

## What We Learned

This study investigated predictors of subjective well-being among rural adolescents. Findings showed four social-emotional contextual variables and gender predicted a substantial proportion of child well-being. Prospective models of subjective well-being among rural adolescents should account for gender, home, family, interpersonal, and educational contextual factors.

### Background

A child's **subjective sense of well-being** is a crucial barometer of her/his potential to **develop** and **thrive**. Yet, the subjective well-being among rural children has received relatively **little attention**.

### Study Aims

- To test whether demographic and **contextual factors** predict adolescent **life satisfaction**.
- To test whether demographic and contextual factors predict adolescent **mental health**.
- To test whether demographic and contextual factors predict adolescent **self-image**.
- To confirm the **reliability** the models using bootstrap resampling.

### Sample

- 7<sup>th</sup> graders ( $n = 149$ ) from a rural Midwestern U.S. school district. US born (100%).
- Age = 13, range 12-14. Gender: 52% male.
- 77% lived in one home, primarily with their mother/mother figure and their father/step-father/father.
- Ethnicity: Child ethnicity was primarily Caucasian (86% Caucasian, 5% Native American, 5% Hispanic, 1% Asian American, 3% other/biracial).

### Methods

- Respondents completed an adapted version of the **Children's Worlds survey** (7<sup>th</sup> Grade version, 140 items).
- Survey language was adapted to local U.S. vernacular and family involvement items were added.
- Stepwise multiple regression and bootstrap resampling procedures were used.

### Results

Table 1  
*Inter-correlations among Contextual Factors (N = 149)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Home	-	.65***	.30***	.25**	-.02	.38***	.08	.24**	.36***	.23**
2. FamilyRel	-	-	.59***	.26***	.01	.47***	.30***	.30***	.49***	.29***
3. Parent	-	-	-	.16*	.11	.49***	.25**	.34***	.40***	.41***
4. FamilyFin	-	-	-	-	.04	.25**	.20*	.08	.21*	.19*
5. Life	-	-	-	-	-	-.04	-.16*	-.12	-.13	.07
6. Neighbor	-	-	-	-	-	-	.42***	.55***	.65***	.46***
7. Teacher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.44***	.50***	.18*
8. SchoolCli	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.72***	.40***
9. SchoolSat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.50***
10. Peer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Home = home environment, FamilyRel = family relationships, Parent = parent involvement, FamilyFin = family financial resources, Life = life stress, Neighbor = neighborhood quality, Teacher = teacher relationship, SchoolCli = school climate, SchoolSat = school satisfaction, Peer = peer relationships.

Table 2  
*Summary of Regression Analyses Predicting Social-Emotional Well-Being with Robust Estimates*

Predictor Variable	Well-Being Indicators			Method of Estimation			
	B	SE B	$\beta$	95%CI	p	95%CI	p
Family relationships	.48	.07	.42	[.35,.61]	.000	[.33,.65]	.001
Peer relationships	.60	.10	.34	[.39,.80]	.000	[.39,.85]	.001
School satisfaction	.25	.06	.26	[.12,.37]	.000	[.07,.37]	.007
Mental Health							
School satisfaction	.46	.06	.45	[.35,.58]	.000	[.33,.56]	.001
Peer relationships	.67	.10	.36	[.47,.88]	.000	[.46,.89]	.001
Home environment	1.57	.33	.24	[.91,2.23]	.000	[.65,2.81]	.004
Self-Image							
School satisfaction	.34	.07	.36	[.21,.48]	.000	[.14,.50]	.001
Peer relationships	.59	.12	.34	[.36,.81]	.000	[.26,.94]	.001
Gender	-3.89	.94	-.24	[-5.75,-2.04]	.000	[-5.71,-2.01]	.002
Family relationships	.27	.07	.25	[.13,.42]	.000	[.09,.45]	.003

### Discussion

- Family, peer, and school contextual variables predicted **.63** of the variance in **life satisfaction**.
- School, peer, and home variables predicted **.67** of the variance in **mental health**.
- School, peer, gender, and family variables predicted **.54** of the variance in **self-image**.
- Bootstrap resampling confirmed the **stability** our models.

### Next Steps

- Test the model with an international sample.
- Ecologically-based interventions.
- Continue to examine the model with different age groups.
- Longitudinal data collection with more robust sampling methods.

### Limitations

- Non-probability sampling.
- Cross-sectional study design.
- Self-reported data.

### Acknowledgments

- This research was supported by The University of South Dakota School of Health Sciences and School of Education and the USD Department of Social Work.
- We appreciate the assistance of the teachers and school administrators who worked carefully to collect the data, and the children who were willing to participate in this study.
- Corresponding author: [Jarod.Giger@usd.edu](mailto:Jarod.Giger@usd.edu)