

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: June, 14, 2026

Revised: August, 14, 2026

Available online: August, 15, 2026

at: <https://e-jurnal.iphorr.com/index.php/mhc>

Socioeconomic status and internalizing–externalizing behaviours as predictors of student subjective well-being among adolescents

Ghina Aliya Mufidah*, Asri Mutiara Putri, Prida Harkina

Universitas Malahayati

Corresponding author: *E-mail: ghinaaliyamufidah@gmail.com

Abstract

Background: High school students in coastal communities may experience academic, psychological, and socioeconomic challenges associated with their quality of school life.

Purpose: To examine the simultaneous and individual associations of parental socioeconomic status and internalizing–externalizing behaviours with student subjective well-being.

Method: This quantitative cross-sectional correlational study involved 248 Grade X and XI students at Senior High School 1 Padang Cermin, Lampung, recruited through quota sampling. Data were collected using the Student Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire (SSWQ), a socioeconomic status index adapted from the Kuppuswamy scale, and the Youth Internalizing and Externalizing Problems Screener (YIEPS).

Results: The overall regression model was statistically significant, indicating that parental socioeconomic status and internalizing externalizing behaviours were jointly associated with student subjective well-being.

Conclusion: Internalizing externalizing behaviours were more strongly associated with lower student subjective well-being than parental socioeconomic status in this sample. The limited variation in socioeconomic status may partly explain its nonsignificant association. These findings suggest that school-based psychological support and early behavioural interventions may help improve students' subjective well-being.

Keywords: Adolescents; Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviours; Socioeconomic Status; Student Subjective Well-Being.

INTRODUCTION

Senior high school represents a critical stage of adolescent development during which students experience substantial academic, social, and psychological changes that shape their adjustment and overall well-being (Han, 2021; de Abreu, Neumann, Wealer, Abreu, Macedo, & Kirsch, 2021). During this developmental period, adolescents encounter various emotional and behavioural challenges that may influence their academic engagement, interpersonal relationships, and psychological functioning (Babicka-Wirkus, Kozłowski, Wirkus, & Stasiak, 2023). Therefore, educational success should not be evaluated solely on the basis of academic achievement but also on students' ability to attain positive psychological

functioning within the school environment. Student Subjective Well-Being (SSWB) refers to students' cognitive and affective evaluations of their experiences in school (Tian, Zheng, Huebner, & Liu, 2022). The construct encompasses four major dimensions: school connectedness, academic efficacy, joy of learning, and educational purpose. Rather than merely reflecting the absence of psychological distress, SSWB emphasizes positive educational experiences that enable students to participate actively in learning, establish supportive social relationships, and adapt effectively to academic demands. Students with higher levels of SSWB generally demonstrate stronger academic engagement, greater motivation, healthier

interpersonal relationships, and better psychological adjustment (Arslan & Coşkun, 2020). Nevertheless, previous studies have consistently reported that although many adolescents experience moderate levels of school-related well-being, a considerable proportion continue to demonstrate reduced psychological well-being and difficulties in school adjustment (Tobia, Greco, Steca, & Marzocchi, 2019; Tian et al., 2022). Such conditions may increase students' vulnerability to academic stress, emotional distress, and psychosocial difficulties. Moreover, SSWB is influenced by multiple factors, including individual characteristics, family circumstances, school experiences, and socioeconomic conditions (de Abreu et al., 2021). Understanding these contributing factors is therefore essential for developing effective interventions to improve students' psychological well-being.

One factor frequently associated with adolescent well-being is socioeconomic status (SES). SES reflects a family's position within the social structure and is commonly assessed through parental educational attainment, occupational status, and household income (Bashar, 2019). Families with more favourable socioeconomic conditions generally have greater access to educational resources, learning opportunities, and social support, all of which positively contribute to adolescents' well-being and life satisfaction (Arslan & Coşkun, 2020). Conversely, financial hardship may expose adolescents to chronic stress, reduce educational opportunities, and negatively influence their psychological adjustment and subjective well-being (D'Ambrosio, Jäntti, & Lepinteur, 2020). The present study was conducted at Senior High School 1 Padang Cermin, located in the coastal area of Pesawaran Regency, Lampung Province, Indonesia. According to Statistics Indonesia (2025) and Statistics Indonesia of Pesawaran Regency (2025), the regency continues to experience relatively high poverty levels, while many households depend primarily on agriculture and fisheries for their livelihoods. These socioeconomic characteristics may influence families' ability to provide educational resources and psychosocial support for their children. Consequently, this setting provides an important context for examining student subjective well-being among adolescents living in socioeconomically vulnerable coastal communities.

