



LIFE SATISFACTION IN ADOLESCENTS: THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED FAMILY ECONOMIC STATUS, SELF-ESTEEM AND QUALITY OF FAMILY AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Zora RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Andreja BRAJŠA-ŽGANEC, Marija ŠAKIĆ
Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Zagreb

UDK: 316.613-053.6(497.5):17.023.34
Izvorni znanstveni rad

Primljeno: 3. 4. 2008.

In this research we aimed to determine to what extent socio-demographic variables, subjective material well-being, aspects of social relationships and personal resources predict adolescents' life satisfaction. The study included a representative sample of 2823 Croatian high school students. The participants completed scales measuring their perception of parental child-rearing practices, family cohesion, support from a close friend and global self-worth. The structured questions were used to assess students' global satisfaction with life, perception of economic status of their family and socio-demographic variables. The results of multiple regression analyses showed that adolescents' life satisfaction could be best explained by their higher self-esteem, family cohesion and parental support, and higher perceived material well-being. Significant interaction effects were also found which indicate that self-esteem and support from a close friend moderate negative effects of perceived material disadvantage on adolescents' life satisfaction.

Key words: life satisfaction, adolescents, economic status, self-esteem, social support, parenting practices

✉ Zora Raboteg-Šarić, Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar,
Marulićev trg 19/1, P. O. Box 277, 10 001 Zagreb, Croatia.
E-mail: Zora.Raboteg-Saric@pilar.hr

INTRODUCTION

Subjective well-being is generally considered to be comprised of three interrelated but distinct factors, namely the relative presence of positive affect, absence of negative affect and perceived quality of life, or life satisfaction (Huebner et al., 2004). Life satisfaction is defined as a cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole and/or of specific life domains (Huebner et al., 2005; Myers and Diener, 1995). Measures of life satisfaction range from multi-item scales to single questions aimed at assessing global life satisfaction (Abdel-Khalek, 2006; Myers and Diener, 1995). In contrast to a wealth of research on the life satisfaction of adults, few studies of life satisfaction in children and adolescents have been conducted (Huebner, 1994; Park and Huebner, 2005). In general, most adolescents report positive global life satisfaction (Huebner et al., 2005). Similar to findings with adults, studies of youth have revealed that subjective well-being is weakly related to demographic variables such as gender, age and socio-economic status (Huebner et al., 2000) whereas personal and/or social resources contribute to subjective well-being and life satisfaction substantially (Huebner, 1991). Subjective well-being is positively related to the internal qualities of self-esteem, sense of control, optimism and extraversion (Ben-Zur, 2003) and to a variety of interpersonal variables that include measures of quality of children's relationships with parents (Demo and Acock, 1996; Shek, 1998; Shek, 2005a; Shek, 2005b; Suldo and Huebner, 2004a), as well as with non-family relations that provide emotional support, such as experiences in school and with peers (Konu et al., 2002).

Studies examining the relationship between economic variables and subjective well-being have shown that satisfaction with income predicts subjective well-being better than actual income (Myers and Diener, 1995). It is generally asserted that family economic hardship adversely effects the adjustment of adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage (Conger et al., 2000). However, some studies have shown that family economic pressure and other aversive events influence children's well-being indirectly, through their disruptive effects on parents' well-being and child-rearing practices (Conger et al., 1994; Demo and Acock, 1996; Simons and Associates, 1996). While studies have been carried out to examine perceived economic stress in parents and adults, perceived economic stress in adolescents has been rarely researched. Furthermore, few researchers have used measures of positive mental health as developmental outcome indicators related to economic hardship (Shek, 2005c).

Research on positive outcomes among at-risk youth often referred as "resilient" has attempted to define the features

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ŽGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

of the individual or the environment that may function as protective factors in the context of significant threats to development (Masten, 1994; Masten et al., 1999). Among these are stable emotional relationships with at least one parent, social support from persons outside family and experiences of self-efficacy and positive self-esteem (Loesel et al., 1989). The relationships between risk factors such as economic disadvantage, protective factors such as social support and self-esteem, and well-being as an outcome are usually described in additive or interactive models (Kirby and Fraser, 1997). Additive models, in which protective factors are said to exhibit main or direct effects, posit that the presence of a protective factor directly increases the likelihood of a positive outcome. According to buffering hypothesis (interactive model), protective factors have an effect in interaction with risk factors and their effect emerges when stress is high.

In the current study, we focused on differential and interactive influences of individual, family and environmental variables on adolescent perceived quality of life. We examined the relations between life satisfaction in adolescents and various socio-demographic variables, perceived family economic status, quality of family functioning, parental parenthood qualities, support from a close friend and adolescents' global self-worth. We aimed to determine to what extent certain objective indicators of quality of life, aspects of social relationships and personal variables predict adolescent life satisfaction as well as to examine to what extent quality of relationships with significant others (parents and peers) and personal resources (self-esteem) moderate the effects of perceived economic disadvantage on adolescent life satisfaction.

