



Primary School Students' Perceptions of Social Support, School Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction

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Perceived life satisfaction during the period of childhood and adolescence can be considered a reliable measure of psychological and emotional growth of children and adolescents. The current study aimed to investigate age differences related to social support provided to students (by teachers, classmates, parents and close friends), and its relationship with school and life satisfaction. The study also examined the significance of social support in explaining students' school and life satisfaction. Data were collected from a sample comprising 390 primary school students in grades 3 - 8 in Croatia. The findings indicate that students perceive a lower level of support received from parents, teachers, classmates and close friends, and lower school and life satisfaction, as they age. Statistically significant differences were found in perceived teacher support and school and life satisfaction between younger and older students. Hierarchical regression analysis showed that age and support from teachers and classmates are significant predictors of school satisfaction. The most significant predictors of students' life satisfaction are support from parents and classmates, and school satisfaction. Finally, the implications of the findings and guidelines for future research are discussed.

Keywords: life satisfaction; quantitative methodology; school satisfaction; social support; students

First submission 15th July 2023; Accepted for publication 11th April 2024

Introduction

Nowadays, young people seem to face significant challenges. The pace of life is faster, and abundant information is easily and readily accessible. Although this may be attractive for young people, the rapidly changing environment they are growing up in provides both opportunities and challenges in their development. It is therefore crucial that the numerous influences that shape and nurture the child's development are directed at enhancing children's well-being. Children with a high sense of wellbeing tend to experience positive emotions over time and report high levels of satisfaction with their lives. In this paper we focus on two key

<https://doi.org/10.56300/QCBN1811>

ISSN 2073 7629

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Volume 16, Number 1, April 2024

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aspects of children's subjective well-being as manifested in their life satisfaction and school satisfaction (Huebner et al., 2014) and how these are related to perceived social support.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is defined as an "individual's overall appraisal of the quality of her or his life" (Gilman & Huebner, 2003, p. 193). Considering the significance of life satisfaction in the process of human growth and development as highlighted by Satici (2016), it seems to be crucial to investigate the elements that contribute to enhanced life satisfaction, particularly during childhood. Although life satisfaction is considered a relatively stable quality when compared to the affective component of subjective well-being, it can be influenced by age (Casali et al., 2023), gender (Chen et al., 2020), culture (Jiang et al., 2021), and external events (Anusic & Schimmack, 2016; Casali et al., 2023). The satisfaction experienced by young individuals is not solely a component of their developmental results, but also a result of favourable life consequences such as academic success, improved interpersonal relationships, and both physical and mental health (Fergusson et al., 2015; Proctor & Linley, 2013; Proctor et al., 2009; 2010). Numerous studies on life satisfaction of young people have focused on investigating the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health (Casali et al., 2023; Fergusson et al., 2015; Vus et al., 2021).

Research by Proctor et al. (2010) on a sample of adolescents yielded interesting results. The study revealed that students who experience a greater level of life satisfaction displayed notably elevated average scores across various school-related, interpersonal and personal factors. Conversely, they exhibited markedly lower average scores on depression, negative emotions and social stress in comparison to peers with moderate and evidently low levels of life satisfaction. On the other hand, the positive impact of aspects such as the meaning of life, gratitude, self-esteem and positive emotions related to life satisfaction was found to be significantly stronger in individuals with an extremely low level of life satisfaction than in those who were already very satisfied with their lives. A study conducted by Cavioni et al. (2021) on a large sample of adolescents demonstrated that life satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between positive school interactions and self-reported mental health in adolescents. The study suggested that both the quality of school interactions and personal life satisfaction are factors which safeguard mental health.

School Satisfaction

The cognitive aspects of subjective well-being entail a global assessment of life satisfaction and satisfaction with specific areas, such as satisfaction with work, marriage, health, and free time (Diener et al., 2003). Work satisfaction is equivalent to school satisfaction as far as children are concerned. School satisfaction has been defined as a "cognitive-affective evaluation of overall satisfaction with one's school experiences" (Huebner et al., 2001, p. 168). As it is interconnected with various domains of subjective well-being and serves as a fundamental element in the way that children measure their overall life quality, school satisfaction can be easily distinguished from other spheres of satisfaction, including satisfaction with family, companions, life circumstances or self-assessment. More specifically, a student may be satisfied with their family or living

conditions while simultaneously experiencing dissatisfaction with some aspects of their school or education. Students' school satisfaction is important, not only given the amount of time they spend there, but also because of its correlation with life satisfaction (Huebner & Gilman, 2006; Scharenberg, 2016).

