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## **Life Satisfaction in Students: The Relationship of Social Support and School Climate**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to determine how social support and school climate predict life satisfaction of vocational high school students. The research participants were vocational high school students in Pringsewu, with the number of subjects used in the study being 200 students. The instruments in this study consisted of a scale of life satisfaction, social support, and school climate. The analytical method used was multiple regression analysis with the help of the SPSS version 23 program. The results of the data analysis between social support and school climate with life satisfaction showed a significance value of the R coefficient of 0.000, meaning that simultaneously social support and school climate were able to predict high and low levels of life satisfaction. Meanwhile, separately, between social support and life satisfaction showed a significance value of the zero-order coefficient of 0.001 and between school climate and life satisfaction showed a significance value of the zero-order coefficient of 0.015; meaning that between social support and life satisfaction, there was a significant relationship, as well as between school climate and life satisfaction. The conclusion in this study is that, both simultaneously and separately, social support and school climate were able to predict student life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** life satisfaction, school climate, social support

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the last decade, there have been worries regarding mental health and psychological well-being in adolescents (World Health Organization, 2022). Life satisfaction is considered important as an indicator to evaluate mental health in individuals (Cao & Zhou, 2021). Life satisfaction is a cognitive appraisal process where individuals assess their quality of life based on their unique criteria (Hills et al., 2020). People with high levels of life satisfaction are inclined to be confident in themselves, be optimistic and get positive assessments from others, cope

well with stress, have goal-directed behaviour, and tend to do their best to achieve predetermined targets in their lives (Supervía et al., 2023). Individuals with low life satisfaction tend to have many obstacles, such as dissatisfaction with themselves, unhappiness, and problems in self and social adjustment (Raharjo & Sumargi, 2018).

Based on research in adolescence, there is a decrease in life satisfaction, such as decreased health, decreased health causes adolescents to carry out various negative activities, such as smoking (Suldo et al., 2015). Life satisfaction decreases when adolescents avoid or flee from the issue they are facing, blame themselves, complain and stress in response to problems (Suldo et al., 2014). In education, the impact of adolescents' life satisfaction decreases, such as decreased academic achievement, missing school, and not listening when the teacher explains (Huebner et al., 2014). One factor that has a relationship with life satisfaction is social support (Cui, 2022). Social support is comfort, attention, appreciation, or assistance from other individuals or organisations (Kong et al., 2015).

Support can come from various sources, from a spouse or loved one, family, friends, doctors, or from groups (Sarafino & Smith, 2016). Teenagers typically have great aspirations for their lives, and with the help of social support, such can increase individual life satisfaction (Xiang et al., 2020). Social support is a buffer when individuals face stress in life (Mahon & Yarcheski, 2017). Previous research showed that social support reduces symptoms of depression and improves psychological conditions and individual life satisfaction (Cui, 2022). Besides social support, a good school climate is needed to increase life satisfaction at school (Long & Eamoraphan, 2015). School climate is the interaction between teachers and students, involving environmental factors such as building facilities and infrastructure and a sense of security and trust (Nasution & Ulfasari, 2015).

According to DeWitt and Slade (2014), a positive school climate is one where everyone is united and respects each other. Students, parents, and educators work together and have the same responsibility to develop and realise the school's vision (Everth & Bright, 2023). A conducive school climate will foster togetherness in learning, group cohesion, and mutual respect, allowing students to grow and learn in a democratic and enjoyable social environment (Thapa et al., 2013). A positive school climate can reduce bullying that occurs in schools, while a negative school climate can reduce student achievement levels (Aldridge et al., 2020). Based on the above problems, researchers aim to predict student life satisfaction based on social support and school climate.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Approaches and Types of Research**

This research uses correlational research that aims the aim of finding a relationship between two variables. This study's dependent variable is life satisfaction, while the independent variables are social support and school climate. These variables are measured based on a scale of aspects related to the variables that have been determined.

### **Research Subject**

Students pursuing vocational education (SMK) in Pringsewu made up the study's population. This study's data collection technique was random sampling (Azwar, 2017). Two hundred students participated in this study, with an age range of 15-17 years. With majors in computer network engineering, automotive mechanics, and motorcycle engineering.

