this regard, higher education institutions must design environments that persistently encourage student engagement [30]. Academic engagement predicts students' performance and success [31], as it encourages them to expand and enrich their knowledge, which is expected to contribute to their career readiness.

Career-ready students are individuals who have the ability to manage uncertainty by effectively planning for events and responding to unforeseen circumstances as they arise [32]. These students exhibit strong social skills, as well as the habits that are expected in the professional setting [32]. Career readiness is largely shaped by educational

institutions' ability to design curricula that incorporates both theoretical knowledge and practical skill development, ensuring students are adequately prepared for their future careers [32]. Aligning academic curricula with the expectations of the labor market reduces stress and anxiety for students during the transition from higher education to employment, contributing to their overall well-being.

### 2.3.3 Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

Different research indicates that social and civic engagement foster the development of diverse social relationships and promote a positive sense of belonging, positively impacting well-being [33, 34]. In this way, individuals are able to achieve a deeper understanding of their purpose and a higher level of self-worth [33]. It is essential to understand that the role of universities extends beyond merely preparing students for professional careers, therefore these institutions must foster growth of socially responsible individuals who contribute to society as a whole [35]. Higher education institutions must emphasize that the purpose of acquiring knowledge extends beyond individual financial benefits and includes a responsibility towards societal progress [36]. Given that students during higher education attain a level of maturity necessary for broader understanding, institutions must prioritize the promotion of social solidarity and awareness [36]. Promoting social awareness through curriculum and diverse educational strategies is vital in fostering humanistic knowledge among students, enabling them to contribute effectively to community development [37]. Encouraging students to recognize their potential contribution fosters active citizenship and supports the formation of ethics and value systems that reflect commitment to social responsibility.

Understanding how students perceive and prioritize different dimensions supports valuable insight

into the subjective aspects of their well-being. Therefore, the following section outlines the methodological approach utilized to explore these perceptions and evaluate the relevance of the OECD BLI dimensions in the context of students' subjective well-being.

## 3. Research Overview

The data collection process (Fig. 1) was carried out in November 2022 at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Belgrade. A total of 276 respondents participated in the research, all of whom were first-year undergraduate engineering students enrolled in either the Information system and technology or the Management and organization study program. The choice to focus on first-year students was based on the fact that they are in the initial stage of their academic journey, a phase commonly associated with substantial transitions often accompanied by stressful and uncertain circumstances. Their perspectives can provide valuable input that may shape the direction of student-centered initiatives and support programs within higher education institutions.

The questionnaire was self-administered by students during class, which enabled immediate support in case of questions or confusion, therefore ensuring higher accuracy and validity of collected data. Students completed the questionnaire online using their personal devices via Microsoft Forms, which allowed faster and more efficient survey preparation and processing of the collected data. A total of 11 closed-ended questions were included, each prompting participants to rate the relevance of individual OECD BLI dimension in the context of the Republic of Serbia. Following the scale format of the OECD BLI online evaluation tool, respondents assessed importance of each dimension using a 0-5 scale, where 0 = not important and 5 = very important.

