

Digital Nomadism: Exploring Origins, Theory and Work- Life Balance

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Abstract

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The rapid emergence of remote work and digital nomadism has transformed the traditional workplace, presenting a unique set of challenges and opportunities for achieving a healthy work-life balance. As a demographic characterized by their flexible schedules and location-independent lifestyle, this thesis investigates how being a digital nomad affects work-life balance. Using quantitative data collected from an online survey with 287 respondents, this thesis investigates three research questions: (1) “How does digital nomadism affect work-life balance?”, (2) “What is the nature of the relationship between work and life domains in the context of digital nomadism?”, (3) “What is the portrait of an average digital nomad?”

The findings in the thesis reveal that most survey participants are single (60.2%), and less than 30% have children. The majority of survey respondents (61.6%) are originally from Europe, with only 11.4% being from North America, this supports previous literature. The least represented regions from our respondents were Africa (2.8%) and South America (8.3%), which can be explained due to lower average salaries. Europe and Asia are by far the most popular continents for digital nomads, with 62.2% and 14.2% of participants residing there, represented by vibrant communities for digital nomads and lower living costs.

Other findings in relation to relocation frequency and mobility saw that about half of the respondents relocate more than once a year. Two prominent groups have been digital nomads for 1-2 years and 3-4 years, each consisting of 37% of respondents, while 10% are seasoned digital nomads of at least five years or more. In terms of education level, 38.4% of the

respondents have a Bachelor's degree, with a large portion of respondents only having finished high school.

This thesis uncovered several important correlations, a negative correlation between education level and job satisfaction, a positive correlation between job- and life satisfaction, a negative correlation between relocation frequency and work-life balance, and a positive correlation between nomad duration and work-life balance. The findings in this thesis provide a comprehensive understanding of work-life balance dynamics in the digital nomad community, offering valuable insights for future investigations on the topic.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The following chapter covers the background of the research, its relevance, and research gaps which formed a basis for research questions, objectives, as well as, the theoretical framework of the study. Delimitations and the structure of the thesis are presented at the end.

1.1 Background

The end of 20th and beginning of 21st century is signified with a new generation, called generation Z (Eldridge, 2024). Young adults differ in their perception of life, work-life balance, values and other individual aspects. In regards to the work-life balance, Brown (2023) states that Generation Z and Millennials experience more stress than previous generations due to the fact that they are on the way to settle their career, while they still need to pay off their loans, solve a problem of housing and build a network of both personal and professional connections. Remarkably, both generations place greater importance on work-life balance than Baby boomers. Barhate and Dirani (2022) add that Generation Z career expectations revolve around organizational culture, work-life balance and stability, while pointing out that young adults don't consider salary as an attributing factor of stability.

An emergence of Generation Z came along with a period of rapid digitalization. According to The World Bank (2022), % of Internet users from EU countries had risen from 2% in 1995 to 89% in 2022. In the same period, the number of EU mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 people had grown from 4 to 124 (The World Bank, 2022). This contributed to operational communication, prompt exchange of information, ideas, and the rise of social networks, including Facebook, WhatsApp, ICQ, Skype, etc. In combination, it had a direct impact on the concept of "work", organizational culture and introduced different forms of employment, including hybrid and remote style. Köffer (2016) states that the opportunity to have a flexible work arrangement has created a segment of mobile workers, people, who travel and work constantly while using mobile devices to perform their job tasks. This contributes to an increase in autonomy and freedom, as well as, boosting the work-life balance of employees, since they become less attached to the offices and can focus more on their personal life and

families. According to Sherif (2024), on the global scale the percentage of employees who work from home all or most of the time had risen from around 5% in 2015 to 27.5% in 2023.

The shift in the perception of work of young adults and rapid digitalization resulted in the emergence of mobile forms of work, including digital nomadism. Schlagwein and Hossein (2020) consider it as arguably the most mobile type of employment in which workers perform their job from different places around the globe while taking advantage of coworking spaces and digital infrastructures. This view is supported by Mancinelli (2020) who claims nomads to be an embodiment of freedom or an archetype of extreme mobility arises at the intersection of two globalization trends: digital and mobility. Müller (2016) identifies two unconnected research streams on this topic: (1) from a perspective of leisure activities, travel and mobility practices and (2) through a prism of changing labor market and adaptation to global market requirements.

Opinions on the motivators of pursuing such a work-life style differ in the present literature. Schlagwein (2018) argues that the combination of digital work and expat living is driven by economic reasons and desire to travel, while pointing out that the reasons are still not fully clear. Prester et al. (2019) provides an in-depth view on the types of practices digital nomads are engaged in. The paper states that workers construct their identities around gaining professional autonomy and maintaining self-assured stability. Hensellek & Puchala (2021) share a number of motivations which push a person to choose a lifestyle of a digital nomad. They argue that this practice can be economically profitable since this type of people typically do not possess a high income which fits the present state of most Generation Z representatives. The individual freedom and an intrinsic desire of humanity to travel for inspiration are supported by a topic of identity and formation of a community of like-minded people play a major role in following this type of employment.

As for the present research, digital nomadism is still an emergent topic in academic spheres while it has been discussed regularly in the mass media (Aroles et al., 2020). Šímová (2023) agrees on the fact that the phenomena is not yet established; empirical and academic research and knowledge is limited, small and even biased. She states that most of the investigations are focused on study of co-working spaces, lifestyles and considers digital nomadism from the aspect of employment, well being and motivation. At the time of the study Google Scholar

provides less than 2.000 articles searched by the term “digital nomadism” and less than 400 papers covering the link of "digital nomadism" to the concept of "work-life balance".

Hence, this paper seeks to cover the existing research gap by exploring relationships of different variables related to individual and organizational environment and their degree of influence on the subjective perception of work-life balance among digital nomads. The results would provide a better understanding of the patterns in the behavior of digital nomads. The findings will be helpful for organizations to design policies, procedures in order to optimize the usage of highly mobile human capital.

1.2 Research questions and objectives

The aim of this research is to get more insights on the link between digital nomadism and work-life balance, in particular how and to what extent different components of work-life balance affect the perceived satisfaction in the content of being a digital nomad. The existing research gap and interest in this sphere resulted in the main research question:

Main research question: *How does digital nomadism affect work-life balance?*

In order to get a better understanding of the topic, correlation between two key variables, two supporting questions were formed.

RQ2: *What is the nature of the relationship between work and life domains in the context of digital nomadism?*

RQ3: *What is the portrait of an average digital nomad?*

1.3 Theoretical framework

In order to understand the components of work-life balance and their relationship the theoretical framework of this thesis is based on the Spillover theory and Person-Environment Fit (PEF).

Spillover theory was first proposed by Wilensky in 1960 and is based on the idea that negative or positive experience of work has a direct influence on the perception of life or vice versa (Khateeb, 2021). The theory is further divided into horizontal and vertical spillover. The horizontal states that there is an influence from one domain on the neighboring one, for instance, job satisfaction may have an impact on feelings and satisfaction within family and vice versa, while vertical considers domain in a hierarchical structure, for example, a job satisfaction as a subordinate spills over on life, the most superordinate domain (Sirgy et al., 2001). Brough et al. (2020) determines three types of antecedents of work–life balance, (a) work-related, (b) family-related, and (c) other non-work related. Hence, it is important to study not only work and family related factors independently, but to consider them as interconnected domains in order to better understand its effect on the WLB in the context of digital nomadism. Sirgy et al. (2001) covers two more concepts which relate to Spillover theory: segmentation and compensation. Segmentation refers to a behavior in which a person prevents the spill of negative emotions from one aspect to another, while the second concept claims that if a person is dissatisfied with one domain, s/he will try to compensate it with positive emotions in another one. Overall, it demonstrates multifaceted nature of human behavior in regards to two domains, work and personal life.

Person-Environment Fit theory expands the idea by elaborating into the linkage between individual and work environment. Voydanoff (2005) states that the stress arises from misfit or incongruence between person and environment rather than from either one separately. She explains that there are two types of fit: demands-abilities and needs-suppliers. Demands include both quantitative and qualitative position requirements, organizational culture, policies, whereas abilities imply energy, motivation, hard and soft skills to meet those demands. Needs entail values, motives, biological requirements, which to some extent meet via intrinsic and extrinsic resources from the supplies side. Van Vianen (2018) calls these two relationships, as individual and environmental attributes, while getting into details of the nature of different types of fit within work context. The author provides a detailed explanation on so-called supplementary fits, including person–organization fit, person–team fit, and person–supervisor fit, etc. de Jager et al. (2016) proposes person-job and person-contract fits, which is more relevant to the phenomena of digital nomad, since the workers perform jobs remotely in a constantly changing environment due to frequent relocation. Hence, these people are less attached to the environment, as well as, they are affected to a lesser extent by the organizational culture (Lidman, 2023). Overall, the theory provides in-depth insights on

the components of work-life balance which will assist in building the questionnaire for the future survey.

1.4 Delimitations

The study aims to get more insights into the relationship between digital nomadism and work-life balance, as well as understand what components of WLB play a greater role in this regard. To reach the goal within the time frame of the research a number of delimitations should be taken into account:

- The survey was conducted in English. Hence, digital nomads who don't speak this language will not be able to provide their answers.
- The survey was published in a number of Facebook groups dedicated to being a digital nomad in a particular city or a country. Therefore, workers beyond these communities will not be reached out.
- The survey was posted with an approval from active administrators who don't ask for a pay. The groups with either inactive moderators or the ones who request a certain pay to publish the questionnaire were excluded for research.
- The survey consists of 12 questions which cover a certain number of aspects related to two domains: work and life in order to limit the focus of the level of congruence between them. It is reasonable to make a survey of a short length to ensure more participants answering the questions. Currently, it takes about 5 minutes to fill in the questionnaire.

1.5 Structure of thesis

The thesis structure includes five chapters. The first chapter introduces a person to a topic of digital nomadism. It provides a brief background on the emergence of this phenomena, its relation to a work-life balance and its components, as well as, discusses the aim of the research, its questions and delimitations. The second chapter reviews up-to-date literature touching various aspects of the topic separately, including digital nomadism, work-life balance, their relation, spillover and person-environment fit theories. Research context, methodology, ways of collecting data and hypotheses are presented in the third chapter. The

current study receives data from a primary source of information in the form of a survey. The findings are outlined and analyzed in the fourth chapter. The last chapter summarizes the research by drawing a list of conclusions, discussing the limitations and making suggestions for the future studies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This part presents the previous research and key literature focused on the concepts of digital nomadism, its relation to well-being and its components. Google Scholar was used as the main platform to find, review and analyze academic papers. The findings on a broader topic “remote work” are included in the preliminary review part due to a limited number of relevant secondary resources.

2.1 What is digital nomadism?

The term “digital nomadism” was initially introduced by T. Makimoto and D. Manners in their 1997 publication “Digital Nomad.” This concept emerged from technological advancements that enable people to work remotely from anywhere in the world, thereby freeing individuals from geographical constraints (Tsugio Makimoto & Manners, 1997). Digital nomads typically generate income through digital platforms, allowing them to travel extensively as long as they have access to the internet and a digital device such as a smartphone, laptop, or tablet (Cook, 2023).

Müller (2016) emphasizes that digital nomads do not rely on traditional office environments; instead, they can freely choose where and when to work, provided they have their laptop and a reliable internet connection. This flexibility is a defining characteristic of digital nomadism, differing from traditional remote work. While remote workers usually operate from a fixed location, such as a home office or co-working space, digital nomads lead a highly mobile lifestyle, frequently traveling and typically residing in specific locations for short durations, on average 2-3 months per location (Cangià et al., 2022).

Moreover, remote workers tend to have more stability and routine in their work, whereas digital nomads prioritize flexibility, adventure, and cultural immersion (Edwards, 2021). Digital nomads encompass a broad range of professionals, including freelancers, business owners, self-employed individuals, entrepreneurs, and consultants. What unites them is their ability to choose their work locations and schedules, which allows them to explore the world while maintaining their livelihoods (Liegl, 2014; Müller, 2016).

Additionally, digital nomads may benefit economically from the concept of “geo arbitrage.” By earning in stronger currencies like the U.S. dollar and spending in countries with weaker

currencies, digital nomads can enhance their purchasing power parity (PPP) and stretch their financial resources while traveling (Jiwasiddi et al., 2024; Poulaki et al., 2023). Furthermore, factors like local gastronomy can influence their choice of destination, particularly if their work, such as culinary blogging, benefits from being in locations with exceptional culinary experiences (Önder et al., 2024).

Challenges faced by digital nomads are that they often do not speak the local language of where they relocate to. In addition, they have left behind their family members and communities at home. In order to deal with this, digital nomads often seek out other digital nomads who are residing in the same location. This can be through online platforms and groups on social media, where digital nomads can schedule meetups, discuss various factors that are relevant to the country they are currently residing in, as well as making new friends (Thompson, 2018). The urge to reach out to and connect with other digital nomads may stem from a feeling of not belonging in the country that the digital nomad is in, as well as the language barrier. Other means of networking with digital nomads are co-working spaces, which typically are cafes or hostels, that can host up to around 30 to 50 people at once (Thompson, 2018).

2.2 What is work-life balance?

Work-life balance is a concept that can be defined as the equilibrium that is obtained when a person effectively manages time and resources across professional responsibilities and personal life/leisure activities. The key to this balance is ensuring that professional responsibilities do not interfere negatively with leisure activities, and vice versa. This balance is crucial for minimizing potential conflicts between professional duties and personal life, such as spending time with family members, hobbies, and other leisure activities. A good work-life balance is pivotal in enhancing both individual sense of well-being and professional fulfillment, thereby significantly improving the overall quality of life (Dex & Bond, 2005).

The quest for a good work-life balance is influenced by numerous factors, such as organizational policies, societal norms, individual career goals, and personal values. Additionally, technological advancements and the emergence of flexible and remote work environments like digital nomadism, presents further challenges to work-life balance by blurring the lines between work and personal life (Voydanoff, 2005).

Digital nomadism, defined by the use of digital platforms to work remotely while simultaneously traveling, presents some unique challenges and opportunities in the pursuit of work-life balance. From one perspective, it offers geographical freedom and independence, enabling individuals to tailor their work schedules around their preferences and lifestyle choices. From another perspective, it may present challenges in disconnecting from work, effective time management, and maintaining personal relationships due to the frequent mobility and the potential for professional responsibilities infiltrating all aspects of life (Dex & Bond, 2005).

Previous research on work-life balance, including papers on the impact of digital nomadism, highlights the necessity for strategies when navigating the complexities of modern work environments. Strategies such as setting clear boundaries between professional responsibilities and personal time, and ways of utilizing technology to promote a balance, rather than disrupt it (de Jager et al., 2016).