METHODS

Participants

Participants were 2823 Croatian high school students. The sample represented the structure of the high-school population of Croatia with regard to the type of school (gymnasiums and vocational schools) and the year of schooling (grades 1 to 4). The sample was also stratified according to the region so that two percent of all students from each grade were selected at random choice from a list of gymnasiums and vocational schools in each county. The mean age of participants was 16.86 years (SD=1.10). Due to the unbalanced number of male and female participants in vocational schools which participated in the survey, there were slightly more girls (54.5%) than boys in the sample (44.6%).

Procedure

Data was collected as part of a broader national survey on the determinants of adolescent risk behaviors. For the purpose of this study, variables concerning adolescent's socio-demographic features, subjective evaluation of their family's economic status, family functioning variables, support from a close friend, self-esteem and satisfaction with life were selected from an extensive questionnaire.

Trained research assistants administered the questionnaire in classrooms during regular school periods. Students' participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous.

Measures and variables

Demographics

Background information about respondents' characteristics included students' gender and their living arrangements, i.e. type of family (two-parent or one-parent), the level of urbanization of the place of education (small town, big town or the city of Zagreb) and type of school they attend (three-year vocational or four-year vocational and gymnasium). Students' reports of their mothers' and fathers' level of education were coded into three categories: primary education or less, some form of secondary education and college, university or post-graduate degree. Respondents' reports of their mothers' and fathers' employment status were coded as "unemployed" (unemployed persons, temporary employed and housewives) and "employed".

Family economic status. The respondents were asked to rate the financial situation of their family when compared to others on a five-point scale (1 – "very bad, considerably worse than most others"; 5 – "very good, considerably better than most others").

Instruments

Quality of family functioning was assessed by scales measuring adolescent's perceptions of family cohesion and parental child-rearing practices. The following instruments were used:

1. *Family Cohesion Scale* (Bloom, 1985). The participants rated on a 4-point scale (1-"it does not apply"; 4-"completely applies to my family") to what extent each of the five items describing getting along, contacts, support and a sense of unity among family members applied to their family. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for this scale is 0.72.

Parental practices scales used in this study were adapted in our research with adolescents (Raboteg-Šarić et al., 2002) from the ones that were used in previous research studies (Brown et al., 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991; Simons et al., 1992).

2. *Parental monitoring.* Respondents rated on a 3-point scale (1-"doesn't know"; 3-"knows a lot") how much their mothers

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ŽGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

and fathers really knew about their whereabouts, activities and associations (5 items, Cronbach alpha = 0.74 and 0.80 for mothers and fathers, respectively).

3. *Parental support*. Respondents rated on a 3-point scale (1-"mainly false" to 3-"mainly true") to what extent they perceive their parents as responsive and feel their parents use non-coercive discipline and encourage them (8 items, Cronbach alpha= 0.77 for mothers and 0.84 for fathers).

4. *Joint decision-making*. Respondents rated on a 3-point scale (1-"mainly false" to 3-"mainly true") to what extent they perceive their parents encourage them to make independent decisions and take into account their opinion when deciding on important matters (4 items, Cronbach alpha= 0.70 for mothers and 0.73 for fathers).

We also included a measure that taps adolescent friendship characteristics, i.e. whether they receive support and regard from a close friend, since the relationship with peers is an important determinant of adolescent well-being.

5. *Close Friend Support* is a subscale of the *Social Support Scale for Children* (Harter, 1985). This scale contains six items which ask whether the child has someone who really understands and listens to them, who they can tell their problems and worries and spend time with. Each item has one statement that describes a child who receives a higher level of close friend's support, and the other that describes a child with a lower level of support from the close friend. The respondents indicated which statement described them best and to what extent it was true of them. Answers were coded on a scale from 1 to 4 where "1" represents the lowest, and "4" the highest level of support (Cronbach alpha= 0.83).

Children's self-esteem was used as an indicator of personal resources and strengths that might protect the child from adverse environmental influences.

6. *Global Self-Worth subscale* from the *Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents* (Harter, 1988) includes five items that tap the extent to which the adolescent likes oneself as a person, is happy with the way he/she is leading his/her life, and is generally happy with the way he/she is. Each item has one statement that describes a higher level of perceived self-worth, and the other that describes a lower level of perceived self-worth. The answers are coded on a 4-point scale from the lowest (1) to the highest (4) level of global self-worth (Cronbach alpha = 0.71).

Global Satisfaction with Life. The dependent variable included one item that was constructed to assess an individual's own global judgment of his or her satisfaction with life (1-"very dissatisfied"; 5-"very satisfied").

RESULTS

Description of study participants

The distribution of results on demographic variables indicated that 87% of students lived in a two-parent family, and 13% in a single-parent family. Seventy-one percent of students attended four-year vocational schools and grammar schools or 'gymnasiums', while 29% attended three-year vocational schools. Half of the students attended schools in big towns, 27% in small towns and 22% in the Croatian capital. More than half of the parents had at least a secondary school education (50% mothers and 58% fathers), 64% of mothers and 74.4% of fathers were permanently employed.