## Research Instruments

The life satisfaction scale compiled by the researcher uses the aspects put forward by Huebner et al. (2014): satisfaction with family, satisfaction with friends, satisfaction with education/school, satisfaction with the living environment and satisfaction with oneself. The number of life satisfaction scale items is 35, with a reliability of 0.902. The social support scale compiled by the researcher uses the aspects proposed by Sarafino and Smith (2016): emotional support, appreciation support, instrumental support, and informative support. The number of social support scale items is 33, with a reliability of 0.894. The school climate scale compiled by the researcher uses the aspects proposed by DeWitt and Slade (2014): involvement, empowerment and autonomy, inclusiveness and fairness, and environment. The number of school climate scale items is 28, with a reliability of 0.908.

## Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study used multiple regression, a technique used in parametric statistics. Several assumptions must be met in this analysis technique, namely normality, linearity, and multicollinearity.

## RESEARCH RESULT

**Table 1**

Normality Test

| Variable          | K-SZ Score | Sig.  | Explanation |
|-------------------|------------|-------|-------------|
| Life satisfaction | 0.091      | 0.051 | Normal      |
| Social support    | 0.091      | 0.051 | Normal      |
| School climate    | 0.090      | 0.057 | Normal      |

The normality test aims to determine whether the distribution of subject scores is normal. The criterion for normality is that if the K-SZ significance value is  $>0.05$ , then the sample comes from a population

with a normal distribution. Based on the analysis results, the life satisfaction variable has a K-SZ significance value of 0.051. The social support variable has a K-SZ significance value of 0.051, and the school climate variable has a K-SZ significance value of 0.057. These results indicate that the data for each research variable is normally distributed.

**Table 2**

Linearity Test

| Variables                             | Linearity |       | Explanation |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------------|
|                                       | F         | Sig.  |             |
| Social support with life satisfaction | 12.141    | 0.001 | Linear      |
| School climate with life satisfaction | 4.486     | 0.038 | Linear      |

The linearity test aims to determine whether the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is linear. The criterion for linearity is that if the F-linearity significance value is  $<0.05$ , then there is a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Based on the results of the analysis, the relationship between social support and life satisfaction has an F-linearity significance value of 0.001. Meanwhile, the school climate variable and life satisfaction have an F-linearity significance value of 0.038. These results indicate a linear relationship between social support and life satisfaction, as well as between school climate and life satisfaction.

**Table 3**

Multicollinearity Test Results

| Variable       | Tolerance | VIF   | Explanation          |
|----------------|-----------|-------|----------------------|
| Social support | 0.979     | 1.021 | No Multicollinearity |
| School climate | 0.979     | 1.021 | No Multicollinearity |

The purpose of the multicollinearity test is to determine whether there is a linear relationship between the independent variables. In multiple linear regression analysis, there should be no multicollinearity between the independent variables. The criteria for a multicollinearity test are a VIF value  $<10$  and a Tolerance value  $>0.1$ . Based on the results of the analysis, the social support and school climate variables had a VIF

(Variance Inflation Factor) of 1.021 and a Tolerance value of 0.979. These results indicate no multicollinearity among the independent variables.

**Table 4**

Multiple Regression Analysis Results

| <b>Variables</b>                                         | <b>R</b> | <b>R Square</b> | <b>Sig.</b> | <b>Explanation</b>       |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Social support and school climate with life satisfaction | 0.391    | 0.153           | 0.000       | Significant relationship |

The multiple regression analysis in this study aimed to determine the simultaneous relationship between social support and school climate with life satisfaction. The criterion used was a significance coefficient value of  $R < 0.05$ , indicating a significant relationship. Based on the analysis results, the significance coefficient value of  $R < 0.000$  indicated a highly significant simultaneous relationship between social support and school climate with life satisfaction.