In order to understand work-life balance, it can be split into two domains, the life domain and the work domain. The life domain includes family time, hobbies, mental health and other leisure activities. The work domain is the professional responsibilities, and important factors here are effective time management, work environment, and managing deadlines. How a person experiences work-life balance depends on the individual differences and factors that are relevant to the individual. In terms of digital nomads, these factors can include access to facilities in the countries they visit, such as gyms, spas, restaurant options, and quality co-working environments. Other factors that help determine the work-life balance of digital nomads are demographics such as their relationship status, whether they are single, married or engaged. Additionally, whether a digital nomad has children or not may play a significant role in terms of challenges presented when attempting to balance the work and life domain (Shirmohammadi et al., 2022).

2.3 Digital nomadism and work-life balance

The lifestyle and characteristics of a digital nomads present a unique framework for examining work-life balance due to the intrinsic blend of flexibility, mobility, and the interference of work in personal life/leisure activities. Due to the nature of digital nomads frequently traveling across new countries and becoming exposed to different cultures, they encounter situations and challenges that may affect their relationship with work and the ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance (Orel, 2019).

The primary challenge that digital nomads face in relation to work-life balance is the constant merging between professional responsibilities and leisure. Another challenge is their freedom to set their own work schedules coupled with location independence can lead to longer working hours and a difficult time distinguishing between what is “work time” and what is “personal time”. This dilemma is often amplified by differing time zones, where digital nomads need to adjust their schedules to maintain effective communication with clients, colleagues and family members across the globe. This poses a potential risk of irregular work patterns, which may impact their leisure activities and time for relaxation (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

In addition, the transient nature of a digital nomad lifestyle of constant travel can pose additional challenges in establishing a consistent schedule and a sense of community, both of which are crucial for mental health and overall well-being. On one hand, frequent travel and movement may offer exciting new experiences and environments. On the other hand, it can also lead to feelings of isolation or detachment, as the relationships are often short-term and lacking depth. This can lead to a fragmented social life, which is an important factor of personal well-being and overall life satisfaction (Haar et al., 2014).

However, the digital nomad lifestyle also offers distinctive opportunities to increase work-life balance through a concept referred to as “lifestyle design”. Digital nomads typically make a conscious decision to spend time in locations that provide them with inspiration and enjoyment, promoting a healthier and more relaxed lifestyle. For instance, digital nomads choosing to live in countries with access to beautiful nature and accommodations such as spas, quality co-working spaces, and leisure activities can significantly enhance the overall

feeling of well-being. Additionally, the cultural experiences that digital nomads obtain when living in a variety of communities internationally, can contribute positively to their individual personal growth and fulfillment. These positive aspects experienced by digital nomads help offset some of the challenges associated with being a digital nomad (Mancinelli, 2020).

Strategies are necessary for digital nomads when attempting to achieve a healthy work-life balance. These strategies include effective time management, self-discipline, having a structured daily routine, utilizing technology to stay connected with family members, and actively engaging in local communities in order to feel a sense of belonging. Digital nomads can also benefit by participating in activities organized by other digital nomads in the same countries, such as working together in co-working facilities. The co-working facilities offer digital nomads not only a work environment, but also opportunities for social interactions and networking opportunities with other digital nomads who share similar interests (Lee et al., 2019).

To conclude, while the digital nomad lifestyle presents itself as an appealing alternative to traditional work settings, it is important to effectively manage the time spent between work and leisure activities in order to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Successfully balancing these domains and achieving a highly personalized and enriched lifestyle depends on individual strategies and the willingness to adapt to the challenges faced by a digital nomad lifestyle.

2.4 Spillover Theory

Originally, spillover arose from Siber's idea of personal enrichment (Viya Kumari, 2018). He noted that skills and behavior in one sphere can be applied in another one. Overall, spillover theory provides a viewpoint on the relationship between work and family life of a person. Positive work experience will be associated with positive experience in life, whereas negative work experiences will lead to negative life experiences and vice versa (Mathew & Natarajan, 2014). As for a simple example, an ordinary working male can be taken into account. He got stressed from his shift, since the head of the department was not satisfied with his performance, the colleagues annoyed him by gossiping and talking all the time nearby and the coffee machine stopped working suddenly. He came while feeling down. He didn't express joy from the achievements of his children at school and talk to his wife, as he usually did. The

negative emotions from one domain spilled over to another one. As Perry-Jenkins et al. (2000) marks there is no boundary between home and work. Radó et al. (2016) denotes that strong connections between family and work are observed and similarities are generated. However, Zedeck & Mosier (1990) points out that a negative experience at work might be a foundation for a positive family experience, since the members will help the worker to manage his stress.

Two types of spillover exist in the present literature. Sirgy et al. (2001) differentiates horizontal and vertical spillovers. In the horizontal one domain influences another, for example, job satisfaction results in life satisfaction and vice versa. The vertical is different and based on the concept of hierarchy. Life is viewed as a super ordinate life domain at the top of the hierarchy, while family, leisure and so on are considered as subordinate. The negative / positive emotions in family or leisure will spill over life and vice versa (Sirgy et al., 2001). A spillover view is extended by its instrumental type which supports Siber's idea stated previously. It states that behaviors, skills and values present in one domain are acquired or nurtured to another one (Radó et al., 2016).

Adam (2021) presents five categories that encompass factors which influence the spillover from home to work. They include the source of material wealth, the process of training, the communication and interpersonal relationships, the level of control of workers over their daily tasks and personal capabilities to perform. Overall, most of the studies in the area of work-family concept has been done with the help of spillover theory, while the term "spillover" has also been referred to as generalization, isomorphism, continuation, etc. (Mathew & Natarajan, 2014). The theory got critics in its address. For example, Lambert (1990) states that it doesn't explain or solve problems of people related to work-life imbalance. Brown et al. (2009) agrees on that while adding that though both domains are considered as interrelated, they are limited to their emotional linkage without taking into account spatial, temporal and social aspects.

2.5 Person-Environment Fit Theory

In a broad sense, Person-Environment fit can be determined, as blending the unique skill and knowledge set of an employee with characteristics of an organization. The set of a worker's traits include ideas, values, interests, while organizations are different in their culture, climate, etc (Jayamaha, 2020). It is a well developed framework applicable to a number of organizational aspects, including HR management practice configurations, hiring procedures, approaches to a job, etc. (Piszczek & Berg, 2020) The theory has two main types: complementary fit and supplementary fit (Le Quy & Zhu, 2024). The former regards the situation in which the weakness or a need of an environment is complemented by an individual's abilities or vice versa. The foundation for this type of fit lies in the psychological need fulfillment (Boon & Biron, 2006). The latter describes a case in which a person supplements or enhances a list of characteristics that individuals in an organization possess (Cable & Edwards, 2004). It occurs when an individual shares similarities in terms of hard and soft skills with his / her colleagues which affects the value congruence since similar people have a good chemistry and feel positively about each other. The value congruence is an extent of match between values held both by an organization and a person, while values are defined as subjective opinions about a significance of certain end-states and desirable behaviors (de Jager et al., 2016) .

According to Le Quy & Zhu (2024), there are two types of complementary fit: needs-supplies or values-supplies and demands-capabilities. The first one is about a match between personal interests, goals, values with rewards, both external / environmental and internal / individual which include salaries, bonuses, paid vacations, appraisals, promotion, sense of importance and so on (Liu et al., 2019). The 2nd one refers to compatibility of organizational demands and an individual's abilities. The requirements of an entity includes work time, achieving KPIs, role expectations, while it fits a person's skill set to perform the tasks. According to Edwards & Rothbard (1999) PEF theory postulates that if an organization provides employees with adequate supplies in the form of pay, realistic goals, comfortable work climate and organizational culture to match preferences of an individual, then s/he will get closer to reaching a work-life balance.

When it comes to values-supplies typology it is worth considering segmentation preferences which refers to a person's inclination towards keeping work and family domains separate (Piszczek & Berg, 2020). The authors state that individuals who experience low segmentation preferences tend to integrate two domains while rapidly moving between them, while those with high segmentation preferences favor minimizing transitions between family and work by imposing physical and temporal boundaries.

Edwards and Billsberry (2010) proposed a multidimensional model that describes a different type of fit of a person with a number of aspects, including job, organization, vocation and group which independently contribute to PEF theory. They emerged due to the fact that originally the theory is focused on considering the link between a person, as an employee and his / her organization. Besides the discussed Person-Organization fit the measures include Person-Vocation (P-V) fit, Person-Job (P-J) fit and Person-Group (P-G) fit. The fits are mainly focused on the work environment and experience of a person while little attention was paid to the fit between an individual and home or family.

P-V fit measures the match between vocational interests of an individual and the working conditions in which he performs his role. This type mainly focuses on the extent to which a person is satisfied with the nature of profession (de Jager et al., 2016). According to Gorgievski et al. (2011) the nation's economic, cultural context strongly affects P-V fit in regards to self-employment.

P-J fit refers to the level of satisfaction resulting from the match between a set of skills, characteristics and values of a particular job with an individual's skills, traits and vision (de Jager et al., 2016). If a person believes that the job tasks require far less level of abilities s/he possesses, then the person-job fit is considered as poor or under efficient which leads to boredom and dissatisfaction. According to López (2024) 35% of the total number of digital nomads as freelancers. For this type of employees, a person-contract fit might be more applicable (de Jager et al., 2016). It refers to a match between requirements of a contract and capabilities of a worker. In general, nomads possess a greater degree of autonomy in decision making and flexibility which allow them to experience a higher fit and well-being.

Iverson and Deery (2007) found out that there is a significant relationship between organizational loyalty, workplace relationship and employer turnover which in turn

contributed to a P-G fit theory. Madhubhai (2020) states that emotional support and opportunities of career advancement are the main factors in defining job satisfaction. Emotional support is built up from relationships with co-workers in which the key role is played by the connection between an employee and a supervisor. According to Padmasiri et al. (2019), a person is attracted to those s/he shares similarities with in terms of personality, values, goals, etc. Madhubhai (2020) points out that the incivility between workers leads to stress, emotional exhaustion and results in a lower job performance. In the study, the author explores a more specific link between an employee and a supervisor. Eisenberger et al. (2001) postulates that the support from a supervisor is connected to lower turnover, job satisfaction and higher productivity. Besides support, sense of sincerity, confidence and emotional intelligence are among significant factors which impact the person-supervisor fit (Madhubhai, 2020).

Armitage and Hussein (2021) shared limitations of Person-Environment fit theory. As one of them, the theory failed to specify the content of a person and the environment explicitly. De Cooman et al. (2019) states that P-E fit might be limited when it comes to operationalizing concepts and interpreting results with perceived fit variables. Van Vianen (2018) points out the difficulty of applying the theory in the environment which is characterized by power-distancing culture. The countries which possess such an environment include Poland, Belgium, Portugal, Greece, etc. (Bruyneel et al., 2019) Andela and Van der Doef (2018) explain that a number of aspects of Person-Environment fit cannot be reduced to a single type of fit or a dimension, while several studies prove that doing so provides an incomplete picture of this phenomena. It leads to problems including an inability to take into account several content dimensions and to distinguish between certain fits, ex. Person-Job and Person-Organization fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Scherer et al. (2016) stresses the fact that so far the existing literature doesn't explore in full the relationship of fit with psychological variables, including strain and burnout. Further studies are definitely needed to better understand fit-outcome linkage.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The following chapter provides information of the research context of the studies of the link between digital nomadism and well-being. The authors describe the way they gathered primary data, encoded it and performed quantitative analysis. Lastly, the reliability of the study was checked.

3.1 Research context

The research in this thesis was conducted with a focus on digital nomads and how they experience their work-life balance, our primary subjects were found in Facebook groups/communities focusing on digital nomads in various cities across the world. Our goal with this thesis was to gain a better understanding of how digital nomads experience various factors that influence their work-life balance, while working remotely. In order to reach this goal, the questionnaire survey was distributed among Facebook groups consisting of digital nomads from all over the world. The Facebook groups that we targeted were for digital nomads living in large cities and islands such as Bali, Barcelona, Bogota, Madeira, Valencia, Cape Town, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Algarve, and Athens. The number of members in each group consists of numbers from 5000 members up to 160 000 members. In general, publications serve two purposes: to share or request recommendations about a particular place / aspect of nomad life and to promote a particular item, rent opportunity, services, etc. The requirements and rules differ from community to community, but mainly, before a user can join the group they ask him / her to answer several questions to introduce a person and to agree to follow the rules. In all of the communities publications are reviewed by moderators in compliance with them.