Respondents' ratings on perceived family economic status were summed into three categories: "low" (1), "average" (2) and "high" (3). More than two-thirds of the respondents (68.8%) reported an average family economic status, 23.8% high and 6.9% low. The mean rating on aggregated three-point scale was 2.17 (SD=0.53).

Descriptive statistics

The means and standard deviations on independent variables that measure relationships with significant others and adolescents' perceived global self-worth are presented in Table 1. Students' total scores on each instrument were formed as mean ratings on the respective scale items. Therefore, theoretical range of the results is equal to the range of rating scale on the specific instrument. Scores for mother's and father's child-rearing practices were combined (mean ratings), since they were strongly related to each other (Pearson r s were 0.52, 0.63 and 0.61, $p < 0.001$ for support, monitoring and joint decision-making, respectively) and there were no systematic differences in their relationships with adolescent's life satisfaction and other main variables in this study.

TABLE 1
Means and standard deviations for the measures of family functioning, friendship quality, self-esteem and life satisfaction

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Range
Family cohesion	2693	3.30	0.58	1-4
Parental support	2577	2.65	0.33	1-3
Parental monitoring	2594	2.35	0.46	1-3
Joint decisions with parents	2552	2.25	0.47	1-3
Close friend support	2035	3.27	0.65	1-4
Global self-worth	2046	2.73	0.60	1-4
Satisfaction with life	2784	3.51	0.97	1-5

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ŽGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

Cases with missing data on any of the items of the applied instruments were deleted from the analysis when total scale scores were calculated. The specific cases excluded from particular analyses varied from one analysis to another, so data analyses were run on samples ranging from 2035 to 2784 participants.

The distribution of the results on the dependent variable showed that 59.1% of the students indicated that they were satisfied with their life (48.4% – "satisfied" and 10.7% – "very satisfied"), one-fourth (24.4%) were "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", while 15.2% of the students showed a lower level of life satisfaction (10.9% – "dissatisfied" and 4.3% – "very dissatisfied"). The mean response rating for the life satisfaction scale indicates a moderately high level of overall satisfaction with life among the student sample.

A series of one-way analyses of variance was performed in order to compare groups with different socio-demographic characteristics on the measure of life satisfaction. Significant differences in perceived satisfaction with life were found ($F=55.96$, $p<0.001$) among three groups of adolescents who rated economic status of their family as low ($M=2.86$), average ($M=3.51$), and high ($M=3.69$). *Post-hoc* multiple comparison (Dunnett C test) showed that the group with high economic status had a significantly higher score on the life satisfaction measure than the average status group and both groups had significantly higher scores than the low economic status group. Father's and mother's unemployment were also associated with the child's lower satisfaction with life ($F=6.86$, $p<0.01$; $F=6.03$, $p<0.05$, respectively). However, additional analyses of covariance showed that these differences were not significant when differences in perceived family economic status were controlled. Since having an unemployed mother and/or father was significantly related to the lower perceived family economic status ($r_s=0.08$ and 0.18 for mothers and fathers, respectively, $p_s<0.01$), it seems that the effects of these variables on adolescent life satisfaction were indirect, through their influence on adolescent's feelings of economic pressure or satisfaction with the financial situation of their family. Students' age was not related to their life satisfaction ($r=0.02$, $p>0.05$). There were no differences in adolescent's life satisfaction according to the type of their family, type of school they attend, town size and parents' level of education. In addition to the family economic status, gender was the only socio-demographic variable that significantly predicted adolescent perceived life satisfaction. Boys reported significantly higher life satisfaction ($M=3.59$) than girls ($M=3.45$; $F=9.75$, $p<0.01$).

Multiple regression analyses

Correlational analyses for the sample as a whole revealed that higher life satisfaction was associated with higher self-esteem, close friend's support, and quality of family relationships. To examine the effects of predictor variables independently of the students' gender and perceived economic status, these variables were entered into the regression equation first. Next, the scores on the three parenting variables and family cohesion were entered as a block in the second step of regression analysis, on the basis of the presumed temporal order of occurrence of the events. In the third step the close friend's support was entered to determine the amount of variance friendship quality adds to the prediction model. In the fourth model we tested additive effects of support from a close friend and students' feelings of self-worth on life satisfaction (Table 2).