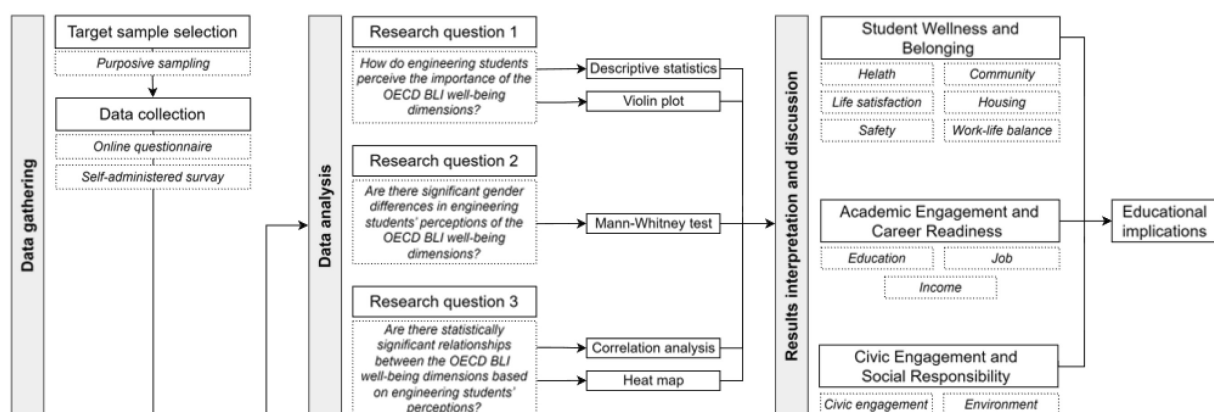


Fig. 1. Research structure.

Following data collection process, the analysis of the gathered data was conducted using SPSS 29.0 software. Values obtained through descriptive statistics were used to identify the ranking of the individual dimensions. The Mann-Whitney test was used to examine whether a statistically significant difference in the perception of BLI dimensions existed between male and female respondents. To investigate the relationships between the individual dimensions, a correlation analysis was employed.

#### 4. Results

The purpose of the study was to analyze first-year engineering students' perceptions of the OECD's quality of life dimensions, in order to better understand their opinions and quality of life perspectives.

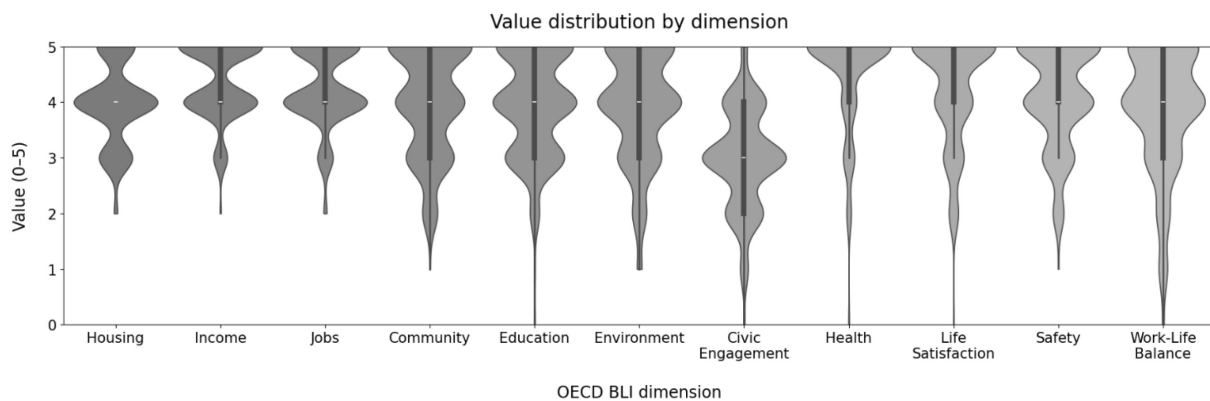
To address RQ1, which aims to explore how engineering students perceive the importance of the OECD BLI well-being dimensions, descriptive statistics were utilized to examine the 276 collected responses and identify students' perceptions of the relative importance of each dimension. These results can be seen in Table 1. Findings show that health (Mean = 4.52) was perceived as the most significant quality of life dimension, whereas civic engagement (Mean = 2.99) was ranked lowest. The

work-life balance dimension (Std. Deviation = 1.101) has the highest standard deviation, reflecting significant differences among students in how they value the importance of achieving equilibrium between work and personal life. The second highest standard deviation was found in the environment dimension (Std. Deviation = 0.990), pointing to diverse student perspectives on the role of a healthy environment on their well-being. Conversely, income demonstrated the lowest standard deviation (Std. Deviation = 0.665), pointing to a relatively uniform student perspective on its relevance and importance. Based on the violin plot (Fig. 2), a clearer understanding of the response distribution and density for each of the OECD BLI 11 dimensions can be obtained. To ensure clarity and prevent misrepresentation, the kernel density on the violin plot was limited to the minimum and maximum values specified in the questionnaire.