Research has shown that school satisfaction is strongly associated with a greater level of life satisfaction. However, it also exhibits a notable negative correlation with feelings of school-related boredom, which in turn is significantly linked to a lower level of life satisfaction (Baños et al., 2019b). The boredom that some students experience within an educational setting reduces the effectiveness of any learning approach (Ahmed et al., 2013), making these students more likely to drop out of school (Takakura et al., 2010) and more prone to disruptive behaviour (Baños et al., 2019a). Students' school satisfaction has a mediating role between school climate and life satisfaction. Students who perceive their environment as supportive, safe and warm are more inclined to develop a greater sense of trust in their school, which increases levels of school satisfaction (Varela et al., 2018). However, the school environment is not the sole factor influencing students' school satisfaction. In the last twenty years, the environments in which children grow up have changed significantly. The contemporary environment entails a greater presence and use of digital media, both during leisure time and the time children spend at school. Recent research on students' school satisfaction and school-related stress (Khan et al., 2022) shows that prolonged screen time increases school stress and decreases school satisfaction in adolescents.

Social Support

According to Thompson (2014), children function within a framework of connections. While the quality of their home, school, and neighbourhood, as well as institutional and cultural influences, are all of great significance, their importance lies primarily in the way they are shaped by the relationships children have with their significant others. Social support, including the support they receive from their families, teachers, classmates and close friends plays an important role in children's lives, and it has been associated with many positive psychological and physical outcomes. Malecki and Demaray (2002) define it as "an individual's perceptions of general support or specific supportive behaviours (available or enacted upon) from people in their social network, which enhance their functioning and/or may buffer them from adverse outcomes" (p. 2). Research on the role of social support in the period of childhood and adolescence has confirmed the positive correlation between social support and school achievement, self-esteem and well-being (Bum & Jeon, 2016). Other studies have revealed a negative correlation between social support and depression in young people; a greater level of social support seems to be effective in preventing depression, while a lower level of social support presents a risk of depression in young people (Rueger et al., 2008; 2010; 2016).

Students who are satisfied with school tend to have better relationships with their peers (Persson et al., 2016) and vice versa. Students with well-established peer relationships report higher levels of school and life satisfaction (Gempp & González-Carrasco, 2021). However, teachers also have an important role in instilling a sense of school satisfaction in students. A study conducted by Baena-Extremera and Granero-Gallegos (2015) demonstrated the significance of the role of teachers, including their potential to directly impact both

students' academic experience and their overall life satisfaction. Comparable outcomes were obtained in a study conducted by Granero-Gallegos et al. (2020), which revealed that the competence of Physical Education teachers played a significant role in managing disruptive behaviours within the classroom, which was also associated with school satisfaction. The connection between students and teachers, along with strong social support for students, was also found to have a positive correlation with both the students' satisfaction with school and their overall life satisfaction (Danielsen et al., 2009).

Objectives of the study

It is therefore important to determine the degree to which the perceived social support influences school students' school and life satisfaction, and to explore the age differences in this relationship. This study seeks to answer the following three questions:

1. How does student satisfaction with life, school, and social support vary across different age groups?
2. To what extent can social support (from teachers, classmates, parents, and close friends) help predict students' school satisfaction?
3. To what extent can social support (from teachers, classmates, parents, and close friends) help predict students' life satisfaction?

Methodology

Participants

The research study encompassed 413 students in grades 3 - 8 at a primary school in Zagreb, Croatia. The age of the participants ranged from 9 to 14 years ($M = 11.54$; $SD = 1.73$). Written parental consent had been obtained for all the participants in the study. Deviations were found in the analysis of the outliers based on z values and in the Mahalanobis distances, which measure unusual relationships between variables for average values in all factors. As a result, 23 participants were excluded from further data processing. The final sample comprised 390 participants, of which 47.2% were boys ($n = 184$) and 52.8% were girls ($n = 206$). The sample size and the proportions of participants in the sample in terms of the grade attended are presented in percentages as follows: 3rd ($n = 62$; 15.9%), 4th ($n = 77$; 19.7%), 5th ($n = 64$; 16.4%), 6th ($n = 52$; 13.3%), 7th ($n = 66$; 16.9%) and 8th ($n = 69$; 17.7%) grade.