**Table 5**

Zero Order Analysis Results

| <b>Variable</b> | <b>Zero Order</b> | <b>Sig.</b> | <b>Explanation</b>       |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Social support  | 3.351             | 0.001       | Significant relationship |
| School climate  | 0.333             | 0.015       | Significant relationship |

The zero-order analysis aimed to determine the relationship between social support and school climate with life satisfaction separately. The criterion used is that if the zero-order significance value is  $< 0.05$ , then it is said that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the results of the analysis, the relationship between social support and life satisfaction shows a zero-order significance value of 0.001. At the same time, the relationship between school climate and life satisfaction shows a zero-order significance value of 0.015. These results indicate a highly significant relationship between social support and student life satisfaction, as well as between school climate and student life satisfaction.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study indicate a significant relationship between social support, school climate, and life satisfaction among vocational high school students. This finding aligns with the theory that life satisfaction results from the interaction between individuals and social and environmental factors (Rajani et al., 2019). Furthermore, social support has been shown to contribute more than school climate in predicting life satisfaction; this is because adolescents are at a developmental stage that greatly requires acceptance, attention, and recognition from significant others, such as family, peers, and teachers (Bi et al., 2021). Emotional support, appreciation, and practical assistance provide a sense of security and appreciation, ultimately enhancing positive life assessments (Azpiazu et al., 2023). With social support, individuals are better able to manage stress, have greater self-confidence, and are optimistic about their future (Su et al., 2022).

Indicators of social support include emotional, esteem, instrumental, and informational support. Students who feel the presence of those closest to them (parents, peers, and teachers) tend to have a stronger sense of belonging (Sarafino & Smith, 2016). Emotional support provides a sense of security, esteem increases self-esteem, practical assistance reduces stress, and informational support provides direction in decision-making (Han Mo et al., 2024). This dynamic suggests that the greater the experience of social support, the greater the individual's likelihood of healthy emotional regulation, optimism, and life satisfaction (Izaguirre et al., 2021).

On the other hand, a positive school climate also plays a significant role in increasing life satisfaction. A conducive school is characterised by healthy interpersonal relationships, student engagement in the learning process, a sense of security, and fair treatment of all students (Rudolf & Lee, 2023). When students perceive the school environment as

supportive, inclusive, and providing space for growth, they feel more comfortable and motivated to achieve (Zullig et al., 2018). Thus, school climate not only influences academic achievement but also contributes to an individual's psychological well-being (Wong & Siu, 2017).

School climate indicators in this study include interpersonal relationships, fairness, engagement, and safety (DeWitt & Slade, 2014). A positive school environment enables individuals to develop a strong social identity and achievement motivation. For example, warm teacher-student relationships foster self-determination, while student engagement in school activities fosters agency and feelings of competence (Zullig et al., 2018). Conversely, a conflicted or unfair school climate can erode psychological safety, lead to alienation, and decrease individual life satisfaction (Aldridge et al., 2020).

The dynamics between social support and school climate in this study indicate that the two complement each other. Strong social support from family or peers can help students adapt to a school climate that may be less than ideal (Yoon & Kuriansky, 2024). Conversely, a positive school climate can compensate for students who may have limited social support at home (Suldo et al., 2013). Therefore, the combination of these two factors is important in shaping students' life satisfaction.

Indicators of life satisfaction include cognitive evaluation of life experiences, self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, and a sense of purpose in life (Huebner et al., 2014). Students who feel socially supported and in a healthy school environment tend to be able to make positive assessments of their lives; this is in line with the theory of subjective well-being, which emphasises that social support and school climate can strengthen positive affect and reduce negative affect, resulting in higher levels of life satisfaction (Diener et al., 2018).

When these indicators are viewed integratively, it can be understood that social support serves as a psychological foundation that

strengthens self-esteem and resilience. At the same time, school climate provides an external context that allows individuals to express their potential and psychological needs. These two factors synergise in shaping life satisfaction (Izaguirre et al., 2021). Thus, social support can act as a protective factor when the school climate is less conducive. Conversely, a positive school climate can offset the limitations of social support from the family (Suldo et al., 2013).

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates a highly significant relationship between social support and school climate and student life satisfaction. Social support contributes significantly more than school climate because it encompasses support from the broader environment, not just within the school. This finding fills a gap in previous research that has not examined both variables simultaneously. The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for further research in developing studies on student life satisfaction, whether through different research methods, more diverse subjects, or by adding other variables, such as gratitude, self-assertiveness, age, and employment status.

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