To address RQ2, which aims to explore the potential gender differences in engineering students' perceptions of the OECD BLI well-being dimensions, the Mann-Whitney test was utilized. The results obtained from the analysis are shown in Table 2. There is a statistically significant difference in how male and female participants perceive importance of the community ( $p = 0.009 < 0.01$ ),

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics

OECD BLI	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Deviation
Housing	3.99	2	5	0.733
Income	4.39	2	5	<b>0.665</b>
Jobs	4.28	2	5	0.701
Community	4.02	1	5	0.959
Education	3.97	0	5	0.918
Environment	3.92	1	5	0.990
Civic Engagement	<b>2.99</b>	0	5	0.908
Health	<b>4.52</b>	0	5	0.912
Life Satisfaction	4.28	0	5	0.956
Safety	4.14	1	5	0.906
Work-Life Balance	3.89	0	5	<b>1.101</b>



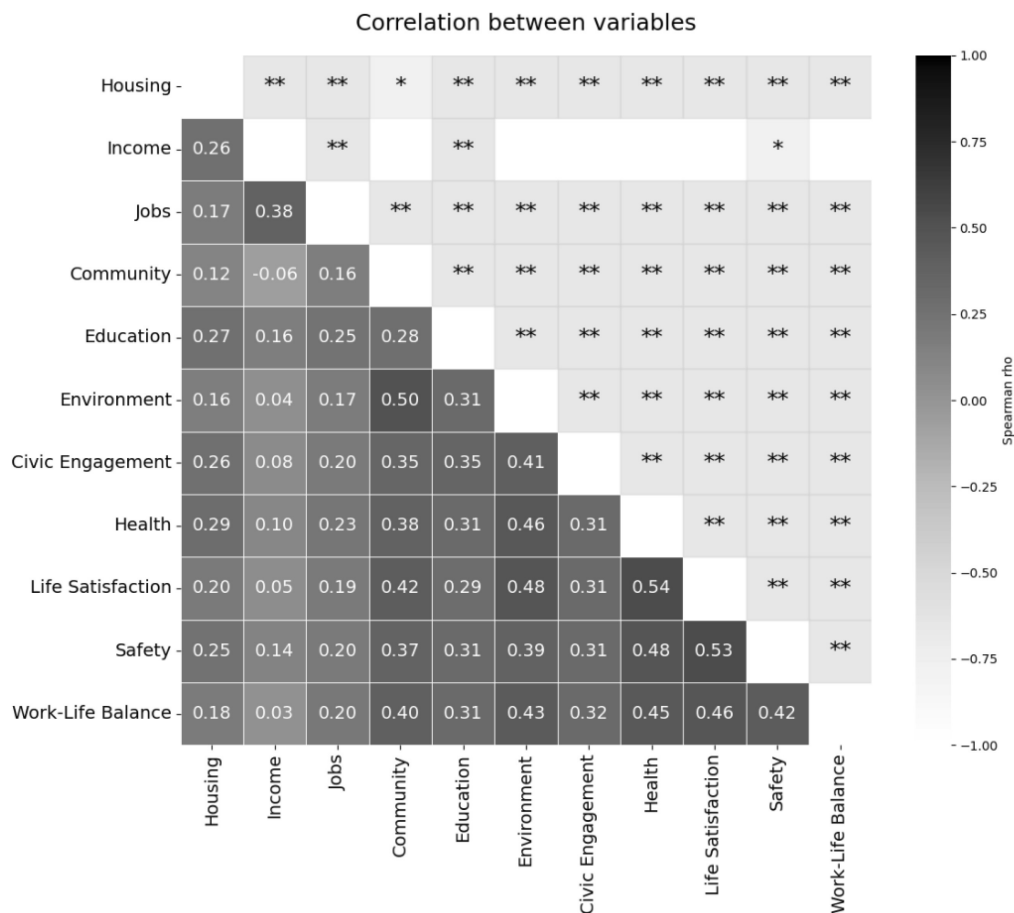
**Fig. 2.** Violin plot – dimension distribution.