TABLE 2
Regressions of adolescents' life satisfaction scores on perceived economic status, family functioning variables, support from a close friend and self-esteem – summary results of hierarchical multiple regression analyses (standardized beta coefficients)

Variables	Pearson r	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β	Model 4 β
Gender	-.068**	-.059*	-.036	-.067*	-.006
Perceived economic status	.171**	.167**	.130**	.127**	.091**
Family cohesion	.285**		.177**	.162**	.122**
Parental support	.268**		.105**	.094**	.087*
Parental monitoring	.204**		.072*	.068*	.050
Joint decisions w/parents	.226**		.050	.045	.023
Close friend support	.181**			.140**	.042
Global self-worth	.405**				.310**
R ² change			.097**	.018**	.075**
R ²		.033**	.129**	.147**	.222**

*p<0.01; **p<0.001; ^aThis variable was scored dichotomously: 1 = male, 2 = female.

Adding the second block of predictor variables to the regression equation demonstrated that family functioning variables cumulatively added significantly to the predictability of life satisfaction; an additional 9.7% of the variance in life satisfaction reports was explained. The inspection of the individual variables within this block indicated that three variables were statistically reliable predictors, including family cohesion, parental monitoring and parental support. Joint decision-making and gender were unrelated to life satisfaction in this model, after their relationships with other variables were controlled. In Model 3, close friend's support was entered into the regression equation after controlling for the effects of family economic status, gender and family functioning variables. This variable added significantly to the predictability of life satisfaction, although it explained relatively little variance

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ŽGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

(1.8%). Model 4 presents the results with global self-worth variable added to represent respondents' personal resources. This variable significantly predicted reports of life satisfaction, accounting for 7.5% of additional variance. The selected model explained 22.2% of variance in life satisfaction scores. An inspection of the beta coefficients from the final regression model determined that self-esteem was the variable most closely related to the variance in life satisfaction scores. Family cohesion was the second most important predictor of global life satisfaction. Other significant correlates of adolescent life satisfaction were higher satisfaction with family economic status and warm, supportive relationships with parents. Support from a close friend was not a direct predictor of life satisfaction when global self-worth was in the model. It seems that regard from a close friend affects adolescents' life satisfaction both directly and indirectly, through its effects on their self-esteem. Similar effects were found for respondents' gender. Girls reported lower life satisfaction. Correlational analysis showed that participants' gender was also significantly related to their self-esteem, with girls showing lower global self-worth than boys ($r=-0.15$, $p<0.001$). When gender differences in global self-worth were statistically controlled in Model 4, no association was found between gender and life satisfaction.

Regression analyses for the interaction effects

Our final question was whether the quality of family and peer relationships and personal resources would have a moderating influence on the relationship between satisfaction with one's economic status and satisfaction with life. To test whether good family relationships buffered life satisfaction from the adverse influences of economic hardship we created interaction variables in which we used perceived economic status as the predictor and family cohesion and parenting practices variables as the moderators. Students' reports of life satisfaction were regressed on gender in the first step. This variable was included to control for its confounding effects. Perceived economic status was entered into regression equation at the second step and family cohesion and three parenting practices variables at the third step as main effects. The four interaction terms of economic status and family functioning variables were entered into regression equation as a block after main effects. No significant interactions emerged from this analysis.

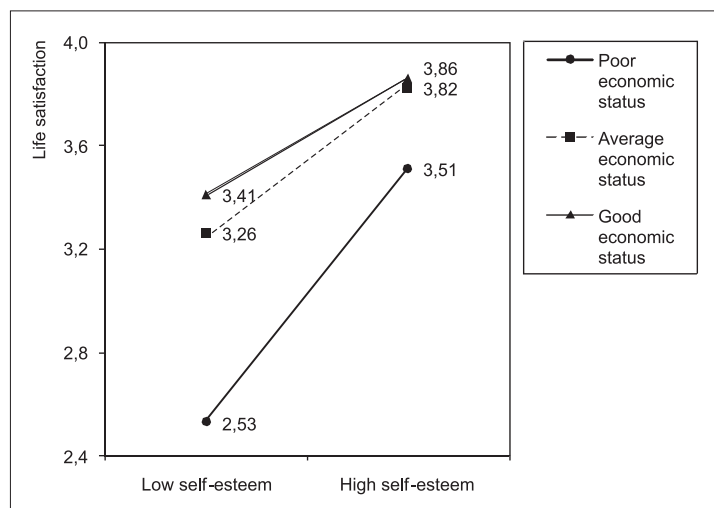
Next, we tested whether the relationship between economic status and life satisfaction was moderated by students' feeling of self-esteem. The main-effect terms for economic status and students' global self-worth were entered in the sec-

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
 GOD. 18 (2009),
 BR. 3 (101),
 STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
 BRAJŠA-ZGANEC, A.,
 ŠAKIĆ, M.:
 LIFE SATISFACTION...

ond step, after controlling for their gender, and their interaction was entered in the third step. There was a significant effect of the interaction between global self-worth and family economic status ($\beta = -0.465, p < 0.001$) which indicates that global self-worth reduced the effects of low economic status on dissatisfaction with life.

