Subjective Well-being and School Functioning among High School Students

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Abstract
Subjective well-being (SWB) is a complex concept that includes all facets of effective and healthy human functioning across many different domains. This study sought to determine how teenagers' subjective well-being correlated with three measures of school functioning: academic achievement, academic satisfaction, and prosocial behavior. 223 teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 were included, with girls making up to 54.9% of the group (M = 15.67, SD = 1.21) and boys 45.1% (M = 16.21, SD = 1.16). Academic satisfaction and performance are the next best predictors of prosocial behavior among study participants, followed by their subjective well-being. Students' academic satisfaction and prosocial behavior are strongly predicted by their gratitude and school connection. However, there was no statistically significant correlation between these characteristics and students' academic achievement. For all participants, academic efficacy and satisfaction were important outcome predictors. Together, these findings indicate that student subjective well-being is an important resource for improving academic performance in adolescents.

Keywords: High School Students, School Function, Subjective Well-being

Introduction
Well-being is a multidimensional concept that incorporates all elements of healthy and effective human functioning in a variety of fields. "Subjective well-being" is the way an individual evaluates his or her life. It is a person's evaluation of his or her life and current situation good, desirable, undesirable, or negative, and to what extent. These evaluations can be cognitive reflections, which represents reflective evaluation of life and areas of life (such as work), can also be an emotional evaluation. Human feelings include various types, such as emotions and moods. Positive feelings include what people experience when things seem to be going well. A variety of feelings, while negative emotions are experienced when things are not going well. Positive emotions include both short-term emotions (such as enjoyment) and longer-term emotions (such as contentment). Negative emotions include moments or "states" emotions, such as anger, sadness, stress, and worry, as well as long-lasting moods, such as depression. Another form of subjective well-being is "optimism," which is typically associated with positive feelings but also includes positive expectations about the future. A distinction is often made between reflective subjective well-being and momentary experiences of subjective well-being, although the two are related (Kapteyn et al., 2015; Maggino, 2015).

Subjective well-being is a subtype of human well-being that is usually quantified by self-reports of personal well-being, which include emotional experiences and cognitive assessments, as well as frequent good sensations, higher life satisfaction, and few negative feelings (Kansky, 2017; Renshaw & Arslan, 2016; Renshaw et al., 2015). Recent methods, on the other hand, have expanded classic operationalizations of subjective well-being to private (thoughts and feelings) and public (verbal
and physical conduct) well-being domains. For example, Seligman (2011) developed the PERMA model (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning and Accomplishment) which identifies five key dimensions of subjective well-being: positive emotion, engagement, connection, meaning, and achievement.

The capacity of a student to carry out crucial functional tasks that support or facilitate their involvement in academic and non-academic components of the educational program, such as attendance and grade level, is referred to as school functioning. These practical activities are separate from academic ones like lessons and assignments and are regarded as non-academic educational programs. Dysfunction in school can manifest itself in many life experiences, including lack of proper medical care. From the perspective of life course, good school function is very important for personal health and education, as well as social employment rate and reducing social cost. Additionally, studies have shown a connection between issues with one or the other of school functioning and mental health. Many adolescents experience internalizing symptoms, or symptoms of anxiety and/or depression, and some research indicate that these adolescents seldom obtain specialized care (Radez et al., 2021; Wisdom et al., 2006).

Every adolescent values their academic performance since it shows how successful they have been in reaching their educational objectives. Academic performance can have both positive and negative long-term implications, including chances for academic careers and jobs when it is strong and mental health issues, school dropouts, and unemployment when it is weak. The ability to manage emotions and impulsive behavior, the capacity to deal with new situations, and the capacity to cope with conflicts with classmates or others may all be enhanced by successfully adjusting to school. Several environmental and psychological variables can affect and forecast successful academic performance. Personal characteristics including IQ, gender, future-focused attitudes, and values have been found to affect how well schools run. Positive school performance is also influenced by supportive interactions with classmates and instructors. Additionally, socioeconomic status (Alade et al., 2014; Eriksson et al., 2021), parental education level (Amuda & Ali, 2016), and support from the family (Cheng et al., 2012; Viray, 2016) are all significant predictors of effective academic performance.