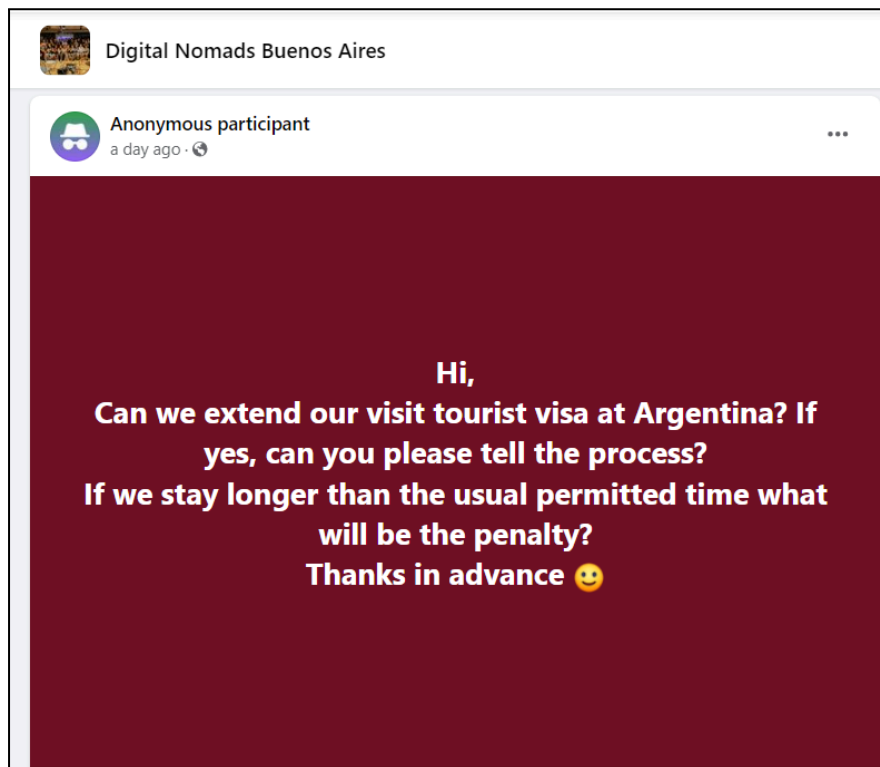


Figure 1. An anonymous participant asking for advice in the Facebook group dedicated to Digital Nomads from Buenos Aires

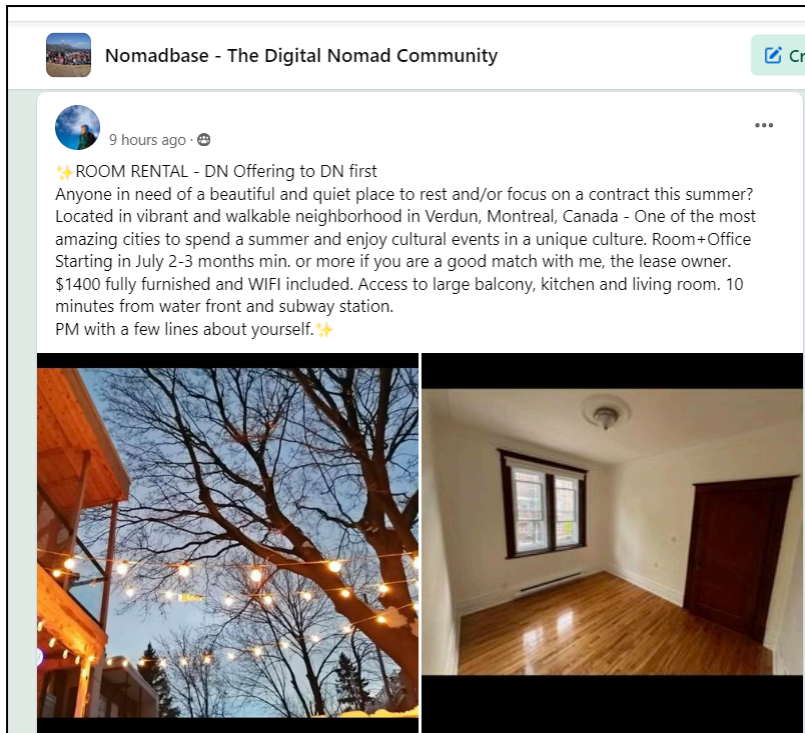


Figure 2. A Facebook user promotes the room rental for the followers of “Nomadbase - The Digital Nomad Community” Facebook group

A part of communities donæt allowed to mention any link, ad or survey in the publication. We were able to successfully post our questionnaire/survey in 15 Facebook groups, although we attempted to post it in a total of 29 Facebook groups. We believe this limitation was due to the questionnaire/survey not being directly relevant to the group contents, but rather as something that has a sole purpose of research. The majority of those 16 Facebook groups that our questionnaire/survey was successfully published in, we did not have to negotiate or communicate with the moderators of the groups in order to have our post verified/accepted. However, we did have to communicate with a few moderators of some of the Facebook groups in order to ask for permission to publish our questionnaire/survey. Below, there is a table with the groups which published the survey.

Community name	Number of members
Digital Nomads - Rio de Janeiro	6 000
Bali Expat Community	30 800
Cape Town Digital Nomads	14 700

Nomadbase - The Digital Nomad Community	69 400
Digital Nomads Around The World.	38 300
Digital Nomad Lifestyle - We Are Freedom Seekers	6 100
Digital Nomads Colombia	6 100
Algarve Digital Nomads	8 600
Ericeira Freelancers & Digital Nomads	12 800
Barcelona Digital Nomads	27 700
Digital Nomads in Madeira	7 000
Digital Nomads Worldwide	18 800
Digital nomads in Greece	52 900
Digital Nomads / Nómadas Digitales: Jobs Freelance Lifestyle Travel	40 100
Digital Nomads Bali	112 000

Table 1. Name of the Facebook groups which published the survey and their number of members

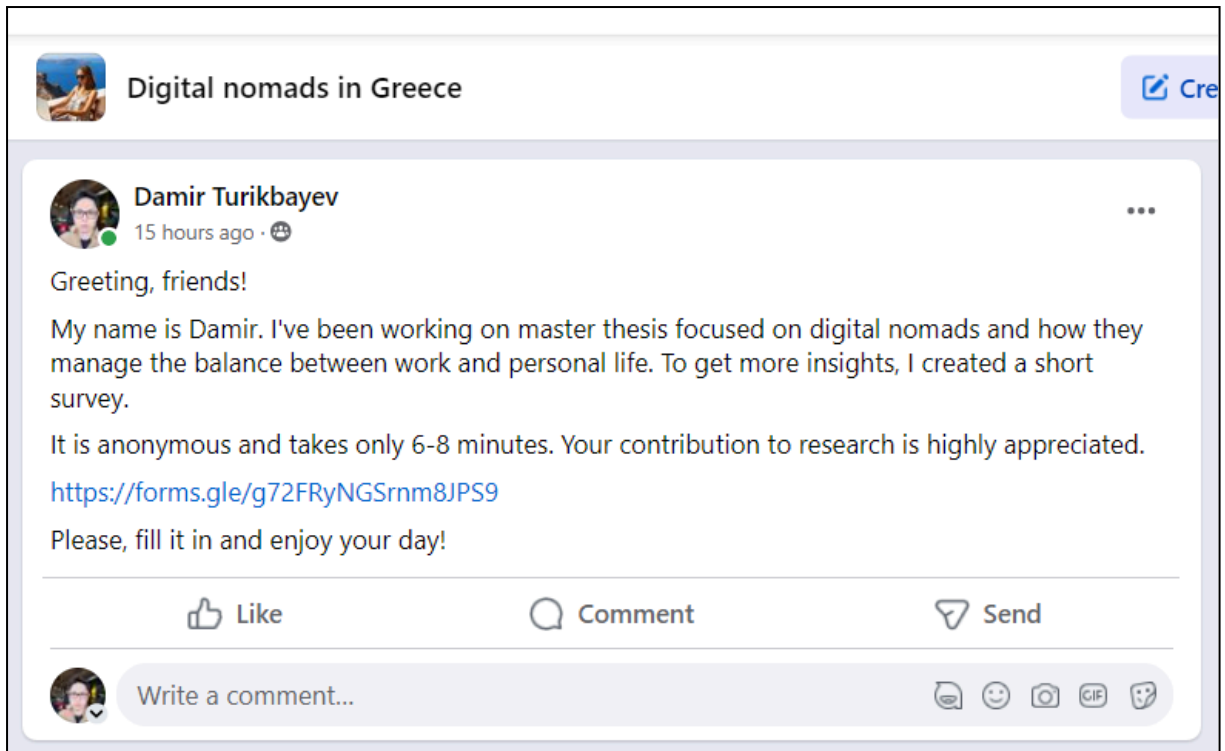


Figure 3. The survey publication in the “Digital nomads in Greece” Facebook group

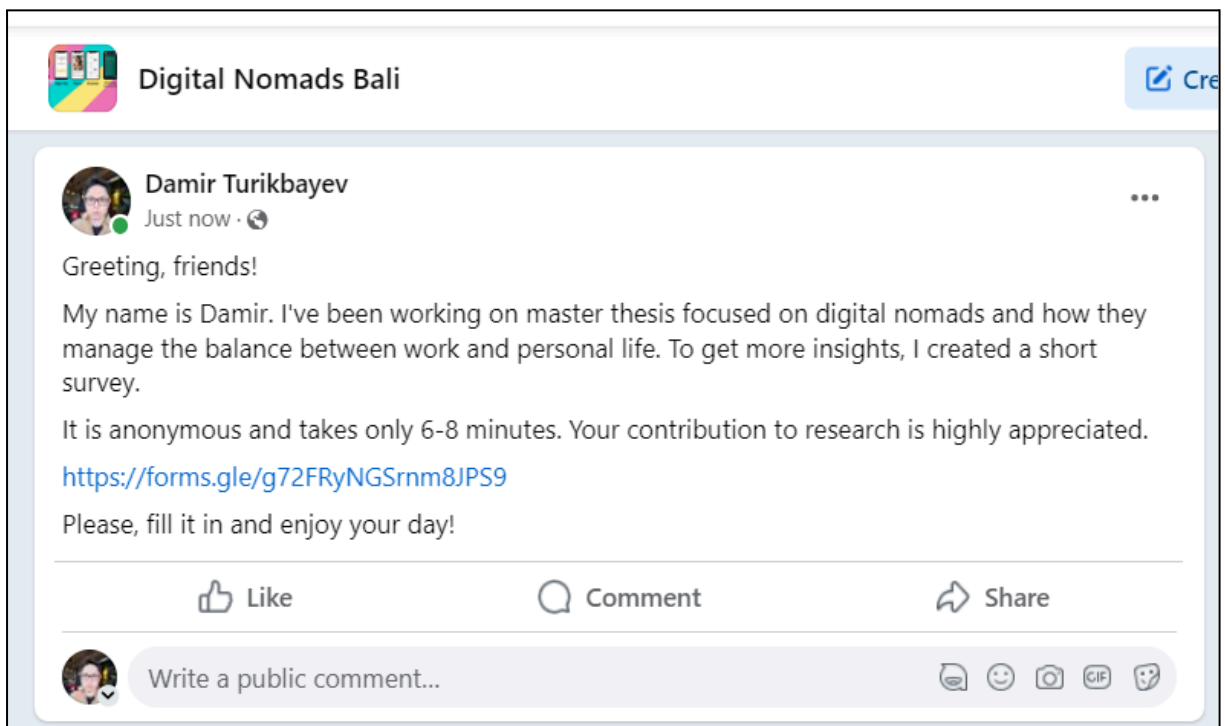


Figure 4. The survey publication in the “Digital Nomads Bali” Facebook group

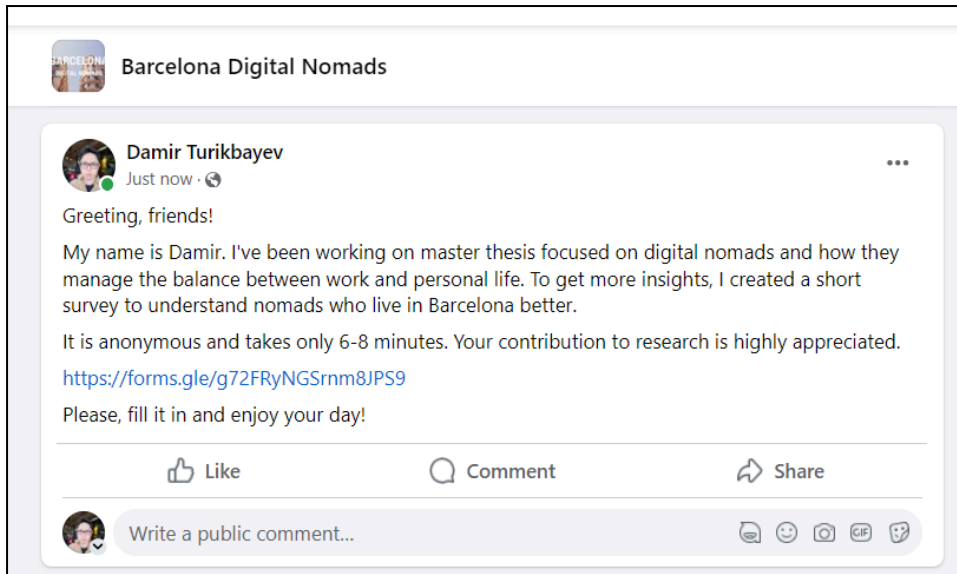


Figure 5. The survey publication in the “Barcelona Digital Nomads” Facebook group

Figures 3, 4 and 5 demonstrate an example of survey publications in the Facebook groups. The link leads to the survey created in the Google Forms. See Figure 6.

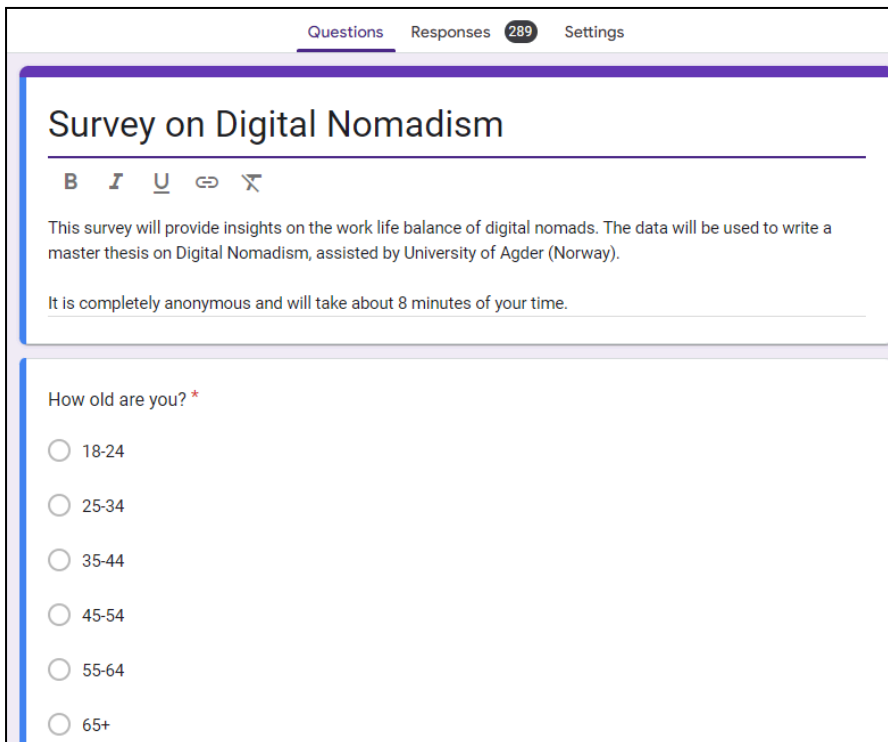


Figure 6. The survey was created in a Google Form

3.2. Theoretical framework and hypothesis

The following chapter describes the hypothesis authors will check based on the theoretical framework. Figure 7 summarizes the hypothesis tested based on the data collected from the participants.