Procedure

It took approximately 20 minutes for participants to complete the questionnaire. The process of data collection involved using a traditional paper-and-pencil survey method. The research was conducted on the school premises during regular class sessions, with each grade being addressed separately. The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring that the children's participation was voluntary. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any point while filling out the questionnaire.

Instruments

The *Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS)* (Malecki & Demaray, 2002; Malecki et al., 2014) originally consisted of 60 items that measured five dimensions of social support. Twenty items that measured four dimensions were used in this research, namely teacher support (e.g. *My teachers treats me fairly*), parental support (e.g. *My parents show they are proud of me*), classmate support (e.g. *My classmates ask me to join activities*) and close friend support (e.g. *My close friend gives me ideas when I don't know what to do*). The factor structure of the questionnaire was checked with the main components method with orthogonal (varimax) rotation ($KMO = .893$; Bartlett's sphericity test $\chi^2_{df120} = 3129.600$; $p = .001$). According to the Kaiser-Guttman criterion, four factors had characteristic roots higher than 1 and they explained 68.39% of the social support variance. Cronbach's α reliability coefficients were $\alpha = .79$ for parental support, $\alpha = .83$ for teacher support, $\alpha = .85$ for classmate support and $\alpha = .88$ for close friend support.

School satisfaction is one of the dimensions included in the questionnaire *Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)* (Huebner, 2011), which comprises eight items (e. g. *I like being in school*). The implemented explanatory factor analysis ($KMO = .864$; Bartlett's sphericity test $\chi^2_{df28} = 1253.394$; $p = .001$) confirmed the one-factor solution which explained 48.44% of the school satisfaction variance. The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .84$.

The *Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS)* (Huebner, 1991) is a unidimensional questionnaire that consists of nine items (e.g. *I feel good about what is happening to me*). The exploratory factor analysis was carried out and checked with the main components method with orthogonal (varimax) rotation ($KMO = .856$; Bartlett's sphericity test $\chi^2_{df21} = 1017.741$; $p = .001$). Based on the analysis, one item was eliminated due to insufficient factor saturation. Eight items were retained, and the factor analysis explained 50.61% of the school satisfaction variance. The reliability of the life satisfaction factor obtained was $\alpha = .84$.

In the questionnaires, participants were asked to express their level of agreement with each statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The outcomes for individual scales were computed as the average value of the responses given to the relevant items. Additionally, the questionnaire also gathered fundamental demographic information (such as gender and grade level) from the participants.

Results

Table 1 presents the basic descriptive parameters of the examined variables were computed. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of distribution normality showed that the distribution of results for all measurements significantly deviated from the normal distribution. However, since the values of skewness and kurtosis were not extreme, according to the criteria set by the authors (Hair et al., 2022; Kline, 2011), the use of parametric statistics was justified. The results presented in Table 1 show that the level of school satisfaction is within the range of the theoretical average of the scale, whereas the results of the perceived support and life satisfaction are shifted towards higher values.

Table I*Descriptive statistics of the variables (N = 390)*

	M	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Support						
Parents	4.55	0.57	2.50	5.00	-1.354	1.028
Teachers	4.12	0.81	1.50	5.00	-.745	-.265
Classmates	4.12	0.75	1.50	5.00	-.986	.936
Close friends	4.52	0.67	1.75	5.00	-1.759	3.018
School satisfaction	3.59	0.79	1.63	5.00	-.085	-.613
Life satisfaction	4.13	0.81	1.17	5.00	-1.090	.768

The first research question examined whether students differ in their perception of support, school satisfaction, and life satisfaction by age (grade). The Bonferroni correction for the comparison of groups in the ANOVA shows that a statistical significance of 1% is achieved if $p \leq .001$, and of 5% if $p < .003$ (Table II).

Table II*Differences in students' perceptions with regard to grade – Results of the variance analysis*

	Grade level						F (5,384)	p	η^2
	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th			
Variable	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)			
Support									
Parents	4.66 (0.49)	4.65 (0.54)	4.56 (0.51)	4.52 (0.54)	4.64 (0.58)	4.27 (0.66)	4.80	.001**	.06
Teachers	4.59 (0.59)	4.56 (0.70)	4.19 (.58)	4.08 (0.74)	3.90 (0.81)	3.36 (0.72)	29.70	.001**	.28
Classmates	4.20 (0.70)	4.28 (0.75)	4.21 (0.62)	3.86 (0.79)	4.23 (0.68)	3.88 (0.87)	3.99	.002*	.05
Close friend	4.54 (0.59)	4.58 (0.69)	4.52 (0.57)	4.44 (0.78)	4.59 (0.55)	4.40 (0.78)	0.87	.502	.01
School satisfaction	4.10 (0.80)	4.08 (0.71)	3.57 (0.60)	3.45 (0.68)	3.20 (0.57)	3.08 (0.70)	27.72	.001**	.27
Life satisfaction	4.30 (0.74)	4.44 (0.71)	4.13 (0.82)	3.96 (0.90)	4.00 (0.83)	3.86 (0.78)	5.40	.001**	.07