➔ FIGURE 1
 Interaction effect of
 perceived family
 economic status and
 adolescents' global
 self-worth on
 satisfaction with life

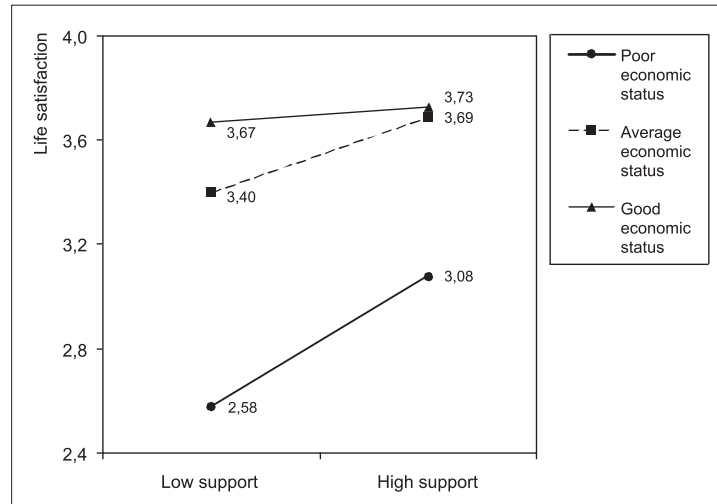


To examine further this interaction, we divided respondents into high and low self-esteem groups, based on the median score on the Global Self-Worth Scale, as well as in the groups of low, average, and high perceived family economic status. Analysis of covariance was performed on life satisfaction scores, with self-esteem and family economic status as main factors, and the child's gender as covariate. This analysis also yielded significant interaction effect ($F=4.23, p < 0.05$). Higher self-esteem produced much stronger effects on increased life satisfaction among the low economic status group than in the groups of respondents with average and high economic status (Figure 1). Additional correlational analysis showed that, controlling for gender effects, the relationship between economic status and life satisfaction was not significant in the high self-esteem group ($r_p=0.06, p > 0.05$), while life satisfaction of individuals with low self-esteem depended more on their satisfaction with family financial state ($r_p=0.20, p < 0.001$).

Similar results were obtained when we examined the interaction between economic status and close friend's support using the same model of hierarchical regression analysis. In this case interaction effect was also significant ($\beta = -0.399, p < 0.01$). For those individuals who experienced higher regard from a close friend, lower economic status produced weaker effects on decreased satisfaction with life ($r_p=.11, p < 0.001$) compared to respondents with low close friend support ($r_p=0.22,$

$p < 0.001$). Analysis of covariance also showed significant interaction effect ($F = 3.46, p < 0.05$), indicating the protective role of peer support (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2
Interaction effect of perceived family economic status and close friend's support on adolescents' satisfaction with life



DISCUSSION

In general, the majority of adolescents in the present study reported positive global life satisfaction which is in accordance with the results obtained in other countries (Funk et al., 2006; Huebner et al., 2000; Huebner et al., 2005; Park and Huebner, 2005).

Adolescents' perception of their family's economic status had a modest positive correlation to life satisfaction. Parents' employment status was related to adolescent life satisfaction, but this relation was not significant after controlling for adolescents' perception of the economic status of their family. This implies that subjective indicators of economic status are likely to play a more important role in adolescents' assessment of their life satisfaction than objective indicators.

In addition to the perceived family economic status, gender was the only socio-demographic variable that significantly predicted adolescents' perceived life satisfaction. In this study, girls were less satisfied with their lives than boys. This finding is in agreement with some previous studies of the relationship between individual and family factors and adolescent well-being (DeGoede et al., 1999; Simons et al., 2002), while other studies did not find significant gender differences in adolescent life satisfaction (Huebner et al., 2000). The results of our study indicate that adolescent gender has an indirect effect on their life satisfaction through the self-esteem variable.

The pattern of correlations between adolescent life satisfaction and socio-demographic variables shows less significant

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ZGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

and generally weaker relationships compared to its relationship with variables that measure quality of family and peer relationships and adolescent personal resources such as self-esteem. The results showed that from all the variables included in hierarchical multiple regression analysis adolescent global self-worth, family cohesion, parental support and subjective evaluation of better economic situation of one's family were related to adolescent global satisfaction with life. The overall findings of this study support the hypothesis about intrapersonal and interpersonal variables as better predictors of adolescent life satisfaction than family structure, family financial resources and adolescent living circumstances, which was also reported in previous studies (e.g. Ben-Zur, 2003; Demo and Acock, 1996; Shek, 1999).

The most important predictor of adolescent global life satisfaction was their self-esteem. This finding is consistent with the results of studies which have demonstrated that global self-confidence is crucial to consider when predicting positive dimensions of well-being (Huebner, 1991; McCullough et al., 2000). Open communication and close relationships with parents may promote development of internal resources and contribute to the subjective well-being of adolescents. The results of our study show that beta coefficients for parental variables decrease, and parental monitoring variable becomes insignificant upon introduction of the self-esteem variable into hierarchical regression analysis, which indicates that parental behavioral variables may, to a certain degree, affect the development of adolescents' internal resources such as self-esteem and contribute to their life satisfaction. Although friends' support is a very important determinant of adolescent's subjective well-being (Suldo and Huebner, 2006), our results suggest that this influence is indirect via global self-worth. Positive interaction with peers may be reflected in the way adolescents evaluate themselves and may enhance their self-esteem and overall life satisfaction. This might be especially important for young people living in poor families who are more socially isolated and have less opportunity to socialize with their peers.