In addition to socioeconomic conditions, adolescents' psychological characteristics may substantially influence their subjective well-being. Internalizing and externalizing behaviours (IEB) are widely recognized as important indicators of adolescent psychological adjustment and mental health (Weeks, Renshaw, Rainey, & Hiatt, 2024). Internalizing problems include anxiety, depressive symptoms, and social withdrawal, whereas externalizing problems involve aggression, impulsivity, and rule-breaking behaviours. Previous studies have demonstrated that adolescents experiencing greater internalizing and externalizing difficulties tend to report lower levels of school-related well-being, poorer school adjustment, and weaker psychological functioning (Babicka-Wirkus et al., 2023; Tian et al., 2022). Behavioural and emotional problems are consistently associated with poorer mental health outcomes among adolescents (DeBoer & Long, 2024). Although previous studies have independently examined the associations between socioeconomic status and adolescent well-being, as well as the relationship between internalizing–externalizing behaviours and school adjustment, relatively few studies have simultaneously investigated these factors in adolescents living in coastal communities characterized by socioeconomic vulnerability. Moreover, limited evidence is available regarding the combined contribution of parental socioeconomic status and internalizing externalizing behaviours to student subjective well-being within such contexts. Addressing this research gap may provide valuable evidence for developing school-based mental health interventions and educational strategies aimed at promoting students' psychological well-being and positive educational outcomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional correlational design to examine the associations of parental socioeconomic status and internalizing–externalising behaviours with student subjective well-being. The study was conducted at Senior High School 1 Padang Cermin, Pesawaran Regency, Lampung Province, Indonesia, during the 2025/2026 academic year. The study population comprised active Grade X and Grade XI students enrolled at the school during the 2025/2026 academic

Ghina Aliya Mufidah*, Asri Mutiara Putri, Prida Harkina

Universitas Malahayati

Corresponding author: *E-mail: ghinaaliyamufidah@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56922/mhc.v5i5.3572>

Socioeconomic status and internalizing–externalizing behaviours as predictors of student subjective well-being among adolescents

year. A total of 248 students participated in the study and were recruited using a non-probability quota sampling technique. Proportional quotas were allocated across grade levels and classrooms to ensure representation of students from each academic level and classroom. Data were collected on May 6, 2026, using self-administered online questionnaires distributed through Google Forms during classroom sessions. Before completing the questionnaires, participants were informed about the study objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Malahayati (Certificate No. 5358/EC/KEP-UNMAL/V/2026).

Three instruments were used to collect the study data. Student subjective well-being was measured using the Student Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire (SSWQ), consisting of 16 items covering four dimensions: school connectedness, academic efficacy, joy of learning, and educational purpose. Each item was rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 4 (almost always), with higher scores indicating higher levels of student subjective well-being. Parental socioeconomic status was assessed using a socioeconomic status (SES) index adapted from the Kuppuswamy socioeconomic scale. The index comprised three indicators: parental education, parental occupation, and monthly family income. Educational attainment was scored on a 7-point scale, occupational status on a 10-point scale, and monthly family income on a 12-point scale. The

composite SES score ranged from 1 to 29, with higher scores indicating higher parental socioeconomic status. For the regression analysis, SES was treated as a continuous variable. Internalising–externalising behaviours were assessed using the Youth Internalizing and Externalizing Problems Screener (YIEPS), consisting of 20 items assessing internalising problems, including anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal, and externalising problems, including aggression, impulsivity, and rule-breaking behaviour. Responses were rated on a 4-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater levels of internalising–externalising behavioural problems. Before hypothesis testing, the instruments were evaluated for validity and reliability. Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise participant characteristics and the study variables. Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to examine the simultaneous and individual associations of parental socioeconomic status and internalising–externalising behaviours with student subjective well-being. The overall significance of the regression model was assessed using the F-test, while the individual associations of the independent variables with student subjective well-being were assessed using regression coefficients, standardised coefficients (β), t-values, and p-values. Prior to conducting the regression analysis, the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were assessed.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1. Characteristics of the Respondents (N = 248)

Variable	Results
Age (n%)(Mean$\pm$SD)(Range)(Year)	(16.1 $\pm$ 0.8)(15–18)
15	58/23.4
16	113/45.6
17	68/27.4
18	9/3.6
Gender (n%)	
Male	99/39.9
Female	149/60.1

Ghina Aliya Mufidah*, Asri Mutiara Putri, Prida Harkina

Universitas Malahayati

Corresponding author: *E-mail: ghinaaliyamufidah@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56922/mhc.v5i5.3572>

Socioeconomic status and internalizing–externalizing behaviours as predictors of student subjective well-being among adolescents