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Analysis of variance and additional checks of the calculated effect sizes and Cohen's d showed no statistically significant difference in the students' perceptions of support from close friends, but significant differences in support from parents and classmates. However, due to the strictness of the Scheffe post-hoc test, no statistically significant differences were revealed in individual comparisons. Conversely, notable statistical

differences were detected in teacher support, as well as students' satisfaction with school and overall life. Eight-grade students showed a statistically significant difference in their perceptions of teacher support in comparison with third- (Cohen's $d = 1.87$), fourth- (Cohen's $d = 1.68$), fifth- (Cohen's $d = 1.26$), sixth- (Cohen's $d = 0.98$) and seventh- (Cohen's $d = 0.71$) grade students. Apart from eighth graders, seventh-grade students differ in their perceptions of teacher support from third-grade (Cohen's $d = 0.97$) and fourth-grade students (Cohen's $d = 0.87$). Third-grade students are statistically significantly different from fifth- (Cohen's $d = -0.76$), sixth- (Cohen's $d = -0.88$), seventh- (Cohen's $d = -.131$) and eighth- (Cohen's $d = -1.38$) grade students, while fourth grade students differ from fifth- (Cohen's $d = -0.78$), sixth- (Cohen's $d = -0.90$), seventh- (Cohen's $d = -1.36$) and eight (Cohen's $d = -1.42$) grade colleagues. In life satisfaction, statistically differences were found only between fourth- and eighth-grade students ($p = .002$; Cohen's $d = -0.78$). A decrease in teacher support from grades four to eight was also found, as well as decreased support from classmates and a drop in life satisfaction in the sixth and eighth grade, and a drop in school satisfaction above the fourth grade.

The second research question examined the extent to which support explains school satisfaction. A regression analysis was conducted in two steps. In the first step, students' gender and grade were recorded, while in the second step, support from parents, classmates and close friends were inserted as well. A multicollinearity check yielded VIF values ranging from 1.008 to 1.773 (under 10), and the values of tolerance ranged from 0.564 to 0.992 (under 0.1), which showed no multicollinearity (Field, 2013). The Durbin-Watson test in this regression model was 1.980 so it can be assumed that the residuals are also independent (Table III).

Table III

Hierarchical regression results for school satisfaction

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE B	β	R2	$\Delta R2$
		LL	UL				
Step 1						.26***	.26***
Gender	.12	-.02	.26	.07	.08		
Grade	-.22	-.26	-.19	.02	-.49***		
Step 2						.37***	.11***
Gender	.10	-.03	.24	.07	.07		
Grade	-.15	-.19	-.11	.02	-.33***		
Parent support	.03	-.09	.15	.06	.02		
Teacher support	.27	.17	.37	.05	.28***		
Classmate support	.16	.06	.26	.05	.16***		
Close friend support	-.02	-.14	.10	.06	-.02		
<i>Note. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit;</i> <i>*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$</i>							

In the first step, it was found that students' gender was not statistically significant, while age, i.e. the students' grade ($t = -11.225$; $p = .001$), explained 25.6% of the school satisfaction variance. In the second step, the percentage of the explained variance increased by 11.2%, and finally the predictors explained 36.8% of the school satisfaction variance. Besides the grade ($t = -6841$; $p = .001$), which explains 16.4% of the variance, other significant predictors were found in teacher support ($t = 5.188$; $p = .001$), which explains 14.5% of the variance, and classmate support ($t = 3.210$; $p = .001$), which explains 5.0% of the school satisfaction variance.

Hierarchical regression analysis was carried out to check to what extent support and students' school satisfaction can help explain life satisfaction. The hierarchical analysis was carried out in two steps (Table 4). The students' gender and grade were introduced in the first step, while support from parents, classmates, close friends, and students' school satisfaction were introduced in the second step. Multicollinearity yielded VIF values for the predictors ranging from 1.008 to 1.897 (under 10), and tolerance values ranged from 0.527 to 0.992 (over 0.1), which showed no multicollinearity (Field, 2013). The Durbin-Watson test calculation in this regression model was 1.921, so the residuals can also be considered independent.