**Table 2.** Mann-Whitney test results

	Housing	Income	Jobs	Community	Education	Environment
Item	M ± SD	M ± SD	M ± SD	M ± SD	M ± SD	M ± SD
Male (N = 104)	3.96 ± 0.75	4.36 ± 0.71	4.21 ± 0.72	3.84 ± 0.96	3.74 ± 1.02	3.74 ± 1.06
Female (N = 172)	4.00 ± 0.73	4.41 ± 0.64	4.31 ± 0.69	4.13 ± 0.95	4.11 ± 0.82	4.03 ± 0.93
<i>p-value</i>	<b>0.725</b>	<b>0.637</b>	<b>0.252</b>	<b>0.009**</b>	<b>0.003**</b>	<b>0.028*</b>

	Civic Engagement	Health	Life Satisfaction	Safety	Work-Life Balance
Item	M ± SD	M ± SD	M ± SD	M ± SD	M ± SD
Male (N = 104)	2.80 ± 1.01	4.39 ± 1.01	4.16 ± 0.99	3.90 ± 0.98	3.80 ± 1.17
Female (N = 172)	3.10 ± 0.82	4.59 ± 0.84	4.35 ± 0.93	4.28 ± 0.83	3.94 ± 1.06
<i>p-value</i>	<b>0.004**</b>	<b>0.095</b>	<b>0.082</b>	<b>0.001**</b>	<b>0.392</b>



**Fig. 3.** Heat map – correlation analysis.

education ( $p = 0.003 < 0.01$ ), civic engagement ( $p = 0.004 < 0.01$ ), and safety ( $p = 0.001 < 0.01$ ) dimensions. Additionally, the environment dimension ( $p = 0.028 < 0.05$ ), exhibited weaker, but still important statistical significance, compared to other dimensions. Upon consideration of these dimensions, it can be concluded that women perceive all five dimensions as more significant for overall quality of life than men.

To address RQ3, which aims to explore potential relationships among the OECD BLI well-being

dimensions based on engineering students’ perceptions, a correlation analysis was conducted. The results showed that the majority of correlations between the 11 dimensions are statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level. The correlations between dimensions housing and community, and between income and safety, were statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. Additionally, it was found that only six correlations between dimensions were not statistically significant, specifically the following: income and community,

income and environment, income and civic engagement, income and health, income and life satisfaction, income and work-life balance. The fact that the OECD Better Life Index measures naturally interconnected dimensions explains why the majority of the relationships were statistically significant. The strength of statistically significant correlations (small  $r < 0.30$ , medium  $r < 0.50$ , large  $r < 1.1$ ) was evaluated to provide additional context to the results of the correlation analysis. Considering this, it was determined that most of the statistically significant correlations identified were of small to medium strength. In three instances, large strength relationships were observed between community and environment ( $r = 0.50$ ), life satisfaction and safety ( $r = 0.53$ ), and health and life satisfaction ( $r = 0.54$ ), highlighting students' perception of a strong correlation between these dimensions. Fig. 3 offers a detailed representation of the findings from the correlation analysis.

## 5. Discussion

To ensure a structured discussion, the eleven OECD BLI dimensions will be examined within three thematic segments, grouped according to their similarity and relevance, which enables a more coherent and organized interpretation of the results, with comprehensive educational implications presented in a separate section.