Although student subjective well-being has been linked to a number of advantageous outcomes, including improved academic performance and school adjustment (Arslan & Duru, 2017), psychological need fulfillment (Hetland et al., 2015), and increased sense of purpose in life, it has also been linked to problematic behavior, psychological vulnerability, and severe psychological adjustment issues. Knowing what influences student adjustment and well-being is essential to delivering mental health care in educational settings given the special psychosocial and developmental requirements of teenagers. The adolescent adjustment to a healthy school environment may be affected similarly because improved well-being encourages healthy school functioning. In addition, preserving time-related changes in well-being over various timeframes for adolescent well-being research (Pethel et al., 2018) may help us comprehend the dynamics of well-being in adolescents in particular.

Recent research (Renshaw & Chenier, 2018) employed student subjective well-being to analyze students' self-assessments of private and public well-being behaviors (i.e., academic effectiveness, school connection, educational purpose, and enjoyment of learning) in the classroom. According to the research, a student's subjective well-being is a crucial factor in how well they operate in school and, in particular, how well they perform academically. A student's capacity to carry out school-related tasks that support involvement in academic and
extracurricular activities is referred to as school functioning, which is a wide notion. Schooling is a primary activity during childhood and adolescence. In light of the amount of time that children and adolescents spend in school, it is perhaps not surprising that the quality of their school experiences appears to be associated with students’ subjective well-being. The previous research suggests the significance of several important elements of the learning environment, such as the effectiveness of interactions with teachers and peers, parental involvement in education, classroom instruction methods, students' perceptions of safety, perceived and actual academic performance, and opportunities for extracurricular participation. Beyond the family setting, the school context is unquestionably a significant factor in determining the SWB and quality of life of children and adolescents (Suldo et al., 2009).

Current study assesses the prosocial behavior, academic satisfaction, and school achievement as crucial positive characteristics of adolescents' school functioning. Academic achievement, school belongingness, motivation, and academic self-concept are just a few of the outcomes that adolescents attain in certain schools that have been linked to student subjective well-being in the past (Renshaw & Chenier, 2019). For instance, Renshaw and Chenier (2018) found that each school's reported instructional results (such as grade point average and scores on standardized achievement tests) were significantly predicted by students' subjective well-being. The influence of educational purpose and academic efficacy on students' self-reported academic success was noticed by Arslan (2016). The impact of subjective well-being on academic achievement, however, is the exact reverse. Both low- and high-achieving students were likely to report higher and poorer subjective well-being, according to a meta-analysis of 47 research. The relationship between adolescent subjective well-being and students' actual academic performance as shown in school-reported data was also discovered by You et al. (2014), though it was weaker than the one between well-being and self-reported academic performance reported in earlier studies. The influence is far more minimal in scope.

The difficulties associated with teenage psychological adjustment are also linked to students' subjective well-being. When we talk about psychological adjustment, we mean if there are any internalizing symptoms (like depression) or externalizing issues (like behavioral issues). For instance, juvenile prosocial conduct, internalizing difficulties, externalizing behavior, and personal adjustment are all significantly predicted by subjective well-being (Arslan & Renshaw, 2018; Kaplan, 2017) implications for one's health and rising social expenses.

Method
Participants
223 adolescents from different public schools in a Mianyang city were recruited for the current study. Ages ranged from 13 to 18 years old in the sample, with 54.9% females and 45.1% boys ($M=15.67$, $SD=1.21$). Low SES was recorded at 12.9%, average SES at 29.8%, and high SES was reported at 57.3% for students. The initial survey was made with demographic data and research measures on paper and pencil. Before beginning the data gathering procedure, the authorities received their ethical permission. By providing informed permission forms and conducting surveys of participants who willingly engaged in the study, all students were informed about the goal and measurement scales of the study.