Table IV

Hierarchical regression results for life satisfaction

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE B	β	R2	$\Delta R2$
		LL	UL				
Step 1						.07***	.07***
Gender	-.19*	-.25	-.03	.19	-.12		
Grade	-.11	-.16	-.07	.02	-.24***		
Step 2						.34***	.28***
Gender	-.24**	-.39	-.09	.07	-.15***		
Grade	-.01	-.05	.04	.02	-.01		
Parent support	.41	.28	.53	.07	.28***		
Teacher support	.09	-.03	.20	.06	.09		
Classmate support	.26	.16	.37	.06	.24***		
Close friend support	-.05	-.18	.08	.06	-.04		
School satisfaction	.22	.11	.32	.05	.21***		

Note. *CI* = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.
 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

In the first step, two predictors explained 6.6% of the criterion variance, with the students' grade proven to be the only significant predictor ($t = -4.852$; $p = .001$). In the second step, the students' grade lost its significance while the students' gender ($t = -3.239$; $p = .001$) explained 1.4% of the variance. Support from parents ($t = 6.169$; $p = .001$), teachers ($t = 1.529$; $p = .001$), classmates ($t = 4.805$; $p = .001$), and school satisfaction ($t = 4.000$; $p = .001$) were shown to be significant predictors, with parent support explaining 12%,

teacher support 3.3%, classmate support 10%, and school satisfaction 7.9% of the criterion variance. Finally, the predictors explained 34.2% of the life satisfaction variance.

Discussion

This research shows that students are generally more satisfied with social support, mostly the support they receive from their parents and close friends. They also seem to be satisfied with life and least satisfied with school. However, when the results are compared by students' age/grade, differences can be found in the perceived teacher support and students' school and life satisfaction. Younger students are more satisfied than older students. Such results are in line with the results of previous research. For example, research conducted by Aymerich et al. (2021) on life satisfaction revealed its decline after students turn 11, coupled with heightened emotional and psychological susceptibility beyond this point. More specifically, the sensitivity of children at that age requires a greater level of support from the environment. The results of this research show a high level of perceived support, but also that it decreases with age. Only support from close friends can be regarded as a constant, while a decrease is noted in other types of support, especially the perception of teacher support. It is possible that the decrease in perceived support and in school and life satisfaction is influenced by increased school pressure and the demands facing students in higher grades. Developmental changes in children at this age, that is, puberty and adolescence, are a key issue to consider at this stage, since, apart from physical changes, this period is at times characterised by insufficient understanding or acceptance of the environment. However, given that this study was carried out in Croatia, another potential reason for such results may be related to the educational context in Croatia. Namely, in Croatian primary schools, classes are conducted by one teacher (classroom teacher) in the first four grades. Thus, as children spend most of their school days with one teacher, they get to know the teacher better, and the teacher can respond to students' individual needs adequately. On the other hand, students in grades 5 - 8 are taught by subject teachers, so it can be assumed that this reduces the possibility of establishing quality relationships with teachers, consequently leading to a lower level of teacher support. The importance of social support for students is also confirmed in Suldo and Huebner's (2006) study which emphasises the impact of classroom settings on adolescent life satisfaction. The study found that adolescents with a significantly low or moderate level of life satisfaction reported comparable levels of teacher support. However, significantly elevated teacher support was notable among students with an extremely high level of life satisfaction. This underscores the pivotal role of school staff in fostering optimal levels of well-being during adolescence.

In line with these results, which show a decrease in perceived support, students' school satisfaction also declines with age. School satisfaction was found to be generally lower than the other examined variables, although it cannot be said that the participants were dissatisfied with school. While the youngest students are satisfied, eighth-grade students reported an average level of school satisfaction. The influence of age on school satisfaction was also determined in previous research (Liu et al., 2015). The results of regression analysis show that age/grade and teacher and classmate support are the most important predictors of students' school satisfaction. These outcomes were anticipated due to teachers and peers being recognised as central figures