### 5.1 Student Wellness and Belonging

Mental health challenges among youth are underscored by the fact that one in four Gen Z individuals frequently or constantly feel depressed, while 49% feel overwhelmed and affected by judgement of others [38]. Through this study, student wellness and belonging will be assessed with reference to the following six OECD BLI dimensions: health, life satisfaction, safety, community, housing and work-life balance. These dimensions are regarded by students to be among the most important, with particular attention given to health, life satisfaction, safety and community, while housing and work-life balance received lower importance rankings (mean below 4). This suggests that students' well-being is closely linked to their physical and mental health, as well as their sense of belonging to the community during their university years. These results are aligned with the findings of [39] and [40]. The fact that housing and work-life balance were ranked lower may be attributed to the relatively limited exposure first-year students have to these concerns at this stage of their studies. The findings of Bjelica et al. [21] suggest that students holding state scholarships exhibit greater life satisfaction in comparison to self-financing students, which has

important implications on young people's well-being. Moreover, research has demonstrated that financial stress negatively impacts social life and sense of belonging [41]. It was further observed that females, in comparison to males, place a higher value on the sense of belonging to the community. One research showed that women in certain STEM disciplines often experience a low sense of belonging, and that fostering an environment in which they feel accepted significantly influences their persistence and academic achievement [42].

### 5.2 Academic Engagement and Career Readiness

University students assess their employability at just 6.7 out of 10, with 88% of European students reporting insufficient guidance and support from their educational institutions in making career decisions, indicating low career readiness [43]. In case of this research, academic Engagement and Career Readiness will be assessed with reference to the following three OECD BLI dimensions: education, job and income. Income and job are considered by students to be among the top three dimensions impacting life satisfaction, while education is rated somewhat lower (mean below 4). The high ranking of job and income in our study can be explained by previous research indicating that young people value financial security [44], therefore secure employment and sufficient income are seen as contributors to improved well-being. The lower ranking of education may be explained by the growing stance among employers that formal education, and GPA in the absence of directly applicable skills and knowledge, is no longer seen as a critical factor in securing employment [45]. From a gender perspective, results showed that females tend to view education as more important than males do. In addition, prior research findings suggest that female students outperform males in terms of academic achievement and GPA [21]. The increased conscientiousness commonly found in women [46] may partly explain their stronger tendency and inclination toward higher educational aspirations and enhanced academic success.

### 5.3 Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

European Commission (2024) emphasize that participation in volunteer activities among youth remains low, with just 17% reporting involvement in such activities, while 40% of those not involved in any civic engagement activities state lack of time as the main reason [47]. Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility will be assessed with reference to the following two OECD BLI dimensions: civic engagement and environment. What stands out is that students have identified these dimensions as the two of three least important factors for overall well-

being. The low perceived importance of civic engagement is similar to findings of [48]. Promoting civic engagement among young people is important for enhancing behavioral outcomes and social context [49]. Moreover, students participating in volunteering or similar groups experience lower levels of depressive symptoms and feelings [50], which highlights the importance of such involvement for young people's well-being. On the other hand, the very low recognition of the environmental dimension's importance calls for deliberate actions by higher education institutions to foster improvement [51]. Previous studies have indicated that women exhibit higher ecological awareness than men, which aligns with our results and suggests that women are more attentive to environmental issues [52]. These results highlight that students have not developed an adequate level of awareness concerning the significance of both civic engagement and environment dimensions.

#### 5.4 Educational Implications

In light of the previous discussion, the following educational implications emerge as a synthesis of the analyzed dimensions, outlining how the findings can be translated into actionable recommendations and implications for higher education institutions.

Considering that, from the students' perspective, health and social belonging are the most important factors, it is essential for higher education institutions to address these needs. In light of the stigma associated with mental health [53], universities should run awareness campaigns that focus on communicating importance and benefits of mental health, therefore encouraging individuals to prioritize it [54]. In addition, providing students with education and training supports the development of mental health literacy, which is centered around gaining knowledge on mental health and effective methods for managing stress [54, 55].

By supporting the formation of student-led groups and organizations, higher education institutions facilitate opportunities for students to connect with fellow students [56]. This encourages the formation of groups based on shared interests and also helps to reduce stress and feeling of loneliness that students may face when adjusting to a new environment [56, 57]. In this way, students' sense of belonging is nurtured, which leads to improvements in both their mental health and overall well-being [26, 56].

