

# Happy and Fulfilled: Examining Student Subjective Well-Being Among Secondary School Students

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DOI: 10.47760/cognizance.2023.v03i07.012

**Abstract**— *The current study aims to examine the levels of student subjective well-being among secondary school students and to identify whether there is a significant difference in terms of the said construct between grade levels. The population chosen for the study are secondary school students from Dr. Yanga's College Inc. Results indicate that there is a high level of subjective well-being and its subfactors among the students across grade levels but there still exists is a significant difference in the level of the construct between grade levels. This implies that students enjoy an overall positive school environment.*

**Keywords**— *Student Well-Being, Secondary School Students, Basic Education, Kruskal-Wallis, Descriptive Statistics*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Recent studies have shown that high school students are stressed out by a variety of issues during their academic years. According to Pascoe et al. (2020), secondary level pupils deal with a variety of ongoing normative stresses that are typically felt as part of routine daily problems like persistent academic expectations. These academic-related stressors contributed to poorer physical and mental health, which in turn had a negative impact on their academic performance and resulted in a wide range of academic issues.

Additionally, there is evidence to support the idea that students' connections with their professors and peers have an emotional component that affects how well they perform academically. Burnout is frequently a result of relationships that are not adequate. According to studies by Yu et al. (2018) and Kim et al. (2018), peer support is second in importance to student burnout after school or instructor support. It's interesting to note that academic achievement and academic identity are both believed to be significantly impacted by high school students' sense of life purpose. According to Yukhymenko-Lescroart and Sharma (2022), students that have a strong sense of their own identity as learners strongly identify as learners, and as a result, academic performance is markedly improved.

Student Subjective Well-Being (SWB) will be taken into account while taking the aforementioned literature into account. SWB is made up of people's assessments of their lives, including positive affect, infrequently unpleasant affect, and life satisfaction, according to Tov and Diener (2009). As a result, SWB primarily focuses on when and why people are happy (Diener, 2000) and depicts pleasure as it is experienced by individuals. These factors include academic success (Bücker et al., 2018), school atmosphere with a focus on interpersonal interactions (Varela et al., 2019), and sense of life purpose (Martela, 2019). This feeling of happiness, particularly within the student population, can be influenced by a variety of factors. Values are another excellent predictor of SWB. According to Schwartz and Sortheix (2018), excellent values such as compassion, stimulation, and self-direction are positively connected with SWB, suggesting that conduct that is positively directed and supported by good values might increase well-being. Additionally, it is claimed that SWB is dependent upon the accomplishment of the objectives that a particular value stimulates.

Strengthening SWB proves to be a favourable discussion. In general, it was discovered that people with higher levels of SWB have more success in a variety of areas of their lives, such as their health, their jobs, or

their social interactions. In a similar vein, while taking a look at classroom environments, students that demonstrate the same levels of SWB considerably excel in their academic engagement and accomplishment, and are more likely to receive higher grades (Datu & King, 2018).

Given the significance of SWB, the current study intends to investigate student participants' levels of the abovementioned construct and provide explanations for why such levels might exist. Additionally, as previously stated, SWB encourages academic success and engagement among the student population; hence, another purpose of the study is to provide recommendations on how SWB can be further optimized within the study's target demographic. The researchers pose the following study questions in accordance with the goals.

1. What is the level of the student subjective well-being according to grade level?
2. Is there a significant difference between student subjective well-being when group according to grade level?

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Research Design

To achieve the study's objective, a descriptive, inferential research approach was employed. The Subjective Well-Being of the participants was naturally examined by the researchers through a survey questionnaire, free from any form of manipulation, while an inferential design was appropriate for the study given that assumptions would be made about whether there would be differences in Subjective Well-Being between the various grade levels.

### B. Population and Respondent

The participant of the study was composed of 874 high school students, from Grade 7 to Grade 11, from Dr. Yanga's College Inc., a private non-sectarian educational institution located in the province of Bulacan, the Philippines. A convenience sampling technique was also used in gathering participants and students who were readily available to the researchers were recruited to be part of the study. Summarized in Table I is the frequency of the students based on their grade level.

TABLE I  
THE STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Grade Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Grade 7	312	35.70
Grade 8	272	31.12
Grade 9	200	22.88
Grade 10	1	.11
Grade 11	89	10.18
<b>Total:</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>100</b>

### C. Instrumentation

The Student Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (SSWQ) was utilized in measuring the levels of SWB of the participants. The SSWQ is a 16-item 4-point Liker scale, self-report questionnaire used to measure student subjective well-being in schools and is operationalized through 4 subscales measuring school connectedness, academic efficacy, joy of learning, and educational purpose. In establishing its validity, the scale underwent substantive, structural, and external validation in its development process and all produced viable results. Furthermore, the SSWQ was correlated with the Student Prosociality Scale and Academic Perseverance Scale to establish its concurrent validity and produces r-values of .65 and .72 respectively. Its reliability, on the other hand, was established through estimation of its internal consistency and the estimated latent-means for all identified factors were invariant across gender (Renshaw et al., 2015). These strongly suggests that the SSWQ is a psychometrically valid and reliable scale fit for the purpose of the current study.