The results of our study also indicate that family cohesion and parental support function as protective factors that directly contribute to adolescent life satisfaction, having a compensatory, rather than buffering effect. This suggests that family cohesion and parental support is equally important to all children rather than being relatively more protective to those exposed to risk factors. Shek (2002) found, in a study with Chinese adolescents, that family functioning was more strongly related to adjustment in poor adolescents than in non-poor adolescents. Our data do not support these findings, although

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ŽGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

it is difficult to compare different studies due to cultural differences in child-rearing practices and differences in sample characteristics. Shek's study sample included those adolescents who reported that their families were receiving social security assistance and who might be more exposed to stressful effects of the lack of material and social resources compared to adolescents in our study. Our study gives an indication on the linkage between economic stress, quality of family functioning and adolescent emotional quality of life in the general adolescent population. More studies are needed for better understanding of multiple types of stressful circumstances that adolescents and their families face within the context of extreme poverty.

In accordance with the interaction model of protective factors functioning, the present findings suggest that the effects of contextual stressors like financial hardship on adolescent well-being may be moderated by psychological and social resources of the adolescent. Self-esteem and close friend's support function as protective factors that buffer the negative influence of economic stress on life satisfaction of adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage. This study confirms the importance of both environmental and intrapersonal variables in adolescent life satisfaction, thus indicating the need for complex interactional models of positive well-being in adolescence.

There are numerous benefits for adolescents with high life satisfaction such as physical and mental health and good interpersonal relationships. Some researchers have reported that high life satisfaction functions as a buffer against the impact of stressful life events on developing psychopathology (Suldo and Huebner, 2004a). Given the link between perceived economic status and life satisfaction, research on the perceived levels and correlates of life satisfaction among children and youth who experience economic disadvantage should lead to better intervention efforts to promote their optimal development.

There are some limitations of this study. Measures of life satisfaction and economic hardship used in this investigation were single-item scales and we did not obtain sufficient information about the parents' socio-economic status and objective family financial situation. Using multidimensional measures of perceived quality of life and more indicators on economic situation of adolescents' families and their experience of economic stress would enable us to examine more thoroughly the link between economic hardship, subjective experience of poverty and perceived quality of life. Researchers agree that multi-item scales of life satisfaction are preferable to sin-

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ZGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

gle-item scales (Sousa and Lyubomirsky, 2001), but nevertheless the validity and reliability of these scales suggests that they are adequate if a very brief measure of global well-being is required (Diener, 1984). This study was of a correlational design, and association between interpersonal/intrapersonal variables and life satisfaction may be reverse. Perceived quality of life may contribute to self-esteem and parental child-rearing practices variables. Future research should focus on these relationships using longitudinal designs and include information collected from both adolescents and their parents.

REFERENCES

- Abdel-Khalek, A. M. (2006), Measuring happiness with a single item-scale, *Social Behavior and Personality*, 34 (2): 139-150.
- Ben-Zur, H. (2003), Happy adolescents: The link between subjective well-being, internal resources, and parental factors, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32 (2): 67-79.
- Bloom, B. L. (1985), A factor analysis of self-report measures of family functioning, *Family Process*, 24 (2): 225-239.
- Brown, B. B., Mounts, N., Lamborn, S. D., Steinberg, L. (1993), Parenting practices and peer group affiliation in adolescence, *Child Development*, 64 (2): 467-482.
- Conger, K. J., Rueter, M. A., Conger, R. D. (2000), The role of economic pressure in the lives of parents and their adolescents: The family stress model. In: L. J. Crockett and R. K. Silbereisen (Eds.), *Negotiating adolescence in times of social change* (pp. 201-233), New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Conger, R. D., Ge, X., Elder, G. H., Lorenz, F. O., Simons, R. L. (1994), Economic stress, coercive family process and the developmental problems of adolescents, *Child Development*, 65 (2): 541-561.
- DeGoede, M., Spruijt, E., Maas, C. (1999), Individual and family factors and adolescent well-being: A multi-level analysis, *Social Behaviour and Personality*, 27 (3): 263-280.
- Demo, D. H., Acock, A. C. (1996), Family structure, family process, and adolescent well-being, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 6 (4): 457-488.
- Diener, E. (1984), Subjective well-being, *Psychological Bulletin*, 95 (3): 542-575.
- Funk, B. A., Huebner, E. S., Valois, R. F. (2006), Reliability and validity of a brief life satisfaction scale with a high school sample, *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 7 (1): 41-54.
- Harter, S. (1985), *Manual for the social support scale for children*, Denver, University of Denver.
- Harter, S. (1988), *Manual for the self-perception profile for adolescents*, Denver, University of Denver.
- Huebner, E. S. (1991), Correlates of life satisfaction in children, *School Psychology Quarterly*, 6 (2): 103-111.