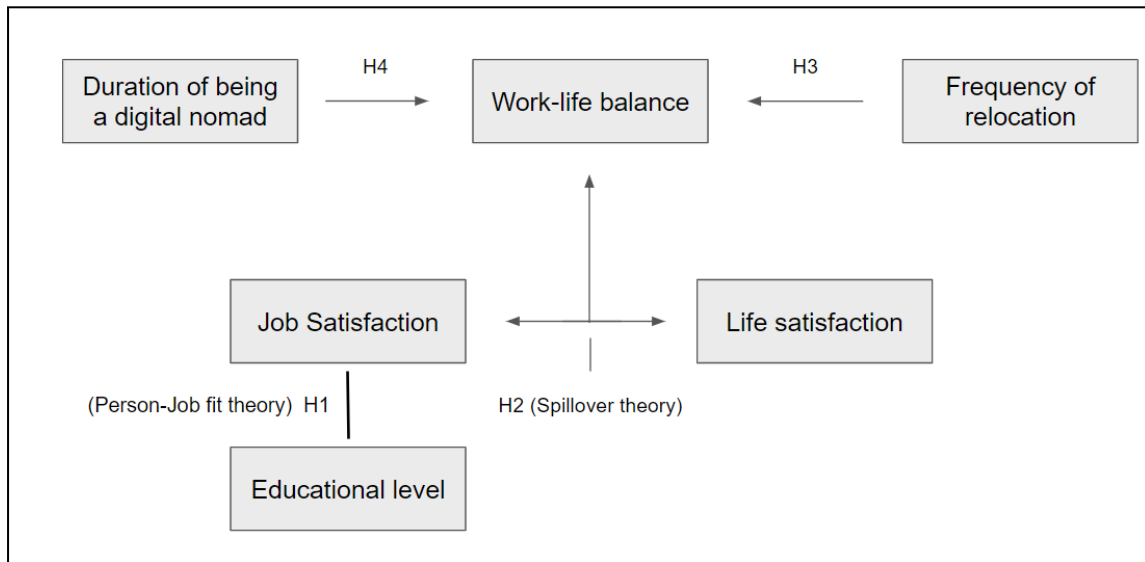


Figure 7. The research model with hypothesis

H1. *The level of education has a negative correlation with job satisfaction.*

The first hypothesis is related to the Person-Job fit theory explained in Section 2.5. According to de Jager et al. (2016), if there is a discrepancy between the set of skills and knowledge an employee possess and the requirements of a job in this regard then a number of negative effects will appear, as a consequence, including decreased job satisfaction. For example, if a person is overskilled, then s/he will experience boredom. In the contrary case, the feelings are likely to include stress and lack of motivation. The survey asks participants about the level of education and provides 4 options to choose from: high school, bachelor degree, masters degree and PhD. According to Waaijer et al. (2017) PhD holders experience less job satisfaction when the requirements are below their level of education which is the case of IT and marketing spheres. This is supported by studies run by Sala-Bubaré et al. (2024) which states that in general, PhDs bring more value than required. The correlation between the level

of education and job satisfaction will be analyzed. Authors assume that the nature of this correlation is negative.

H2. *There is a positive correlation between Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction.*

The second hypothesis refers to the Spillover theory described in Section 2.4. Mathew & Natarajan (2014) stated that negative experiences received in the life domain will lead to negative experiences in the work domain and vice versa. The negative experience directly influences the level of their satisfaction. “*Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state, resulting from the appraisal of one’s job experiences*” (Montuori et al., 2022) In the case of present thesis its level was derived from the answers from strongly agree to strongly disagree according to Likert Scale (Jamieson, 2024) on the 4 statements, encoded as Job1, Job2, Job3, Job4 from Appendix I. The statements are based on the questionnaire from the research conducted by Jaiswal et al. (2015). Life satisfaction is “*a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life*” (Karataş et al., 2021). In the thesis it is measured by the combination of Life1, Life2, Life3, Life4 statements from Appendix I which are derived from the Life Satisfaction Scale proposed by Diener et. al in 1985. Based on the Spillover theory the authors make a hypothesis that there is a positive correlation between Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction.

H3. *There is a negative correlation between frequency of relocation and work-life balance.*

H4. *There is a positive correlation between the time spent as a digital nomad and work-life balance.*

Digital nomadism is a lifestyle which involves constant relocation of various frequencies while doing the job. As explained in Section 2.3, this way of living possess a list of drawbacks, for example, short terms relationships which lack depth and lead to a fragmented social life (Haar et al., 2014), as well as, it may result in irregular work patterns which affect leisure activities (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). Harvey et al. (2010) also points out the difficulties of frequent relocation which negatively affect healthy lifestyle. Therefore, authors assume that the more often a person switches locations the less perceived work-life balance s/he will get.

Numerous studies demonstrate both positive and negative impact of flexible working arrangements or remote work on employees' work-life balance. For example, Stephen et al. (2024) states that it increases autonomy and improves job satisfaction. Stankevičiūtė and Kunsakaja (2022) agree and share that despite the fact that an employee enjoys freedom and autonomy, it also interferes with personal life thus decreasing life satisfaction. The same position is tracked in the study by Mikołajczyk et al (2023) who noted that increased autonomy and flexibility comes at expense of personal life leading to blurred lines between two domains. The controversial effect of remote format of employment raises interest to investigate the matter which authors do by making a hypothesis that there is a positive correlation between time spent as a digital nomad and work-life balance. Authors assume that the longer a person follows such a lifestyle the easier it gets to him / her to separate work and personal life, be more disciplined and get the best out of the chosen way of living.

3.3. Data collection

In order to test hypotheses and reach the goals of the research the authors gathered quantitative data with the help of the questionnaire. The answers to the survey have to encompass the needs of all hypotheses and research objectives, while the questions should be stated clearly with minimal to no confusion. The survey was designed in English with the help of Google Forms. To meet the ethical considerations (Roberts & Allen, 2015) we used the anonymous type of survey, hence, the respondents don't need to share their names or emails. It is stated in the Facebook publications related to the survey which to some extent boosted the reply rate and in general, it makes participants feel more comfortable and safe. The information about Facebook groups and the screenshots of publications are provided in section 3.1. The survey consists of 24 questions related to the general background, job satisfaction, life satisfaction and work-life balance. They are clearly demonstrated in Appendix I. Questions unrelated to general background are presented in the form of positively worded statements which are measured on a 5 point Likert Scale, where 1 is "strongly disagree", and 5 is "strongly agree". The list of questions and the answer choices are depicted in Appendix II. In Appendix I and II, the general answers are encoded as well and the encoded variables are assigned to all of the statements.

In total we got about 289 respondents on our questionnaire/survey, from the Facebook groups and communities. Considering the amount of potential respondents we reached out to, we

have to account for the fact that not all members in the Facebook groups and communities are 1) actively engaging in the groups/communities and 2) do not wish to participate in a questionnaire/survey. In order to combat these challenges, we proposed a “participation reward” in some of the groups, offering the respondents the ability to win amongst 20 prizes consisting of 5 USD. In order for the members to participate, they would have to complete the survey, and afterwards leave a comment on the post confirming that they have completed it. According to a research paper that targeted young cigarette smokers in the United States, they published 20 ads and saw a 0.7% response rate, whereas we saw an approximate 1% response rate on our questionnaire/survey (Ramo & Prochaska, 2012). According to another survey, the average response rate was almost 45%, although this study also experimented with sending the surveys directly to potential respondents (Wu et al., 2022). However, accounting for inactive members as well as those who do not bother to answer a survey, we knew that if we targeted a large number of groups we would get sufficient responses that we deemed to be enough for our thesis.

3.4 Data analysis

This section of the thesis presents the methods that we used in order to analyze the quantitative data we collected from our online survey/questionnaire. We used the statistical software “IBM SPSS STATISTICS”, which was provided to us free of charge from the university. We encoded all the responses we gathered from our online survey/questionnaire, that includes the demographic and general questions, as well as the questions related to the work-life balance. The first encodings included the demographic and general questions, where the general questions were questions we used in order to determine if the respondent is in fact a digital nomad, for how long they have been, as well as questions related to country of origin and current location. These questions were encoded from a scale of 1-5, and labels were added to the responses, as the response options to these questions were in the form of multiple choice questions. Then, we split the work-life balance into two domains focusing on the life domain and the work domain. On these questions, the respondents of the online survey/questionnaire had the choice between five responses: “Strongly disagree”, “Disagree”, “Neutral”, “Agree”, and “Strongly agree”. These responses were encoded using a Likert scale with the values ranging from 1-5, where 1 = “Strongly disagree” and 5 = “Strongly agree”.

By examining various demographic and occupational variables from our quantitative data, we identified key factors that help influence and explain certain aspects of the work and life domains of digital nomads. This encoding made it possible for us to test our data in terms of figuring out how digital nomads from all over the world experience work-life balance, and discover other variables that tie into the overall experienced work-life balance by digital nomads. We applied Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine relationships between different variables from our quantitative data. Pearson's coefficient assisted us in determining the strength and direction of the linear relationships between our variables, for example the correlation between work satisfaction and life satisfaction among digital nomads.

Furthermore, we tested the reliability and validity of our online survey/questionnaire structure by deploying the Chronbach's alpha test. The Chronbach's alpha test helped us verify the internal consistency and reliability of our scale items. The generally acceptable threshold for Chronbach's alpha is 0.70, indicating that our questions reliably measured the constructs that make up work-life balance. These analyses provided us with a comprehensive understanding of the perceived work-life balance among digital nomads and laid the groundwork for further research on the topic.

4. FINDINGS

This chapter is focused on presenting the findings from quantitative data analysis of the questionnaire. The authors present the demographic background of the 289 participants of the survey, including answers to questions regarding their nomad lifestyle. The validity and reliability of data and thesis, as a whole, is checked with the help of confirmatory factor analysis or CFA. The chi-square test and the least squares method are applied to check the hypothesis.

4.1 The demographic analysis of respondents

The questionnaire was anonymous and contained 12 basic questions on the background of participants. The authors present the answers in the form of pie charts with a detailed description on each question.

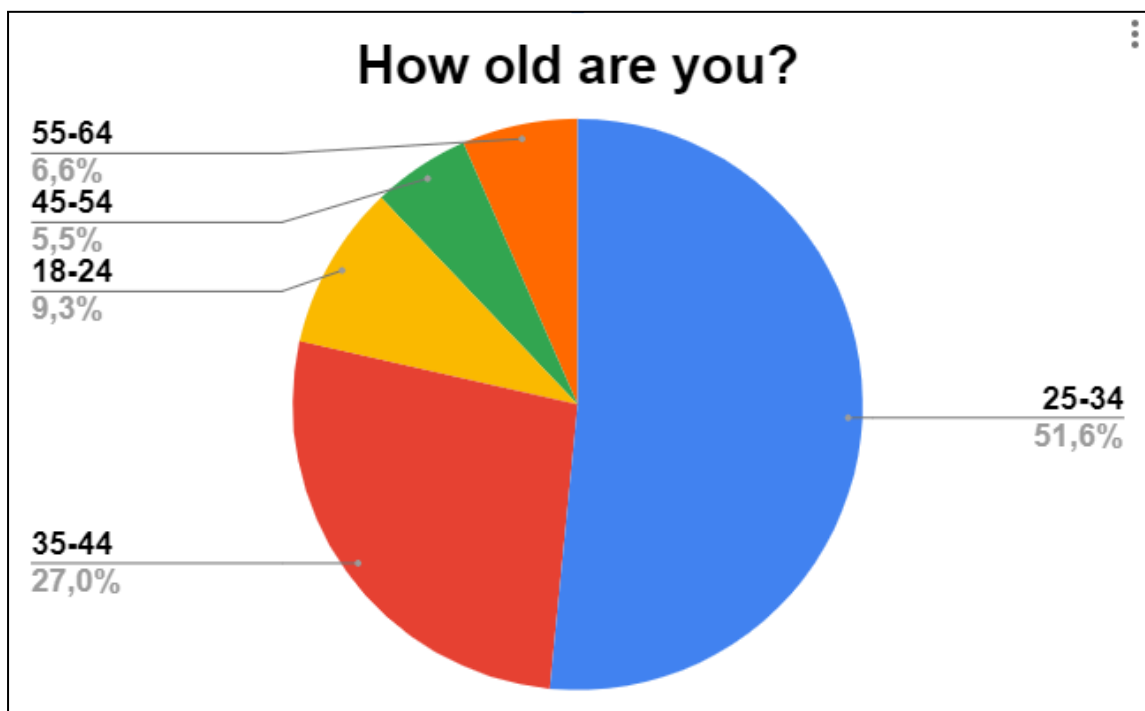


Figure 8. Respondents' age

The survey starts with a question “How old are you?”. As shown on Figure 8, the majority of participants, 51.6% are adults from 25 to 34 years range. 27% of the people are represented by

the age of 35 to 44. In general, the 25-44 years account for the biggest share of respondents, 78.6%. In general, people of that age have or are on the way to establish a career or get a stable job which allows them to travel. Also, these people fall into Gen Z and Millenials category who value new experiences more than salary, as stated in the introduction. The findings are supported by the statistics provided by López (2024), in which the majority, 52.6%, of respondents were aged between 30 and 39.

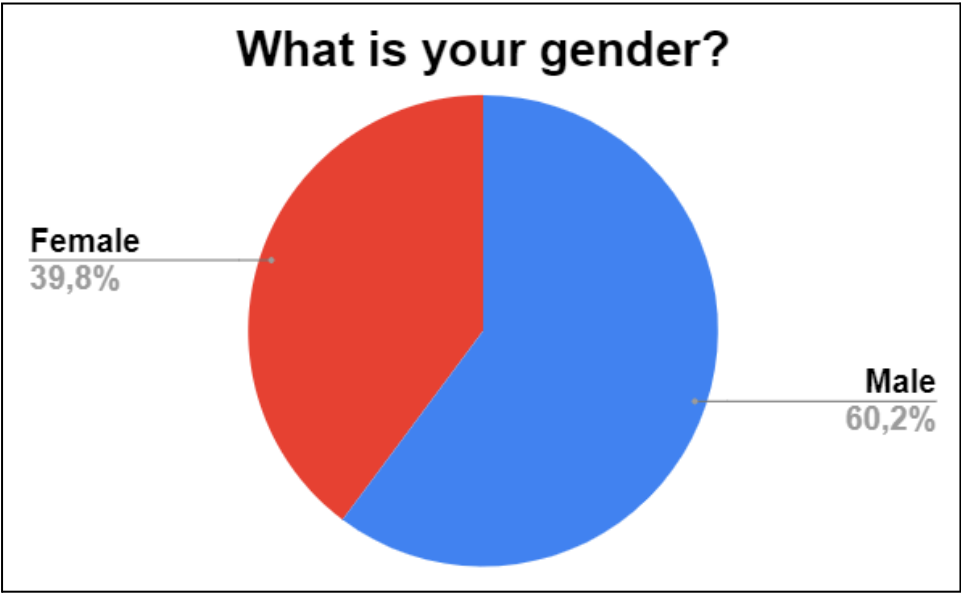


Figure 9. Respondents' gender

Majority of the respondents are males, 60.2%, while 39.8% are represented by females. López (2024) shares similar statistics. In her report male digital nomads accounted for 61%.