### D. Statistical / Data Analysis

The researchers employed the Kruskal-Wallis test, a non-parametric test, to analyse the gathered data and compare the between student subjective well-being when group according to grade level. This choice was made because the data did not exhibit normality, meaning it did not follow a normal distribution. Considering the information provided, the Null Hypothesis claims that there is no significant difference between the student subjective well-being when group according to grade level. On the other hand, the Alternative Hypothesis claims that there is a significant difference between the mentioned variables.

E. *Ethical Considerations*

Ethical considerations were firmly observed in the entire advent of the study. Participants were adequately informed on the usage of their test scores and confidentiality is strictly followed. Furthermore, during the data gathering process, there were no any form of psychological and/or physical harm present to the participants, nor were there any deception used. Right to withdraw was also provided to ensure that no coercion was done.

**III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

*SoP 1: What is the level of student subjective well-being according to grade level?*

When the scores of the students, as shown in Tables II to Table VI, are closely examined, it is apparent that students in all grade levels demonstrate satisfactory levels of academic efficacy, educational purpose, and joy of learning, with verbal interpretations of the scores ranging from "often" to "almost always". Additionally, it has been noted that students in all grade levels have a positive outlook when it comes to their feeling linked to their school and their general level of well-being, as indicated by the verbal interpretation of their score as "often".

TABLE III  
COMPARISON OF JOY OF LEARNING SCORE PER GRADE LEVEL

Grade Level	Joy of Learning Score	Interpretation
Grade 7	13	Often
Grade 8	13	Often
Grade 9	13	Often
Grade 10	14	Almost Always
Grade 11	12	Often

TABLE IIIII  
COMPARISON OF SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS SCORE PER GRADE LEVEL

Grade Level	School Connectedness Score	Interpretation
Grade 7	13	Often
Grade 8	12	Often
Grade 9	13	Often
Grade 10	11	Often
Grade 11	12	Often

TABLE IVV  
COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE SCORE PER GRADE LEVEL

Grade Level	Educational Purpose Score	Interpretation
Grade 7	14	Almost Always
Grade 8	14	Almost Always
Grade 9	14	Almost Always
Grade 10	15	Almost Always
Grade 11	13	Often

TABLE V  
COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC EFFICACY SCORE PER GRADE LEVEL

Grade Level	Academic Efficacy Score	Interpretation
Grade 7	12	Often
Grade 8	13	Often
Grade 9	12	Often
Grade 10	14	Almost Always
Grade 11	12	Often

TABLE VI  
COMPARISON OF STUDENT SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING SCORE PER GRADE LEVEL

Grade Level	Student Subjective Well-being Score	Interpretation
Grade 7	52	Often
Grade 8	52	Often
Grade 9	52	Often
Grade 10	54	Often
Grade 11	49	Often

With the verbal interpretation above, the participants' perceptions of their well-being as secondary school students at the learning institution where they are currently enrolled are inferred to be of satisfactory. This may also imply that the students benefit from a supportive learning environment at school, which lowers students' burnout and boosts their academic achievement, that the students are able to evaluate their academic behavior in light of the demands placed on them by their environment, and that they view academic challenges as exciting and necessary for personal development. Additionally, it can be assumed that they have a sense of purpose in their studies, i.e., they value and find meaning in their time spent in school. This contributes in maximizing their learning opportunities as exhibiting a strong sense of purpose is a sign of having a satisfactory subjective well-being. (Renshaw et al., 2015; Yu et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2018; Martela, 2019; Varela et al., 2019; Yukhymenko-Lescroart & Sharma, 2022).

*SoP 2: Is there a significant difference between student subjective well-being when group according to grade level?*

The results in Table VII show that there is no statistically significant difference in the student subjective well-being across the categories of academic efficacy and school connectedness. Contrary to this, however, findings indicate that there are notable differences in student subjective well-being on general, as well as in the areas of joy of learning and educational purpose across all grade levels.

TABLE VII  
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STUDENT SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING SCORES

	<b>p</b>
Joy of Learning	< .001
School Connectedness	0.123
Educational Purpose	0.013
Academic Efficacy	0.178
<b>Student Subjective Well-being Total Score</b>	<b>0.01</b>

According to the Kruskal-Wallis test results, students may experience varying degrees of positive emotions and cognitions while working on academic tasks, depending on their grade level, as well as their capacity to view school and academic work as significant and worthwhile. The degree of overall student subjective well-being varies from grade 7 to grade 11, which is equally important to note. As secondary level students cope with a variety of academic expectations that cause continuous stress, these disparities may be the result of experiences unique to specific grade levels (Pascoe et al., 2020). This suggests that as students complete their secondary education, their feeling of purpose as learners may continue to grow and increase, which contributes to improving their overall subjective well-being.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

According to the study's findings, the subjective well-being of the student participants is generally in a satisfactory, as evidenced by their scores on the construct's four areas, which include academic efficacy, school connectedness, joy of learning, and educational purpose. The study also comes to the conclusion that there are differences in the subjective well-being of students in each grade level, which are also evident in their results on the subdomains of joy of learning and educational purpose. These findings suggest that students belong in a supportive learning environment, are able to evaluate their academic behavior in light of learning-related environmental demands, and is capable of viewing academic obstacles as motivating and necessary for their development as learners.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researchers would like to acknowledge the support of Dr. Yanga's Colleges Inc. in making this study possible.

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