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ŽGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

Huebner, E. S. (1994), Preliminary development and validation of a Multidimensional life satisfaction scale for children, *Psychological Assessment*, 6 (2): 149-158.

Huebner, E. S., Drane, W., Valois, R. F. (2000), Levels and demographic correlates of adolescent life satisfaction reports, *Social Psychology International*, 21 (3): 281-292.

Huebner, E. S., Suldo, S. M., Smith, L. C., McKnight, C. G. (2004), Life satisfaction in children and youth: Empirical foundations and implications for school psychologists, *Psychology in the Schools*, 41 (1): 81-93.

Huebner, E. S., Valois, R. F., Paxton, R. J., Drane, J. W. (2005), Middle school student's perceptions of quality of life, *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6 (1): 15-24.

Kirby, L. D., Fraser, M. W. (1997), Risk and resilience in childhood. In: M. W. Fraser (Ed.), *Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective* (pp. 10-33), Washington, National Association of Social Workers.

Konu, A. I., Lintonen, T. P., Rimpellä, M. K. (2002), Factors associated with school children's general subjective well-being, *Health Education Research*, 17 (2): 155-65.

Lamborn, S. D., Mounts, N. S., Steinberg, L., Dornbusch, S. M. (1991), Patterns of competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful families, *Child Development*, 62 (5): 1049-1065.

Loesel, F., Bliesener, T., Koefler, P. (1989), On the concept of "invulnerability": evaluation and first results of the Bielefeld project. In: M. Bambring, F. Loesel, H. Skowronek (Eds.), *Children at risk: Assessment, longitudinal research, and intervention* (pp. 186-219), Berlin, de Gruyter.

Masten, A. S. (1994), Resilience in individual development: Successful adaptation despite risk and adversity. In: M. C. Wang and E. Gordon (Eds.), *Educational resilience in inner city America: Challenges and prospects* (pp. 3-25), New York, Erlbaum.

Masten, A. S., Hubbard, J. J., Gest, S. D., Tellegen, A., Garmezy, N., Ramirez, M. (1999), Competence in the context of adversity: Pathways to resilience and maladaptation from childhood to late adolescence. *Development and Psychopathology*, 11 (1): 143-169.

McCullough, G., Huebner, E. S., Laughlin, J. E. (2000), Life events, self-concept, and adolescents' positive subjective well-being. *Psychology in the Schools*, 37: 281-290.

Myers, D. G., Diener, E. (1995), Who is happy?, *Psychological Science*, 6 (1): 10-19.

Park, N., Huebner, E. S. (2005), A cross-cultural study of the levels and correlates of life satisfaction among adolescents, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 36 (4): 444-456.

Raboteg-Šarić, Z., Sakoman, S., Brajša-Žganec, A. (2002), Stilovi roditeljskoga odgoja, slobodno vrijeme i rizično ponašanje mladih, *Društvena istraživanja*, 58-59 (2-3), 239-265.

Shek, D. T. L. (1998), A longitudinal study of the relationship between family functioning and adolescent psychological well-being, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1 (2): 195-209.

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ZGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

Shek, D. T. L. (1999), Parenting characteristics and adolescent psychological well-being: A longitudinal study in a Chinese context, *Genetic, Social & General Psychology Monographs*, 124 (1): 27-44.

Shek, D. T. L. (2002), Family functioning and psychological well-being, school adjustment, and problem behavior in Chinese adolescents with and without economic disadvantage, *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 163 (4): 497-502.

Shek, D. T. L. (2005a), Paternal and maternal influences on the psychological well-being, substance abuse, and delinquency of Chinese adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 61 (3): 219-234.

Shek, D. T. L. (2005b), Perceived parental control processes, parent-child relational qualities, and psychological well-being in Chinese adolescents with and without economic disadvantage, *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 166 (2): 171-188.

Shek, D. T. L. (2005c), Economic stress, emotional quality of life, and problem behavior in Chinese adolescents with and without economic disadvantage, *Social Indicators Research*, 71 (1-3): 363-383.

Simons, C., Aysan, F., Thompson, D., Hamarat, E., Steele, D. (2002), Coping resource availability and level of perceived stress as predictors of life satisfaction in a cohort of Turkish college students, *College Student Journal*, 36 (1): 129-141.

Simons, R. L. and Associates (1996), *Understanding differences between divorced and intact families: Stress, interaction and child outcome*, London, Sage Publications.

Simons, R. L., Lorenz, F. O., Conger, R. D., Wu, C. (1992), Support from spouse as mediator and moderator of the disruptive influence of economic strain on parenting, *Child Development*, 63 (5): 1282-1300.