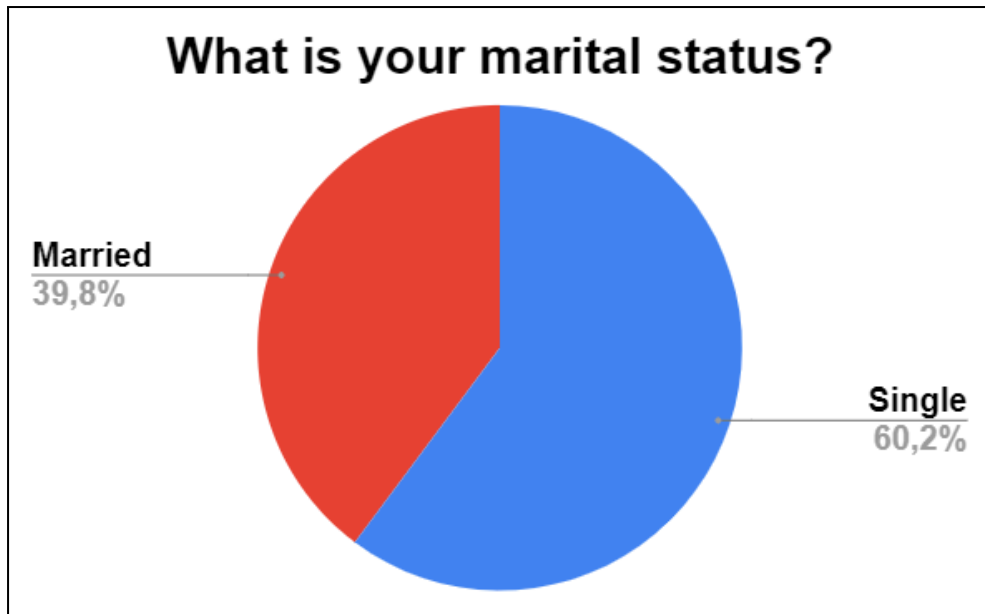


Figure 10. Respondents' marital status

Most of the survey participants are single, 60.2%, while 39.8% specified that they are married. Thompson (2019) reveals that in the questionnaire of his study most of the digital nomads are singles, since in a constantly changing environment it might be challenging to settle down and form a long-term romantic relationship.

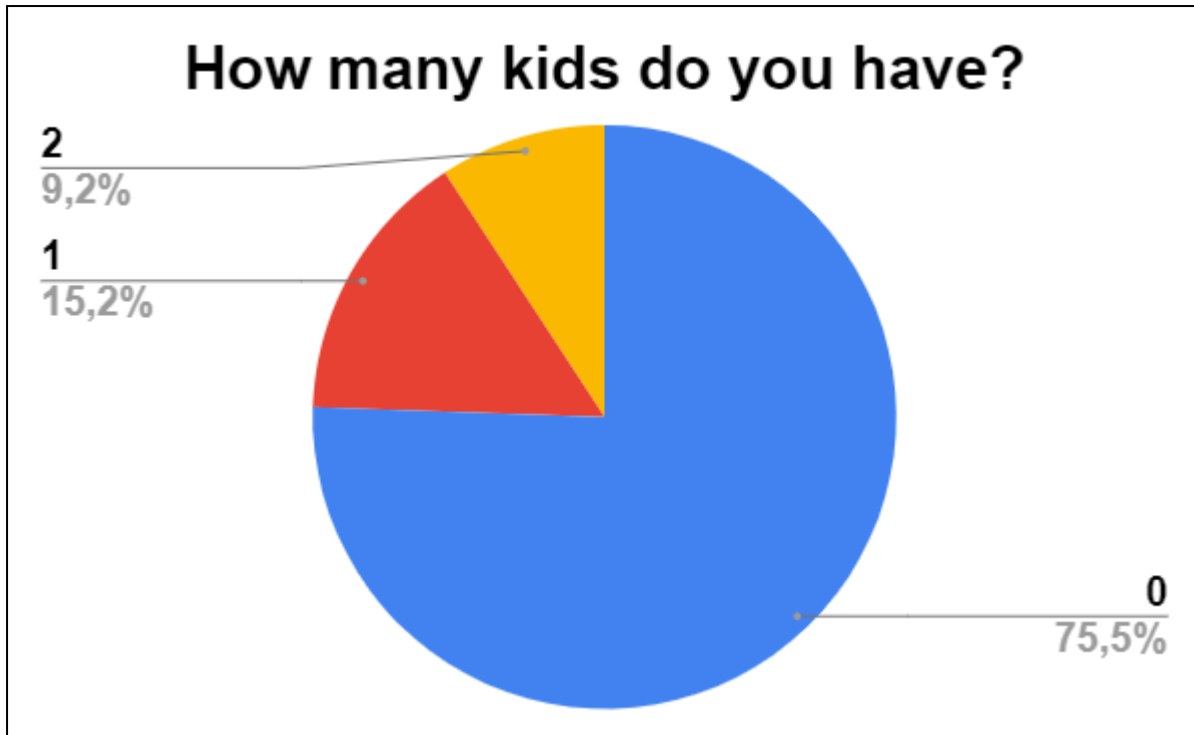


Figure 11. Respondents' number of kids

Figure 11 demonstrates that more than 75% of the digital nomads participated in the survey don't have any kids. The results are similar to the study run by Buchnik and Frenkel (2023) in which about 80% of respondents didn't have any offspring. Partially, it might be explained by the portion of single people at 60%, as well as, by the lifestyle of constant relocation and the concept of self-focused journey full of experience.

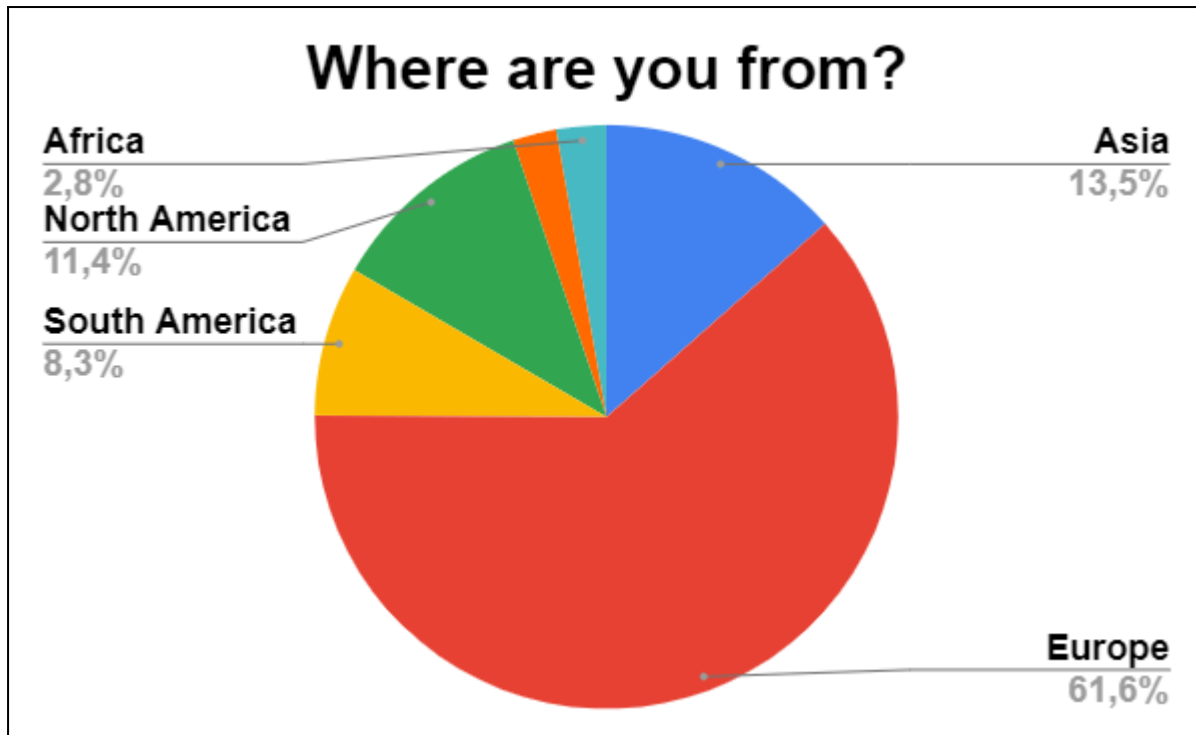


Figure 12. Continents which the respondents originally came from

Majority of respondents, 61.6%, originate from Europe. This contradicts the findings of López (2024). In her study 49% of the participants represent the US, while Figure 5 depicts that only 11.4% of people came from North America. The least portion of nomads were born in Africa, 2.8%, and South America, 8.3%. It can be explained by being quite far from Europe and Asia, two most popular regions for digital nomads and the average salaries in these regions. For example, the highest average salary in continental South America is about 1.000 USD, according to Statista Research Department (2023).

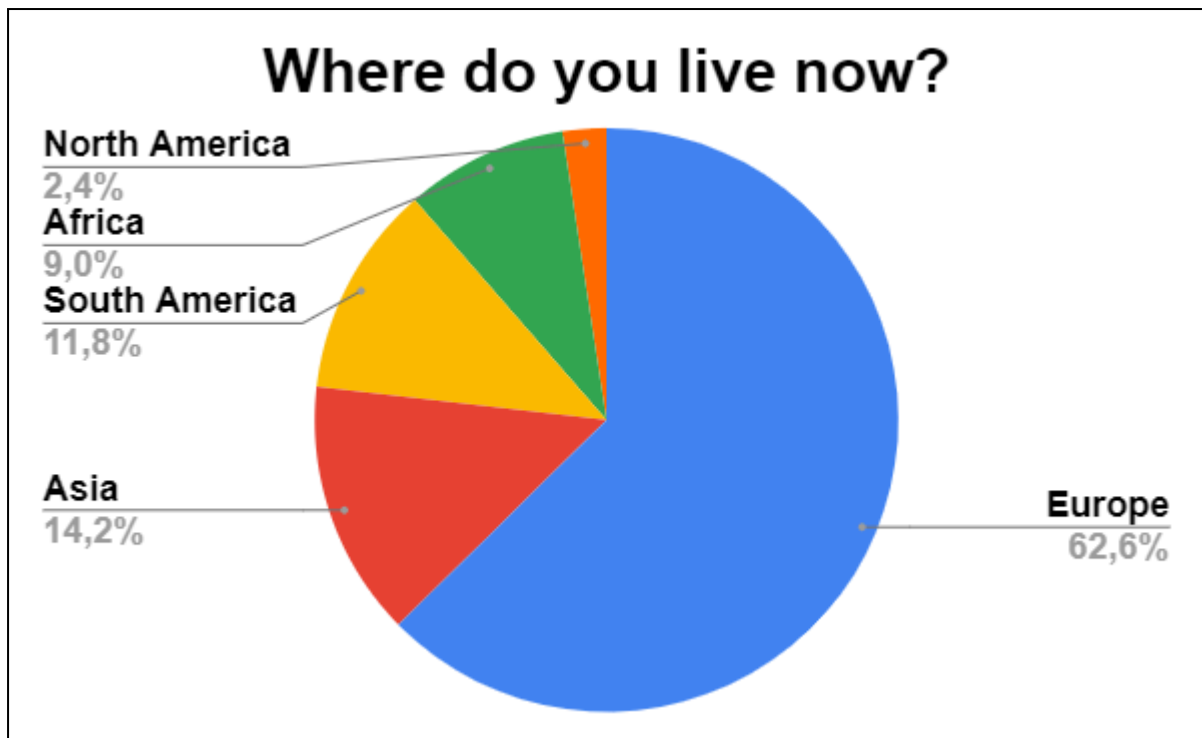


Figure 13. Continents of residence of survey participants

It turns out that North America is the least popular continent for digital nomads, accounting for 2.4%. Authors believe that it might be connected to high living costs in the US and Canada, along with a high crime rate in Mexico. According to the Statista Research Department (2024), Mexico is one of the least peaceful countries in Latina America. Europe and Asia stand out as the most nomad-friendly places with 62.6% and 14.2% of the total number of participants living there. One of the reasons behind Europe getting the biggest portion of the pie, lay in the fact that the survey was published in Facebook groups dedicated to living in European cities. However, statistics presented by van Rijswijk (2023) support this result, by stating that Spain, France, Portugal, Italy and the UK are among top 10 countries attracting digital nomads the most. Thailand, Indonesia and India are also present in the list which provides a basis for explanation of Asia being the 2nd in the list of continents with the most respondents living in there.

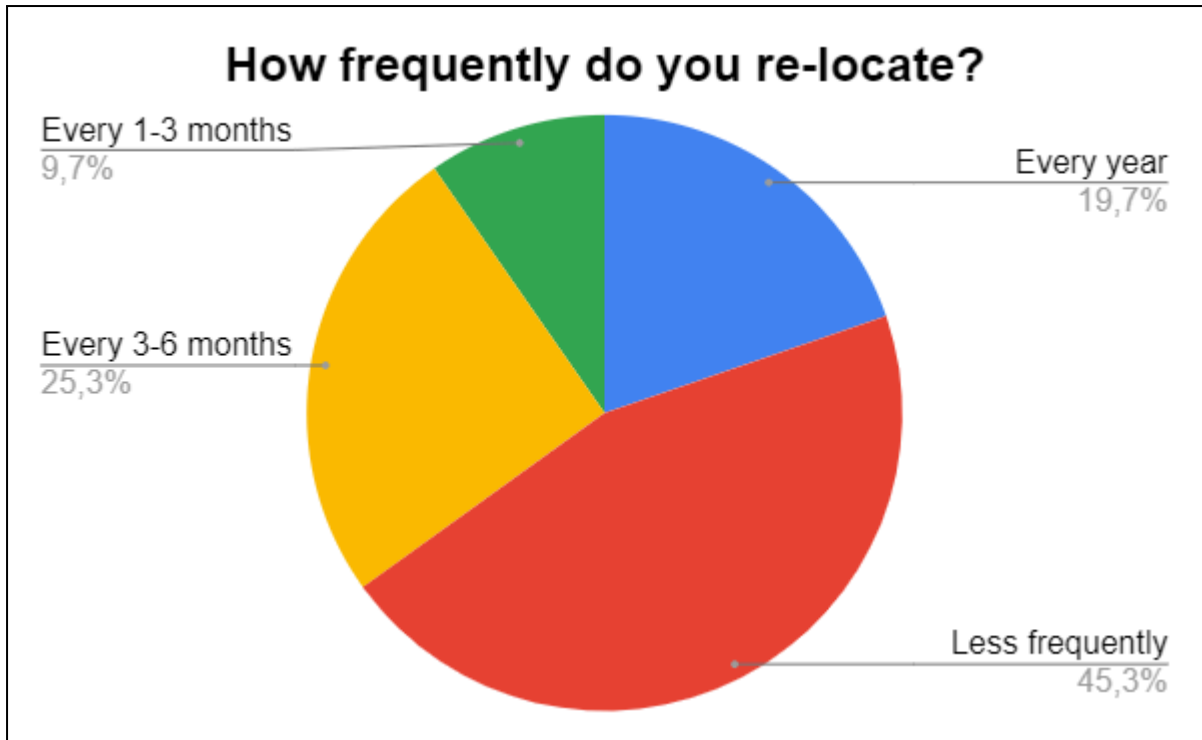


Figure 14. Frequency of relocation of survey participants

According to Figure 14, about half of the respondents change their locations in less than 1 year. About 10% of the respondents switch places frequently, once in every 1-3 months. Around a quarter of survey participants move to a new city or a country every 3-6 months. The rest of the people make a decision regarding relocation once a year. The results contradict to a high extent with statistics provided by López (2024). In her studies, the portion of people who re-locates at least once every 6 months constitutes more than 70%, whereas 12% switch locations less than once a year.