Instruments
The Chinese version of the College Student Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire (CSSWQ) (Renshaw & Arslan, 2016; Zhang & Carciofo, 2021) consists of 16 self-report items measuring four school-specific positive psychological domains: academic satisfaction, academic efficacy, school connectedness, and school gratitude.
All CSSWQ items are scored using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree). This scale has strong internal reliability estimation and convergent validity with other indicators of Chinese adolescent students' well-being. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, which were calculated to examine the internal consistency of the CSSWQ-Chinese data, were all > 0.7 and mostly > 0.8, largely consistent with results for the English CSSWQ for which Cronbach’s alphas were no less than 0.79 (Zhang & Carciofo, 2021). Students’ school functioning was measured using the Student Prosocial Behavior Scale (SPSB), alpha reliability $\alpha=.82$, Academic Satisfaction Scale (ASS), $\alpha=.91$ (Schmitt, 2008) and Grade Point Average (GPA). The SPSB and ASS is a 4-item self-report scale used to measure prosocial behavior of adolescents and academic satisfaction in school settings. All items were answered using a 4-point Likert-type scale (1=almost never 4=almost always). A student's grade point average (GPA) for the past year (Marks converted to GPA by dividing student percentage by 100 and multiplying it by 4) is used to assess adolescent's academic performance. One item was asked to measure their transcript average, reflecting their performance in all academic courses (on a scale of 0 to 100). The higher the score, the better the student is doing in school.

**Data Analysis**

Prior to the main study, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were run. The normalcy assumption was evaluated using slope and kurtosis measurements, and the results below showed that the assumption was met. The relationships between the research variables were then investigated using Pearson correlation analysis.

**Consent to Participate**

The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

**Ethics Statement**

The study was performed by the ethical standards as laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Psychology Department of Mianyang Normal University, Mianyang, Sichuan, China.

**Results**

Descriptive statistics showed that skewness and kurtosis scores ranged between -1.51 and 2.00, and all variables had relatively normal distributions (D'agostino et al., 1990). As shown in Table 1, the internal reliability ($\alpha$) of these scales ranged between .75 and .92, indicating adequate internal reliability estimates. To explore gender differences in the variables under research, an independent-samples $t$-test was first conducted. Only prosocial conduct and academic achievement showed significant gender differences. Girls performed much better in school than boys did ($M=79.24$, $SD=8.90$ vs. $M=75.91$, $SD=9.64$) [$t(183) =2.441$, $p<0.05$]. Girls ($M=14.15$, $SD=2.76$) and boys ($M=13.20$, $SD=2.58$) both reported higher levels of prosocial behavior [$t(208) =2.570$, $p<.05$] (Table 3). Additionally, the correlation analysis' findings revealed substantial and small-to-large correlations between the variables under study. According to Table 2, there is a substantial positive correlation between student subjective well-being and academic achievement, academic satisfaction, and prosocial behavior.
Table 1
Descriptive Statistics (N=223)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skew.</th>
<th>Kurt.</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students' subjective well-being</td>
<td>50.83</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>-.54</td>
<td>-.47</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school connectivity</td>
<td>12.52</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>-.71</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Gratitude</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>-.57</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educational purpose</td>
<td>13.17</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>-.84</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academic efficacy</td>
<td>12.47</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>-.47</td>
<td>-.39</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School grades (GPA)</td>
<td>77.60</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academic satisfaction</td>
<td>18.23</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>-.68</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prosocial behavior</td>
<td>13.72</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>-1.51</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SSW=student subjective well-being, SC=school connectedness, CG=school gratitude, EP=educational purpose, AE=academic efficacy, SA=school achievement. ASS=Academic Satisfaction, SPSB= Student Prosocial Behavior Scale

The well-being domain of all students was most strongly associated with prosocial behavior, followed by academic satisfaction. Taken together, these results suggest that students' subjective well-being is an important resource for improving adolescents' academic abilities (Table 2).