Sousa, L., Lyubomirsky, S. (2001), Life satisfaction. In: J. Worell (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of women and gender: Sex similarities and differences and the impact of society on gender* (pp. 667-676), San Diego, CA, Academic Press.

Suldo, S. M., Huebner, E. S. (2004a), The role of life satisfaction in the relationship between authoritative parenting dimensions and adolescent problem behavior, *Social Indicators Research*, 66 (1-2): 165-195.

Suldo, S. M., Huebner, E. S. (2004b), Does life satisfaction moderate the effects of stressful life events on psychopathological behavior during adolescence? *School Psychology Quarterly*, 19 (2): 93-105.

Suldo, S. M., Huebner, E. S. (2006), Is extremely high life satisfaction during adolescence advantageous? *Social Indicators Research*, 78: 179-203.

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ŽGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

Zadovoljstvo životom u adolescenata: učinci percipiranoga ekonomskog statusa obitelji, samopoštovanja i kvalitete odnosa s obitelji i vršnjacima

Zora RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Andreja BRAJŠA-ŽGANEC, Marija ŠAKIĆ
Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar, Zagreb

Cilj ovoga istraživanja bio je utvrditi u kojoj mjeri sociodemografske varijable, subjektivna materijalna dobrobit, aspekti socijalnih odnosa i osobni resursi predviđaju zadovoljstvo životom adolescenata. Istraživanje je provedeno na reprezentativnom uzorku od 2823 hrvatska srednjoškolca. Sudionici su popunjavali skale kojima se mjerila njihova percepcija roditeljskih odgojnih postupaka, obiteljske kohezije, podrške bliskoga prijatelja i općega samopoštovanja. Primijenjena su strukturirana pitanja kako bi se procijenilo opće zadovoljstvo učenika životom, percepcija ekonomskoga statusa njihove obitelji i sociodemografske varijable. Rezultati multiple regresijske analize pokazali su da se zadovoljstvo životom adolescenata može najbolje objasniti njihovim visokim samopoštovanjem, obiteljskom kohezijom i podrškom roditelja te višom percipiranom materijalnom dobrobiti. Pronađeni su i značajni interakcijski učinci koji upućuju na to da samopoštovanje i podrška bliskoga prijatelja moderiraju negativne učinke niže percipirane materijalne dobrobiti na zadovoljstvo životom adolescenata.

Ključne riječi: zadovoljstvo životom, adolescenti, ekonomski status, samopoštovanje, socijalna podrška, roditeljski odgojni postupci

Zufriedenheit mit dem Leben bei Adolszenten: Die Wahrnehmung des wirtschaftlichen Familienstatus, des Selbstwertgefühls und der Qualität der Beziehungen zu Familienmitgliedern und Altersgenossen

Zora RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Andreja BRAJŠA-ŽGANEC, Marija ŠAKIĆ
Ivo Pilar-Institut für Gesellschaftswissenschaften, Zagreb

Mit dieser Arbeit sollte ermittelt werden, inwiefern soziodemografische Variablen, subjektiv erlebter materieller Wohlstand, soziale Beziehungen und persönliche Ressourcen auf die Zufriedenheit von Adoleszenten mit dem eigenen Leben schließen lassen. An der Untersuchung nahmen 2823 kroatische Mittelschüler teil. Die Adoleszenten füllten Fragebogen aus, anhand deren ihre Wahrnehmung der

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB
GOD. 18 (2009),
BR. 3 (101),
STR. 547-564

RABOTEG-ŠARIĆ, Z.,
BRAJŠA-ZGANEC, A.,
ŠAKIĆ, M.:
LIFE SATISFACTION...

elterlichen Erziehungsmaßnahmen, des Familienzusammenhalts, der Unterstützung von seiten eines guten Freundes und des allgemeinen Selbstwertgefühls ermittelt wurde. Die zu beantwortenden Fragen betrafen die allgemeine Zufriedenheit der Schüler mit ihrem Dasein, die Wahrnehmung des wirtschaftlichen Familienstatus und soziodemografische Variablen. Eine multiple Regressionsanalyse ergab, dass sich Zufriedenheit mit dem eigenen Leben am besten aus einem ausgeprägten Selbstwertgefühl, einem starken Familienzusammenhalt, dem Erleben elterlicher Unterstützung sowie des materiellen Wohlstands ableiten lässt. Des Weiteren konnten bedeutende Wechselwirkungen der genannten Variablen untereinander ausgemacht werden, die darauf schließen lassen, dass durch ein positives Selbstwertgefühl und die Unterstützung eines guten Freundes negative Auswirkungen des wahrgenommenen geringeren Wohlstandes abgefedert werden können.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Zufriedenheit mit dem Dasein, Adoleszenten, wirtschaftlicher Status, Selbstwertgefühl, Unterstützung im sozialen Umfeld, elterliche Erziehungsmaßnahmen