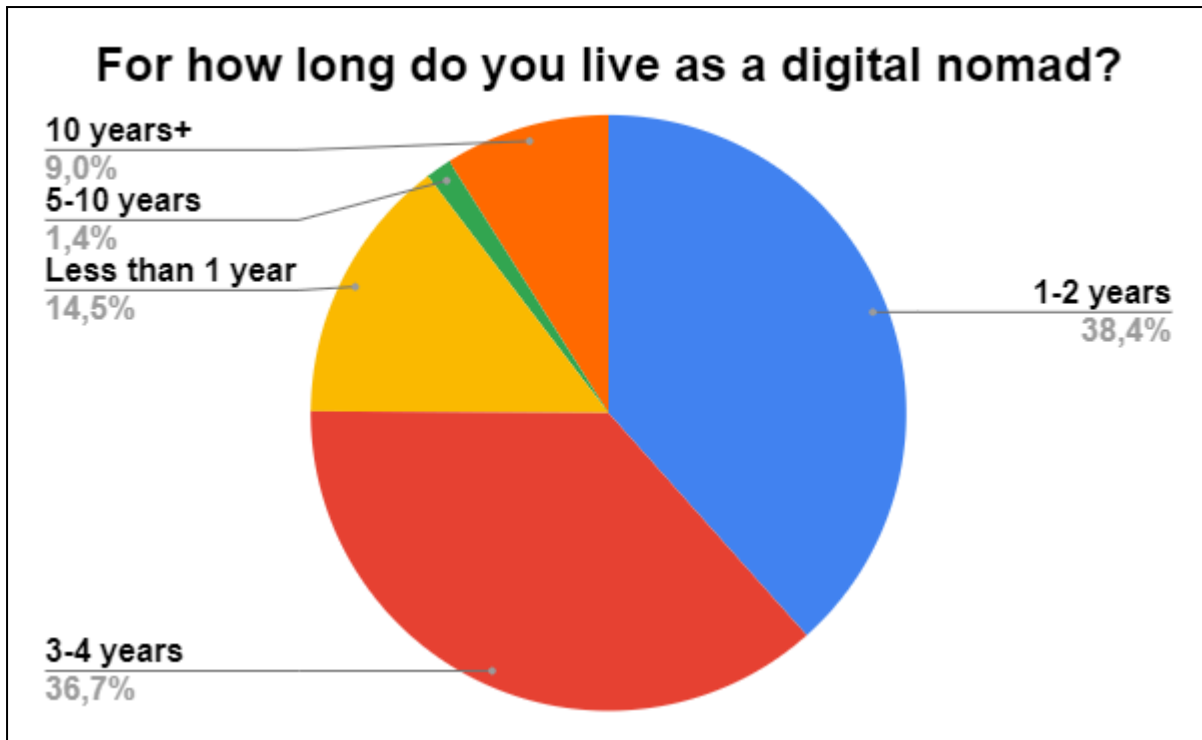


Figure 15. Number of years spent as a digital nomad

Based on Figure 15, there are two groups of digital nomads accounting to about 37% of the total number of respondents. In the first one, people have been following such a lifestyle for 1-2 years, the 2nd one for 3-4 years. Around 10% are considered as “veterans” of digital nomadism who spent at least 5 years of their lives in the “travel” mode. 14.5% of the digital nomads embrace such living style for less than 1 year.

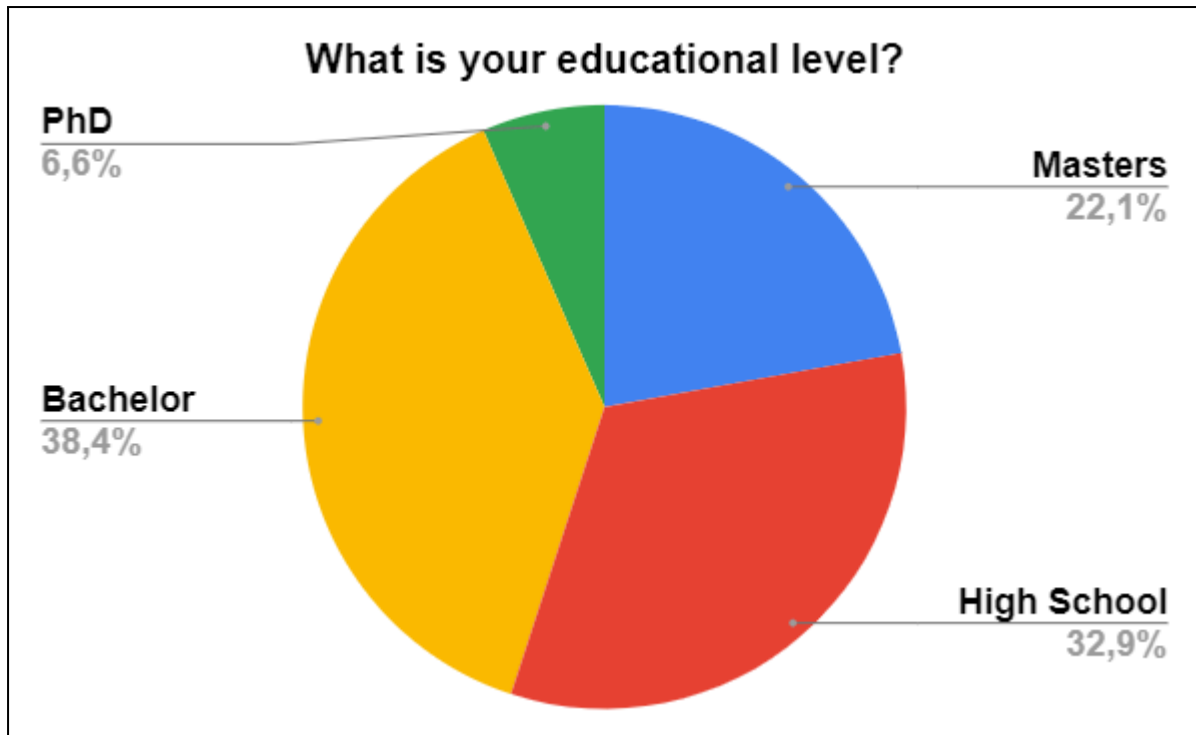


Figure 16. The educational level of respondents

According to Figure 16, the majority of respondents, 38.4%, are Bachelor holders. Surprisingly, roughly one third of digital nomads have finished high school. People who have more advanced education, including masters and PhD account for 28.7% in total. The results are different from the ones which López (2024) received in her March analysis. The report states that only 9% of digital nomads just finished high school, while 88% of the total number of survey participants finished either Bachelor or Masters.

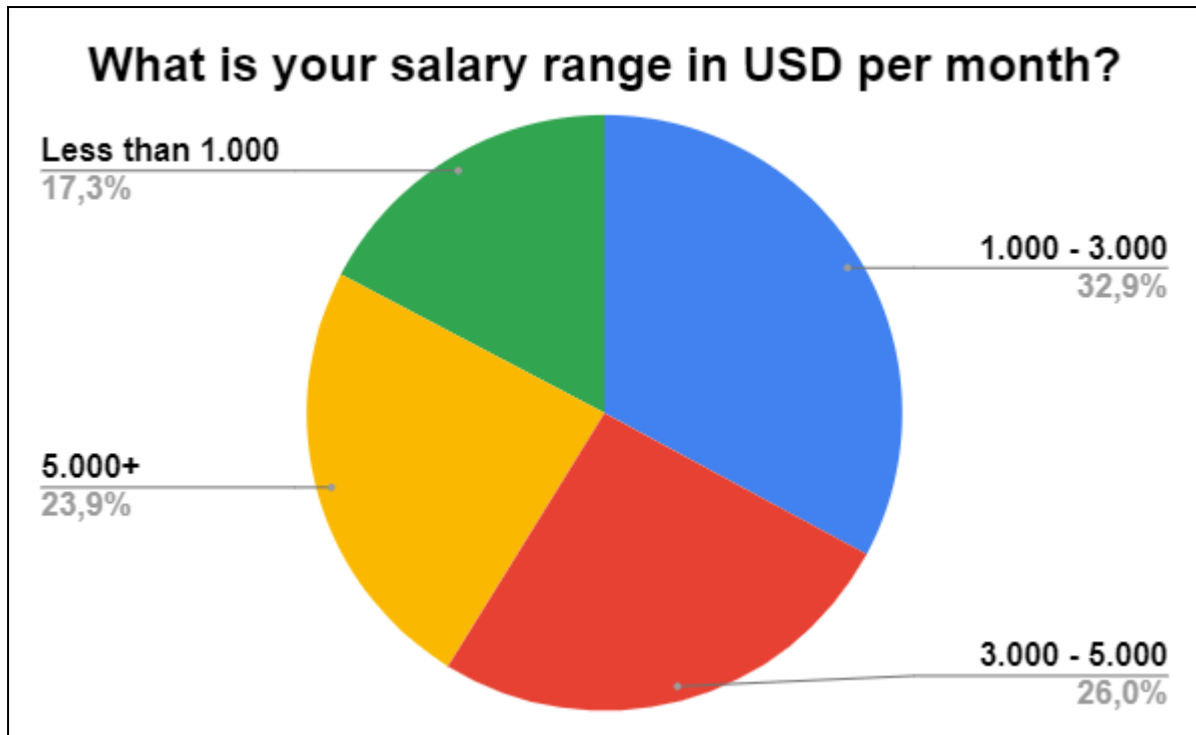


Figure 17. The salary range is USD per month for survey participants

According to Figure 17, the least portion of digital nomads, 17.3%, earns less than 1.000 USD per month. The reason behind that might be the fact that it is rather challenging to afford a travel-work lifestyle, as well as the number of jobs which allow working remotely with this level of salary is limited. Majority of respondents earn in the range of 1.000-3.000 USD, accounting to one third of the number of people. Participants with a salary range starting from 3.000 USD per month comprise half of the pie. López (2024) findings differ from the results presented in this thesis. In her survey, 21% of people earn less than 4.000 USD, while 45% of people earn more than 8.000 USD per month.



Figure 18. Portion of people being self-employed and working in the company

Figure 18 shares the information about the types of employment of the survey participants. 58.5% of respondents are self-employed, while the rest of the people work in the organizations. Results of the survey run by López (2024) differ significantly. In the case of her study, only 41.8% of nomads perform their job tasks as either self-employed professionals or freelancers.

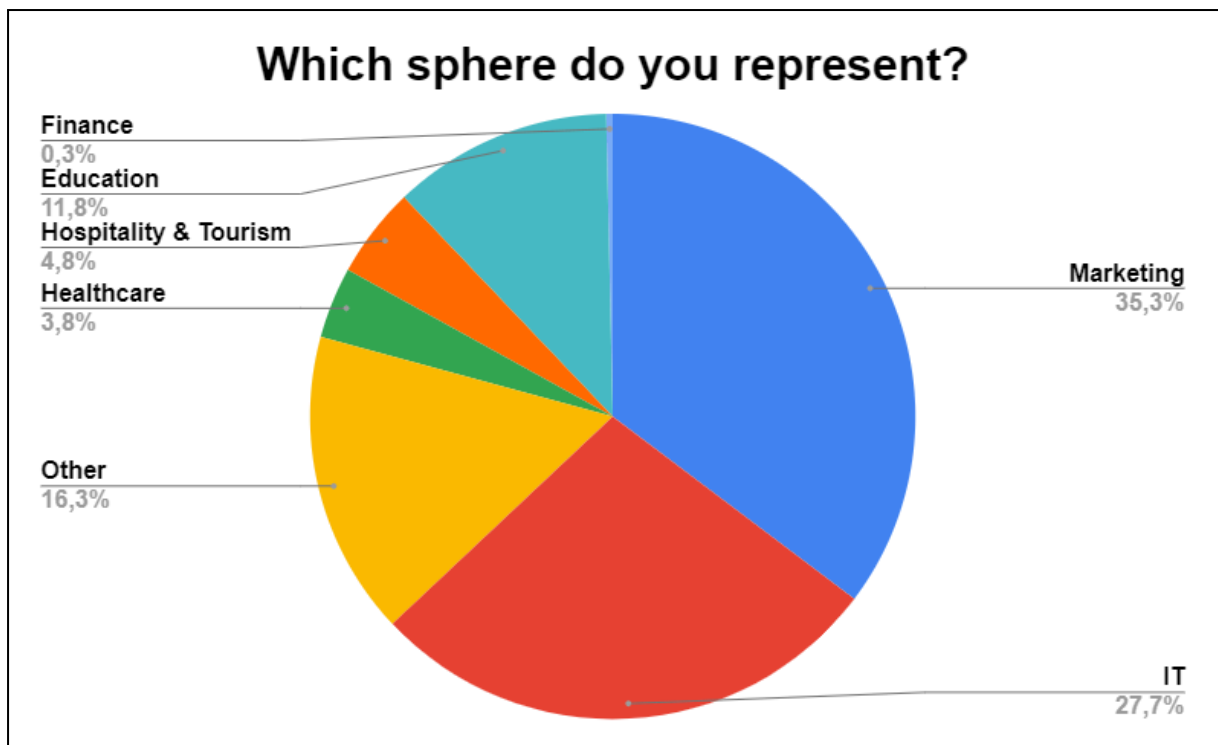


Figure 19. Portion of people being self-employed and working in the company

According to Figure 19, the majority of respondents are employed in two spheres, marketing and IT with 35.3% and 27.7%, respectively. The results are partially supported by the relevant statistical data. According to Lindner (2024), about 74% of marketing agencies have remote work policies. Sherif (2024) states that 67.7% of employees from the Technology industry work remotely. People who earn by teaching others comprise 11.8% of the participants, while the spheres in which 16.3% of nomads are employed are undefined. Hospitality & Tourism, Healthcare and Finance sectors employ less than 10% of the survey population.