Table 2
Correlation Analysis of the Study Variables (N=223)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M±SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SSW</td>
<td>50.83±9.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.85**</td>
<td>.83**</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SC</td>
<td>12.52±3.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. SG</td>
<td>12.33±2.83</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.71**</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. EP</td>
<td>13.17±2.74</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. AE</td>
<td>12.47±2.67</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. SA</td>
<td>77.60±9.40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ASS</td>
<td>18.23±5.27</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. SPSB</td>
<td>13.72±2.71</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 3
Mean Comparisons of Gender Differences on Prosocial Behavior and Academic Achievement (N=223)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial Behavior</td>
<td>75.91±9.64</td>
<td>79.24±8.90</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>&lt;0.05*</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>13.20±2.58</td>
<td>14.15±2.76</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>&lt;0.05*</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how Chinese middle school students' subjective well-being relates to their school functioning. First, examinations into the connection between students' subjective well-being and academic performance essentially mirror prior studies (Huebner et al., 2001; Shoshani & Slone, 2013; Stewart & Suldo, 2011), which are in line with the present findings. The results show that school connectivity and gratitude have considerable and strong predictive impacts on students' academic satisfaction and prosocial behavior in terms of the sub-dimensions of their subjective well-being. In particular, school connection has been shown to predict prosocial behavior among adolescents (Murnaghan et al., 2014; Oldfield et al., 2016) and to be positively correlated with academic satisfaction (Zullig et al., 2011). Prior studies (McNeely et al., 2002; Nasir et al., 2011) have concentrated on the facilitative impact of school connections in enhancing academic achievement. As students become older, school connection decreases, which may account for the present non-significant results (Wilkinson-Lee et al., 2011). In a meta-analytic analysis, Bücker et al. (2018) found that although there might be substantial and non-significant relationships between these variables, student subjective well-being and academic achievement must inevitably reinforce one another. In conclusion, there may be some explanations for the non-significant correlation between these characteristics and high school students' academic performance, including time-related reductions in school connection and satisfaction. This topic requires more study.

Conclusion

The current study helps to understand the relationship between subjective well-being and school functioning among Chinese adolescent students. In summary, it can be concluded that students' subjective well-being is strongly correlated with the functioning of adolescent schools. These findings are generally consistent with past findings in the relevant literature. In this sense, these findings are expected to contribute to theory and practice. Consequently, findings of this study would contribute to the existing literature. Subjective well-being is directly associated with the school functioning. In this context, results of this research on Chinese high school students have clinical utility. Considering the results, subjective well-being can be focused on during psychological counseling procedures and programs aiming to increase school functioning. Future research may examine the mediating effect of variables such as...
meaning in life and optimism, which contribute to the subjective well-being.

**Limitations**
The current study is a survey on subjective well-being and school functioning and is limited to high school students and only adopts age and socioeconomic status as demographic variables, future studies can explore the relationship with other sociodemographic variables such as religion and culture. In terms of research methods, it is relatively single and adopts a questionnaire survey method. Although the reliability and validity of the questionnaire are relatively high, the research results still rely on the participants' answers to the questions, and the research results cannot exclude the subjectivity of the participants. Due to limitations in the research subjects, there are difficulties in inferring the results of this study. This study did not use experimental methods, and strict control of experimental conditions would make the study more effective.

**Acknowledgments**
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**Contribution of Authors**
Najam ul Hasan Abbasi: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - Reviewing & Editing, Supervision
Lv Lin: Investigation, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft

**Conflict of Interest**
There is no conflict of interest declared by the authors.

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**Data Availability Statement**
The datasets of the current study are not available publicly due to ethical reasons but are available from the corresponding author [N.U.H.A.] upon the reasonable request.

**References**


D'agostino, R. B., Belanger, A., &