during students' school years, constituting the primary sources of interpersonal relationships for students. Classmates are also important in the process of socialisation because students are mostly reliant upon and are directed to their classmates in daily interactions. The correlation between teacher and classmate support on the one hand, and school satisfaction on the other, was also determined in earlier studies (Liu et al., 2015; Suldo & Shaffer, 2008; Tian et al., 2016). Teacher support and its relationship to school satisfaction can also be viewed in the context of culture. Danielsen et al. (2009) found that Norwegian students perceived support from other students to be more important than support from teachers. Conversely, Chinese students perceived teacher support as more important (Liu et al., 2015). This study found that both teacher support and support from classmates are important, but teacher support is more useful in explaining students' school satisfaction. Interestingly, it was observed that support from close friends and parents was not statistically significant. A plausible explanation for this finding could be rooted in the fact that students associate their satisfaction with school with individuals directly engaged in their educational environment. Although support from parents is undeniably relevant for students' school achievement, it seems that it has no role in explaining students' school satisfaction. It can be assumed that students do not mix their “working” and “private” lives so they seek teacher and classmate support in school, whereas they count on other types of support outside of school.

This was confirmed by the results of the regression analysis. It was found that the most important predictors in explaining students' life satisfaction are support from parents and classmates, and school satisfaction. Teacher support and students' gender proved to be somewhat less important, but still significant. Surprisingly, best friend support was not found to be significant in explaining student life satisfaction. It might be assumed that students feel that the support they receive from other classmates is more important than that from their best friend, simply because classmates are more numerous. It seems that the number of friends overrides the need for closeness. Research by Kang (2023) found similar results: students considered the number of friends to be more important to their life satisfaction, especially at a younger age. Such a need for a large group of friends decreases with age and is at its lowest in adulthood.

Parental support has a significant role in explaining students' life satisfaction, as has been found previous studies (Suldo & Huebner, 2004; 2006; Bi et al., 2021). Students depend on parental emotional and instrumental support (love, financial stability); as a result they feel less stressed, which in turn strengthens their mental health. Research shows that parental support is much more important for life satisfaction than support from peers, friends and teachers (Rueger et al., 2016). A comprehensive study carried out in 42 European countries found that Croatian students exhibit a life satisfaction level above the average. The same applies to support from parents and friends, while students seem to be somewhat less satisfied with support from teachers and classmates (Bi et al., 2021). The outcomes of the regression analysis in the present study are in line with the findings of Bi and colleagues, confirming that parental support stands out as the most influential predictor of life satisfaction. However, in this research, school satisfaction was found to be a significant predictor of students' life satisfaction, indicating that school satisfaction has a mediating role between teacher support and life satisfaction. Students are satisfied with their lives if they have adequate support from parents, classmates and teachers, and if they are satisfied with school.

Conclusion and Implications

The findings of this study emphasise the significance of both family and school in impacting students' life satisfaction. Considering the results of previous research, which associate students' life satisfaction with their mental health, the importance of educational policies and intervention strategies for maintaining stable family relationships and a high level of family support has become indisputable. Furthermore, the significance of teacher and peer support, which have been established as crucial factors in students' satisfaction with both school and life, highlights the importance of establishing safe and supportive classrooms and schools.

The present study indicates several important implications for researchers and school professionals. Firstly, considering the age differences found in the perception of teacher support and school satisfaction, it is important to conduct additional research to better understand students of particular ages, and prevent the possible causes of a lower teacher support and decreased school satisfaction. Secondly, the study underlines the role of classmates and teacher support in students' school satisfaction, underlining the need to facilitate better relationships among students and with teachers through various procedures and activities. Dynamic communication that allows students to express their opinions and workshops with students will enable better familiarity with and recognition of similarities, as well as acceptance of differences among them. Finally, it would be useful for future studies to use qualitative methods to examine the aspects of support that are most appreciated by students and the sources of their (dis)satisfaction with school and their personal lives.

Limitations

When reflecting on the results of the present study, certain methodology issues need to be considered. First of all, the sample was purposive, so the extent to which the results apply to the student population in Croatia, and especially beyond, is questionable. Secondly, this research was based on students' self-reports; therefore, future research should examine other perspectives other stakeholder such as teachers, peers and parents in order to deepen the understanding of the relationship between social support and students' school and life satisfaction. Thirdly, while the research included the support received from parents, students and close friends, relationships with siblings and communities (e.g. religious communities) were not included. Finally, due to the cross-sectional nature of our study, the findings are correlational, and the results cannot be interpreted in any causal way. More studies need to be carried out to grasp the complexity of the relationship between support received, and students' school and life satisfaction, which would ultimately illuminate the processes that enhance the subjective well-being of students.

Declaration of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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