4.2 Data analysis

In order to test the data we collected against the hypotheses, we have conducted data analysis using the statistical software from IBM SPSS STATISTICS. Then, we conducted reliability and validity tests in order to ensure that the data we collected measured the items correctly and reliably.

4.2.1 Hypothesis testing

H1. *The level of education has a negative correlation with job satisfaction.*

First, we tested our H1, "The level of education has a negative correlation with job satisfaction" using the Pearson correlation coefficient:

		JT	Education_Level
JT	Pearson Correlation	1	.087
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.141
	N	288	287
Education_Level	Pearson Correlation	.087	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.141	
	N	287	287

Figure 20. Pearson correlation between job satisfaction and education level

The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between job satisfaction and education level was found to be $r = 0.087$, meaning a very weak positive correlation. This means that those with higher education levels only score slightly higher on job satisfaction. However, the correlation is not statistically significant, due to the p -value being $p = 0.141$, which is above the accepted threshold of 0.05 . Therefore, we can not say with confidence that there is a significant relationship between education level and job satisfaction.

H2. *There is a positive correlation between Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction.*

Second, we tested our H2, "There is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction" using the Pearson's correlation coefficient:

		JT	LIFET
JT	Pearson Correlation	1	-.011
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.850
	N	288	288
LIFET	Pearson Correlation	-.011	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.850	
	N	288	288

Figure 21. Pearson correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction

The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between job satisfaction and life satisfaction was found to be $r=-0.011$, meaning there was a very weak negative correlation. This suggests that there is no linear relationship between the two domains. The p -value is $p = 0.850$, which is significantly higher than the accepted threshold of 0.05. Therefore, we can not say with confidence that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction based on our analysis.

H3. *There is a negative correlation between frequency of relocation and work-life balance.*

Third, we tested our H3, “There is a negative correlation between frequency of relocation and work-life balance” using the Pearson’s correlation coefficient:

Correlations			
		WLBT	Relocation_Frequency
WLBT	Pearson Correlation	1	-.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.713
	N	288	287
Relocation_Frequency	Pearson Correlation	-.022	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.713	
	N	287	287

Figure 22. Pearson correlation between work-life balance and relocation frequency

The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between work-life balance and frequency of relocation was found to be $r = -0.022$, meaning there was a very weak negative correlation. This suggests that there is no linear relationship between work-life balance and relocation frequency. Again, the p-value is $p = 0.713$, which is much higher than the accepted threshold of 0.05, indicating that there is no linear relationship between the two variables.

H4. *There is a positive correlation between the time spent as a digital nomad and work-life balance.*

Fourth, we tested our last H4, “There is a positive correlation between the time spent as a digital nomad and work-life balance”:

Correlations			
		Nomad_Duration	WLBT
Nomad_Duration	Pearson Correlation	1	.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.265
	N	287	287
WLBT	Pearson Correlation	.066	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.265	
	N	287	288

Figure 23. Pearson correlation between nomad duration and work-life balance

The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between time spent as a digital nomad and work-life balance turned out to be $r = 0.066$, indicating a very weak positive correlation. These findings suggest that the longer time spent as a digital nomad is only slightly associated with better work-life balance. However, with a p value of $p = 0.265$, which is higher than the accepted threshold of 0.05 , the correlation is not statistically significant. That means there is no significant linear relationship between the two variables.

4.2.2 Reliability

In order to make sure the data from our questionnaire/survey translates accurately and measures the items we want to measure, we performed Chronbach's alpha reliability tests using IBM SPSS STATISTICS.

4.2.3 Job satisfaction reliability

		N	%
Cases	Valid	288	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	288	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Figure 24. Case processing summary for work domain

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.736	4

Figure 25. Chronbach's alpha for work domain

In order to test our data for internal reliability, we performed a Chronbach's alpha test on the variables that make up job satisfaction. The Chronbach's alpha for the four items (Job1, Job2, Job3, Job4) was found to be 0.736, which is an acceptable level of internal consistency. This means that the items we selected for measuring the job satisfaction domain (JOBT) are reliable.

4.2.4 Life satisfaction reliability

		N	%
Cases	Valid	288	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	288	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Figure 26. Case processing summary for life domain items

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.730	4

Figure 27. Chronbach's alpha for life domain

In order to test our data for internal reliability, we performed a Chronbach's alpha test on the variables that make up life satisfaction. The Chronbach's alpha for the four items (Life1, Life2, Life3, Life4) was found to be 0.730, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency. This means that the items we selected for measuring the life satisfaction domain (LIFET) are reliable.

4.2.5 Work-life balance reliability

		N	%
Cases	Valid	288	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	288	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Figure 28. Case processing summary for work-life balance

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.749	4

Figure 29. Chronbach's alpha for work-life balance

In order to test our data for internal reliability, we performed a Chronbach's alpha test on the variables that make up work-life balance. The Chronbach's alpha for the four items (WLB1, WLB2, WLB3, WLB4) was found to be 0.749, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency. This means that the items we selected for measuring the work-life balance (WLBT) are reliable.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The following chapter summarizes the thesis by discussing research questions mentioned in the first chapter. Then, it explains both theoretical and practical implications of the study. Lastly, it shares factors limiting and affecting the results of the survey and provides suggestions for future research.

5.1 Summary

This study explored the topic of work-life balance in the context of digital nomadism. This topic has gained more attention in the media due to globalization, rapid development of information and communication technology and an increase in the portion of employees who perform job tasks remotely or have flexible work arrangements. Remote work in combination with well being, job satisfaction and other aspects of life have been studied in depth, yet the number of papers dedicated to a specific analysis of work and life balance of people who combine constant relocation and work is limited in number thus providing a research gap to fulfill. The goal of the thesis is to explore the linkage between two concepts and get more insights into the life of digital nomads. This led to 3 research questions:

RQ1: How does digital nomadism affect work-life balance?

RQ2: What is the nature of the relationship between work and life domains in the context of digital nomadism?

RQ3: What is the portrait of an average digital nomad?

In order to address them, analysis of the past papers and existing theory on work-life balance was undergone. Demands of research questions are satisfied to the big extent by Spillover and Person-Environment fit theory, the most suitable ones from the list. Person-Environment fit is a complex concept which assesses the congruence between values, needs and demands of a person and environment and is mainly focused on the work domain. It is analyzed from different aspects, including Person-Group fit, Person-Organization fit and others, in the study, Person-Job fit is paid attention. The theory behind this type of fit states that if a job or a position requires a set of skills and knowledge below the level of an employee, then s/he will

experience boredom and dissatisfaction at the end. This leads to a hypothesis stating that The level of education has a negative correlation with job satisfaction.

The spillover theory claims that the negative or positive experiences acquired in a workplace result in the similar ones in the life domain and vice versa. To check and understand whether it is applicable to the case of digital nomads, a 2nd hypothesis was designed which assesses correlation between Job and Life Satisfaction.

The first research question is checked by two hypotheses which involve digital nomadism, as a style. It includes frequency of relocation and duration of following this way of living. Studies focused on remote work claim that flexible working arrangements bring both positive and negative effects to the life of an employee. This raises interest in understanding how it works in case of digital nomads who used to switch places, since it is one of their distinct characteristics. The third hypothesis claims that there is a negative correlation between frequency of relocation and work-life balance while the fourth states that there is a positive correlation between the time spent as a digital nomad and work-life balance.

In order to test all of the hypothesis and answer research questions, as well as, defining the portrait of an average digital nomad a survey was conducted gathering 289 responses from Facebook groups focused on digital nomadism. The obtained quantitative data was encoded and run through SPSS to analyze the correlations, using Pearson Correlation coefficient, as well as, its reliability was checked with the Cronbach's alpha. Though the data is proven to be reliable with Cronbach's alpha to be higher than 0.7, SPSS analysis demonstrates weak correlation in all of the hypotheses:

- There is a very weak positive correlation between the level of education and job satisfaction.
- There is a very weak negative correlation between Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction.
- There is a very weak negative correlation between frequency of relocation and work-life balance.
- There is a very weak positive correlation between the time spent as a digital nomad and work-life balance.

The findings contradict the Person-Job theory and Spillover theory to a high extent, as well as, propose that the lifestyle of being a digital nomad doesn't affect work-life balance of a person.

In regards to the 3rd research question, based on the most frequent replies, the profile of an average digital nomad:

- 25-34
- Male
- Single
- Has no kids
- Is originally from Europe
- Currently lives in Europe
- Relocates less often than 1 year
- Has been living as a digital nomad for about 3-4 years
- Has a bachelor degree
- Earns between 1.000 to 3.000 USD per month
- Is self employed
- Works in marketing

5.2 Theoretical and practical implications

Roughly 2000 research papers are dedicated to digital nomadism in which 400 studies are focused on its link with digital nomadism. The sphere provides a large understudied space which leads to this thesis. The paper has a number of theoretical and practical implications.

Firstly, the study revealed the insights about the nature of digital nomadism and analyzed it from the perspectives of two theories, Spillover and Person-Environment fit. Up to this moment, though the relationship between P-E fit and WLB, as well as, Spillover with WLB are studied deeply, the connection between P-E fit and Spillover to digital nomadism received attention from only 15 papers in combination, according to Google Scholar results on “Digital nomadism” + “Person-Environment fit” and “Digital nomadism” + “Spillover theory.” The thesis broaden horizon on these links and based on the findings and the data, authors came to

the conclusion that the assumptions and statements of these theories are relevant to a small extent in the case of digital nomadism. Consequently, other theories might be more applicable in exploring the linkage between digital nomadism and work-life balance or similar studies need to be conducted to gain better understanding and reduce the rooms for potential mistakes.

Secondly, the authors gained insights about the demographic portrait of digital nomads and measured the effectiveness of using Facebook groups for sharing the survey. The answers provide information about the income, education level, countries of origin and current residence, sphere of employment and its type. Most of the present studies pay less attention to the detail of the picture and more to their lifestyle and values. For example, in regards to general questions, Chevtava and Denizci-Guillet (2021) focus on country of origin, gender, occupation, age range and the presence of travel companions. Garcez et al. (2024) generates profiles of digital nomads based on a number of studies. The paper includes variables such as country / region of origin, salary, age range, family status, gender, and sphere of employment. The thesis not only includes the above mentioned life aspects, but also produces knowledge on the frequency of relocation and the duration of following a path of a digital nomads which is analyzed in combination with work-life balance, as well.

Thirdly, the study results would contribute to decision making of organizations. Based on the results, digital nomadism, as a remote type of employment and a lifestyle doesn't affect the work life balance of an employee as well as no significant correlation was observed between job and life satisfaction. Consequently, it provides no basis for the organizations to introduce an option or allow employees to follow a nomadic way of living with a goal to boost their work-life balance, unless it results in cost reduction and / or boost in performance. This might alter their hiring process as well as push companies to reconsider their policies and organizational culture.

5.3 Limitations and further research proposals

Though the authors have made their contribution in the sphere of digital nomadism, the research can be improved while addressing a number of limitations. Firstly, the research context included understanding the life of digital nomads by running a questionnaire in Facebook groups dedicated to the topic. As mentioned before, only 15 out of 29 groups allowed the authors to publish the survey, thus limiting an opportunity to reach a more diverse audience which would affect at least the number of participants. Only 289 people took part in the survey which provides limited data to analyze the correlation between variables, a larger sample of nomads is preferred. An extensive number of respondents and a variety of platforms which they come from should be among features of future studies to get a better picture and results from quantitative analysis.

Secondly, the questionnaire aims to analyze the relationship between life and work domain, as well as different variables with work-life balance. Due to the size of the survey and concern about the response rate, all three variables are assessed based on the answers on 4 statements only. This limits the potential of the research, shrinking the amount of knowledge which authors may get. For example, work domain was assessed only with one variable called Job Satisfaction. More insights can be gained if the domains include more sub-variables, in case of work, it might include “organizational culture”, “energy at work”, “leadership”, “autonomy” etc. (Ejlertsson et al., 2018), whereas life domain may consist of “physical state”, “psychological state”, “social relationships”, “education and self-improvement” and so on (Szegeci, 2024). These and other variables are recommended to use in future studies to enrich them.

Thirdly, other Person-Environment types of fit can be considered, including Person-Home fit, Person-Group fit, etc. Due to the fact that most of the digital nomads are self-employed specialists based on the survey results, it is advised to delve into recently emerged Person-Contract fit. Due to time and survey limits only Person-Job fit with a focus on education was studied. It is worth noting that this fit could be analyzed more in-depth by both including additional variables and inspecting them separately, ex. “personal skills”, “skills and abilities” (Shah & Ayub, 2021).

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Discussion paper

Benjamin Kleiven Åvik

Introduction

The phenomenon of digital nomads is a trend that has emerged recently as an alternative to the traditional workplace, defined as individuals who rely on technology in order to work remotely while traveling. Our thesis investigates the impact of a digital nomad lifestyle on work-life balance, a key aspect of well-being and productivity. The thesis looks at and aims to explain the challenges that occur in how digital nomads manage both their professional responsibilities and personal lives, and how these domains interfere with each other with such a mobile way of living. The goal of my discussion paper is to relate the findings from the thesis, and connect them to the broader concept of “international”, as well as examining how global trends may influence digital nomadism and its implications for work-life balance.

Globalization

Globalization has played an important role in making the digital nomad lifestyle possible and a realistic approach to business. The interconnectedness of the global economy, advancements in communication technologies, and the widespread adoption of the internet has enabled individuals to work from anywhere in the world. Even in the business climate, as organizations expand their operations across borders, there is a steady increase in demand for remote work. This allows employees to work together with colleagues and clients worldwide, without being dependent, or tied to a specific location.

For digital nomads, the concept of globalization has opened up a world of possibilities. The ability to work remotely has given digital nomads the option to choose their travel destinations based on personal preferences, living costs, or their personal desires to explore different cultures. The freedom to be location independent while still maintaining a career or earning money, is a direct result of the globalized and interconnected world, and the digital infrastructure that supports it. Additionally, the impact of globalization on work-life balance for digital nomads is an interesting topic, as it provides both flexibility and presents new challenges.