To make the transition from higher education to the labor market as smooth and stress-free as possible, it is important to provide students with opportunities to participate in internships that foster the development of practical skills and knowledge [58]. It is important for higher education

institutions to support this process by offering career counseling services or establishing career departments [59, 60]. As a result, students receive valuable support and guidance for their future career development, which helps foster career optimism [60]. Furthermore, higher education institutions should encourage students to engage in a variety of extracurricular activities, as this will enhance their academic engagement, incorporating both formal and informal education, and helping them develop additional skills [61]. Continuously improving the academic environment to provide students with such opportunities in this regard further supports their well-being, thereby promoting higher levels of various forms of engagement [62].

Higher education institutions must promptly intervene and take action to help students recognize the critical importance of civic engagement and social responsibility. This can be explained by the possibility that students lack awareness of the actions they can take to make a difference in these domains. Students' awareness of their potential contribution to society can be enhanced by promoting learning through socially relevant examples, along with encouraging debate as a powerful means of fostering wider, critical thinking [63]. Higher education institutions can also promote awareness of the importance of social participation by engaging students in projects with broader social implications [35] and providing volunteering opportunities. This way students will be able to recognize the contributing value of their knowledge, not just for future careers and financial aspects, but also for the betterment of society [36].

## 6. Conclusion

Student's well-being is receiving growing public attention, prompting efforts to identify strategies for improving their life satisfaction. This research sought to better capture engineering students' perspectives by offering insights into their perception of the factors that determine their overall well-being.

Findings revealed that youth predominantly associate their quality of life with physical and mental health, deeming it more significant than financial aspects. Conversely, civic engagement and environmental issues were identified as the least significant dimensions, suggesting that students in the early years of their studies have not yet fully developed an awareness of their importance, likely due to limited acquaintance with this topic during high school. This underscores the pivotal role of higher education institutions in cultivating future active citizens. Interestingly, education was not perceived as highly important,

suggesting a need for universities to continuously improve their curricula to better meet the expectations of young people. Additionally, the examination of gender differences showed that females attributed greater importance to all assessed OECD BLI dimensions than males, suggesting gender-based variations in perceptions.

Findings from this study offer recommendations aimed at improving both the acknowledged and overlooked aspects that shape engineering students' life satisfaction. To promote students' mental health, higher education institutions should provide training programs focused on mental health literacy and facilitate involvement in student-led organizations that strengthen social connections and a sense of belonging. Through participation in extracurricular activities, students cultivate various skills, and higher education institutions should further support them by providing career counseling and internships to strengthen their career preparedness. The use of debate methods in teaching, combined with volunteering and engagement in socially relevant projects, helps students recognize and understand how their formal knowledge can contribute to society as a whole.

## 7. Limitations

While the study provides significant direction and recommendation for each aspect of students' well-being, it is essential to recognize the limitations that may affect the scope and applicability of its findings.

When discussing the limitations of the research sample, one of the primary constraints of this study is that the sample consisted solely of first-year engineering students majoring in IT and business. Students from other years or other engineering

disciplines were not included, which should be addressed in future research to enhance the generalizability of research findings. Additionally, the findings' generalizability is limited by the fact that sample included only students from the Republic of Serbia, given the country's distinctive socio-economic background and characteristics, which should be addressed in future research through cross-national sampling. An important conceptual limitation of the study is that, while it examines perceived well-being dimensions, it does not consider the potential discrepancy between these perceptions and students' actual behavior.

Regarding methodological limitations, the study's reliance on the self-reported survey may have introduced certain biases, suggesting that future research should include complementary approaches in order to confirm the validity of the collected responses. Given that data collection occurred at a single point in time, the study is limited in its ability to capture changes over time in well-being dimensions or their interrelationships, highlighting the importance of employing longitudinal approaches in future research. Additionally, since the OECD Better Life Index was primarily developed for high-income countries, its ability to reflect socio-cultural and socio-economic variations in other national contexts may be limited.

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