Trends

The emergence of remote work is a significant trend itself which has greatly influenced the digital nomad lifestyle. Working remotely offers flexibility, which can positively enhance work-life balance by allowing individuals to essentially create their own schedules in accordance to their personal needs. On the other hand, it also presents a challenge of the lines between work and life being blurred, which can lead to issues such as overwork and isolation.

In order to mitigate these challenges, digital nomads often use co-working spaces and digital nomad communities. These co-working spaces provide a professional environment for digital nomads, which helps maintain productivity, as well as offering a setting that allows for social interaction with people that have similar interests. Digital nomad communities, both online and offline, serve as support networks where individuals can share experiences, advice, and make new connections.

The trend of remote work has led to the development of digital tools and technologies that make it easier to collaborate and communicate. These digital tools help digital nomads stay connected with their colleagues, clients, manage projects efficiently, as well as maintain a routine, all which are crucial for a healthy work-life balance. On the other hand, the reliance on technology also means that digital nomads must navigate issues such as time zone differences of their peers, as well as make sure they have a reliable internet connection.

Economic and Cultural Factors

The economic factors play a significant role in the digital nomad lifestyle. The destination that a digital nomad chooses for his travels, can greatly depend on the cost of living and their overall work-life balance. There is a trend of digital nomads choosing to live in countries with a lower cost of living, in order to maximize their income and enjoy a high quality of life. This economic strategy is called “geo arbitrage”, and in the context of digital nomads it allows them to save money, invest in experiences, and reduce financial stress, which are all factors that positively impact work-life balance.

The cultural differences also influence the experience of a digital nomad. Each country has its own norms and values regarding work, leisure, and social interactions. It is pivotal for digital nomads to adapt to these cultural differences, which can enhance their personal lives, but also

present challenges. For example, language barriers and different work practices can affect their ability to integrate into local communities and work efficiently.

Understanding and respecting the cultural differences can be challenging to a digital nomad, but is important in order to enhance their experience, as well as it will contribute to a better work-life balance. Engaging or immersing in local cultures can provide a valuable learning experience, as well as present opportunities for personal growth. However, depending on the location, cultural adaptation requires time and effort, which can sometimes conflict with the digital nomad lifestyle, depending on how often the individual relocates.

Responses to International Trends

Digital nomads utilize various strategies to respond to international trends and enhance their work-life balance. Examples of these strategies include:

Destination choice: Digital nomads often utilize the concept of “geo arbitrage” in order to choose locations that offer a good balance of affordability, quality of life and connectivity. Some popular destinations that digital nomads frequently pick are Bali, Chiang Mai, and Portugal, as they all provide excellent infrastructure for remote work, have large communities of digital nomads, and provide affordable living costs.

Routine: Although the digital nomad lifestyle is a very flexible lifestyle, establishing a routine can help maintain work-life balance. Popular strategies among digital nomads are to set specific working hours, creating dedicated workspaces in order to stay focused, and utilizing productivity tools and software to keep them routined.

Community engagement: In order to combat loneliness and alienation, digital nomads engage with local and digital nomad communities. Meetups, co-working spaces, and online platforms to stay connected with other digital nomads are all tools that can provide support, reduce loneliness, and enhance the overall experience.

Health and wellness: “Health is wealth”, especially when digital nomads have such a flexible routine, it is pivotal that they prioritize health and wellness in order to maintain work-life balance. Digital nomads usually incorporate exercise, mindfulness practices, and healthy eating as part of their routines to manage stress and stay productive. The location they have chosen may impact the ability to access facilities such as spas and gyms.

Conclusion

The digital nomad lifestyle is greatly interlaced with international trends and forces. Concepts like globalization, technological advancements, and the emergence of remote work have enabled individuals to pursue careers while traveling the world. These trends play an important role in terms of a healthy work-life balance, presenting both opportunities and challenges.

On one hand, digital nomads benefit greatly from the flexibility to design their own schedules, experience new cultures and achieve personal fulfillment. On the other hand, digital nomads face challenges in setting boundaries, managing time zones differences, and adapting to new environments and cultures.

Final Thoughts

The concept of “international” is pivotal to understanding the digital nomad lifestyle and its impact on work-life balance. By examining the trends that shape digital nomadism, we can gain valuable insights into how individuals navigate the complexities of remote work and personal life. As remote work becomes increasingly more common, the experiences of digital nomads will provide valuable insights into maintaining a healthy and fulfilling life in a rapidly increasing interconnected world.

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Discussion paper

Damir Turikbayev

Summary of the thesis

The thesis is focused on analyzing work-life balance through a prism of digital nomadism, a work-related phenomena which is relatively new, as a sphere of research. Digital nomads are people who work without geographical constraints due to technological advancements (Tsugio Makimoto & Manners, 1997). In general, this type of employee experiences greater freedom and autonomy than an office worker, however, this may result in a blurred line between work and life and other drawbacks (Voydanoff, 2005). In order to explore the topic we've made a research into two theories related to work-life balance which includes Spillover theory and Person-Environment fit theory. This theoretical framework resulted in a number of hypotheses assuming that there is a correlation between job and life satisfaction and between level of education and job satisfaction. We performed a quantitative analysis by running a survey on Facebook groups focused on digital nomadism and gathered replies from 289 respondents on the general questions and life, job satisfaction, as well as, work-life balance statements, according to Likert scale (Jamieson, 2024). The questions were designed based on the existing studies of Jaiswal et al. (2015) and Diener et al. (1985). 4 hypotheses were analyzed with the help of SPSS. According to Cronbach's alpha, the data is proven to be reliable, since the index exceeded 0.7. The Pearson correlation coefficient received at the end revealed that there is little to no correlation between the tested variables, hence, the spillover theory doesn't work in case of digital nomadism, the same as person-job fit, since the level of education doesn't affect job satisfaction. Work-life balance turned out not to be correlated with frequency of relocation and duration of being a digital nomad. The findings led us to the conclusion that the theories are not applicable to the case of digital nomadism. Therefore, either other theories need to be explored or additional quantitative studies need to be performed, since the thesis turns out to be one of few papers which get into the link between digital nomadism and two theories we described in theoretical framework. There were limitations which affected the results. The survey was published in a number of Facebook groups which limits the reach to respondents, since only the ones who followed those pages and were online at the moment of publication had an ability to share their opinions. We analyzed the concepts based on only two theories which we believed to fit our topic the most.

Other closely related theories, ex. Compensation theory, Conflict theory, Instrumental theory, etc. have to be considered in future studies (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014).

How the thesis related to the concept “international”

The lifestyle of digital nomads is an epitome of “international”. According to Cangià et al. (2022), on average, nomads switch locations every 2-3 months. Lipton & Basu (2022) points out that remote work is becoming more prevalent in the world, as one of international trends. In his study, Ozimek (2020) reveals that the remote work experiment exceeded the expectations of managers bringing benefits and thus pushing the companies to increase plans for remote hiring in the future. Due to work specific entities who run businesses in marketing and IT (software development) are expected to have the greatest portion of remote workers across all of the spheres. COVID-19 demonstrated that in most of the cases performance of an employee is higher than average due to higher degree of freedom and autonomy. In case of the offline work arrangement a person is required to spend some time to reach the office, have a lunch break of 1 hour, then s/he has to spend a period of time to get back home which decreases the amount of time which can be potentially spent on family, leisure activities and other aspects of life. Eliminating unnecessary time, breaks, either increases time dedicated to work or improves a person’s well-being, for example, s/he can sleep for longer. The case of epidemic will alter companies’ corporate cultures, hiring policies, methods of interpersonal communications and so on. More companies will apply hybrid workplace arrangement to their business to test whether it will positively affect key performance indicators. Throughout the time, we expect more people to follow the path of digital nomads. The idea of traveling, freedom, experiences and being less attached to the financial aspect of work is one of characteristics of Generation Z and Millenials (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). As employees hire more representatives of both generations, they have to adapt to their mindset and common values.

The 21st century is characterized by a rapid development of information and communication technology. Individuals in the European Union and other parts of the world have higher access to the Internet (The World Bank Official website, 2022). The growth of accessibility provides more opportunities to find, negotiate and be employed remotely, while being present in a different location. Sherif (2024) points on the surging number of people who perform their job tasks from home through the last decade.

Digital nomads will grow along with the development of the gig economy and freelancing. In spheres of marketing and IT, in some cases, it is more cost efficient to hire a person on a short-term contract or invite him / her to work on a project basis than to have a full-time employee. The gross volume of the gig economy had risen from 204 billion USD in 2018 to 455 billion USD in 2023 (Statista Research Department, 2024). This tendency clearly demonstrates the rising demands for a side service which in turn cultivates “gig based” income and, therefore, remote work. We can look at this from the perspective of an employee. The cost of living is rising yearly and fewer people can afford to buy a property, rent a comfortable place or simply live in countries like the UK. Therefore, an option to live in a developing country with drastically lower prices while adding a meaning to one's own life in the form of a job is more appealing.

As most of the developed and developing countries got affected by COVID-19, all of them and the organizations which reside in them implemented similar policies which kept people working from home. Based on this, a number of different nationalities and cultures got used to the concept and style of working remotely. Thus, digital nomadism is getting to be widely accepted as a socio-labor phenomena. The globalization and the growth in the number of popular social media platform users, including Instagram and TikTok, foster constant exchange of ideas and thus causing a shift in perception and values in some cases resulting in uniting people by common ideals from all over the world. Traveling while working is among them. Hence, we would be able to observe a rise in the number of digital nomads from different countries.

Digital nomadism touched the legislation of a number of countries, including Spain, Italy, Indonesia and others. They issue visas to nomads which provides them an opportunity to stay and work in these countries for an extended period (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024). By 2024, 58 regions offer programs for temporary remote workers (Williams, 2023). It demonstrates that countries are interested in this type of people, since by earning from a country outside of the one they reside in, they affect the inflow of finances which boosts the health of the economy. For example, a person who is a contract worker in the US chooses to live in Spain as a digital nomad. S/he will spend the salary to purchase goods and services in Spain while obtaining finances from the USA. In a bigger perspective, it will create more workplaces for the locals, similar to the case of Bali, an island in Indonesia which is considered as a heart of digital nomadism of South-Eastern Asia.

Conclusion

Digital nomadism is an international phenomena which involves a worker to perform job tasks while traveling across countries. Digital nomadism in the form of traveling to a place with lower living costs while working remotely affects the work-life balance of a person. As a type of remote work it allows an employee to experience greater autonomy, freedom of movement and decision making, and the opportunity to spend more time with family. Globalization, advancement of communication technologies, growth of gig economy, acceptance of remote work across numerous cultures and other “international” aspects forster the development of digital nomadism, as a lifestyle. It is supported by governments, as 58 of them have already introduced digital nomad visas. I am proud that this master thesis contributes to research of digital nomadism, a future for most of us.

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Appendices

APPENDIX I. SURVEY QUESTIONS AND THEIR ENCODED FORMS

Questions	Encoded Form
How old are you?	Age
What is your gender?	Gender
What is your marital status?	Marital_Status
How many kids do you have?	Kids_Count
Where are you from?	Origin
Where do you live now?	Current_Location
How frequently do you re-locate?	Relocation_Frequency
For how long do you live as a digital nomad?	Nomad_Duration
What is your educational level?	Education_Level
What is your salary range in USD per month?	Salary_USD
Are you self-employed or do you work in a company?	Employment_Status
Which sphere do you represent?	Work_Domain
My job tasks are diverse and interesting	Job1
I am satisfied with my job / position / company I work in.	Job2
My job is enjoyable	Job3
I like the people I work with	Job4
I currently have a good balance between my work as a digital nomad and the time I have available for leisure activities.	WLB1
I feel that being a digital nomad gives me more opportunities for recreational activities compared to a stationary lifestyle.	WLB2
Overall, I believe that my work as a digital nomad and my leisure activities are well balanced.	WLB3
I have difficulty balancing my recreational activities and work responsibilities as a digital nomad.	WLB4
In most ways, my lifestyle as a digital nomad meets my personal and professional expectations.	Life1
The overall quality of my life as a digital nomad is outstanding.	Life2
I am satisfied with my life as a digital nomad	Life3
If I choose to continue my life over as a digital nomad, I will change almost	Life4

nothing.	
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APPENDIX II. SURVEY QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question	How old are you?	
Answers	18-24 / 25-34 / 35-44 / 45-54 / 55-64	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5
Question	What is your gender?	
Answers	Male / Female / Other	1 / 2 / 3
Question	What is your marital status?	
Answers	Married / Single / Divorced / Widow	1 / 2 / 3 / 4
Question	How many kids do you have?	
Answers	0 / 1 / 2 / 3+	0 / 1 / 2 / 3
Question	Where are you from?	
Answers	Europe / North America / South America / Asia / Africa / Oceania	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6
Question	Where do you live now?	
Answers	Europe / North America / South America / Asia / Africa / Oceania	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6
Question	How frequently do you re-locate?	
Answers	Every 1-3 months / Every 3-6 months / Every year / Less frequently	1 / 2 / 3 / 4
Question	For how long do you live as a digital nomad?	
Answers	Less than 1 year / 1-2 years / 3-4 years / 5-10 years / 10 years+	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5
Question	What is your educational level?	
Answers	Bachelor / Masters / PhD / High school	1 / 2 / 3 / 4
Question	What is your salary range in USD per month?	
Answers	\$0-1k / \$1k-3k / \$3-5k / \$5k+	1 / 2 / 3 / 4
Question	Are you self-employed or do you work in a company?	
Answers	Self-employed / Working in the company.	1 / 2
Question	Which sphere do you represent?	
Answers	IT / Marketing / Finance / Education / Hospitality & Tourism / Healthcare / Othe	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6

Job Satisfaction	My job tasks are diverse and interesting
	I am satisfied with my job / position / company I work in.
	My job is enjoyable
	I like the people I work with
Work-life balance	I currently have a good balance between my work as a digital nomad and the time I have available for leisure activities.
	I feel that being a digital nomad gives me more opportunities for recreational activities compared to a stationary lifestyle.
	Overall, I believe that my work as a digital nomad and my leisure activities are well balanced.
	I have difficulty balancing my recreational activities and work responsibilities as a digital nomad.
Life Satisfaction	In most ways, my lifestyle as a digital nomad meets my personal and professional expectations.
	The overall quality of my life as a digital nomad is outstanding.
	I am satisfied with my life as a digital nomad
	If I choose to continue my life over as a digital nomad, I will change almost nothing.
Answers	Strongly Disagree / Disagree / Neutral / Agree / Strongly Agree
Encoded answers	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5