Grade (n/%)	
X	127/51.2
XI	121/48.8
Parental Education (n/%)	
No Formal Education	1/0.4
Elementary School	52/21.0
Junior High School	39/15.7
Senior High School	129/52.0
University	27/10.9
Parental Occupation	
Unemployed	8/3.2
Unskilled/Day Laborer	102/41.1
Agricultural/Maritime Worker	53/21.4
Skilled/Clerical Worker (Merchant, Administrative Clerk)	49/19.8
Higher Professional (Doctor, Lawyer, Lecturer)	12/4.8
Professional/Civil Servant	18/7.3
Semi-Skilled Workers	6/2.4
Socioeconomic Status (SES) Classification	
Lower	1/0.4
Upper Lower	174/70.2
Lower Middle	54/21.7
Upper Middle	19/7.7

The respondents had a mean age of 16.1 ± 0.8 years, with ages ranging from 15 to 18 years. The largest proportion of respondents was aged 16 years (113; 45.6%), followed by those aged 17 years (68; 27.4%), 15 years (58; 23.4%), and 18 years (9; 3.6%). Most respondents were female (149; 60.1%), while 99 (39.9%) were male. Regarding grade level, 127 respondents (51.2%) were in Grade X and 121 (48.8%) were in Grade XI. In terms of parental education, most parents had completed senior high school (129; 52.0%), followed by elementary school (52; 21.0%), junior high school (39; 15.7%), university (27; 10.9%), and no formal education (1; 0.4%). Regarding parental occupation, the largest proportion were unskilled/day laborers (102; 41.1%), followed by agricultural/maritime workers (53; 21.4%), skilled/clerical workers (49; 19.8%), professional/civil servants (18; 7.3%), higher professionals (12; 4.8%), semi-skilled workers (6; 2.4%), and unemployed parents (8; 3.2%). Based on socioeconomic status classification, most respondents were categorized as upper-lower socioeconomic status (174; 70.2%), followed by lower-middle status (54; 21.7%), upper-middle status (19; 7.7%), and lower status (1; 0.4%).

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standard Error (SE)	Standardized Coefficients (β)	t-value	p-value
Constant	54.874	2.047	-	26.801	<.001
Socioeconomic Status	-.142	.104	-.086	-1.363	.174
Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviour	-.119	.041	-.180	-2.863	.005

Ghina Aliya Mufidah*, Asri Mutiara Putri, Prida Harkina

Universitas Malahayati

Corresponding author: *E-mail: ghinaaliyamufidah@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56922/mhc.v5i5.3572>

Note: $N = 248$; $R^2 = .037$; Adjusted $R^2 = .029$; $F = 4.736$; $p = .010$.

Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to investigate whether socioeconomic status (SES) and internalizing-externalizing behaviour (IEB) were associated with Student Subjective Well-Being (SSWB) among students. The analysis demonstrated that the regression model was significant, $F = 4.736$, $p = .010$, indicating that the two independent variables collectively contributed to explaining variations in SSWB. When each predictor was examined separately, internalizing-externalizing behaviour emerged as a significant predictor of SSWB. The negative regression coefficient ($\beta = -0.180$, $t = -2.863$, $p = .005$) suggests that students experiencing higher levels of emotional and behavioural problems tended to report lower levels of subjective well-being in the school setting. On the other hand, socioeconomic status was not found to be a significant predictor ($\beta = -0.086$, $t = -1.363$, $p = .174$), indicating that differences in parental socioeconomic background were not significantly related to students' well-being in this study. The regression model accounted for 3.7% of the variance in SSWB ($R^2 = .037$). After adjusting for the number of predictors included in the model, the explained variance decreased slightly to 2.9% (Adjusted $R^2 = .029$). These results indicate that although internalizing-externalizing behaviour plays a meaningful role in students' well-being, the majority of the variation in SSWB is likely attributable to other variables that were not examined in the present research.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the associations of parental socioeconomic status (SES) and internalizing–externalizing behaviour (IEB) with Student Subjective Well-Being (SSWB) among high school students. The findings indicated that SES and IEB were jointly and significantly associated with SSWB ($F = 4.736$, $p = .010$). However, the adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted $R^2 = .029$) showed that these variables explained only 2.9% of the variance in students' subjective well-being. This relatively small proportion suggests that SSWB is a multidimensional construct influenced by numerous individual, family, interpersonal, and school-related factors beyond those examined in the present study.

Previous research has emphasized the importance of school connectedness, supportive relationships, academic engagement, and individual psychological resources in shaping adolescents' well-being at school (Han, 2021; McCabe, Davis, Mandy, & Wong, 2022). Therefore, efforts to improve SSWB should consider multiple dimensions of students' school experiences rather than focusing exclusively on socioeconomic or behavioural characteristics (Fornander & Kearney, 2020).

Among the independent variables, internalizing–externalizing behaviour emerged as the only significant negative predictor of SSWB ($B = -.119$, $t = -2.863$, $p = .005$). Students reporting higher levels of internalizing and externalizing problems tended to report lower levels of subjective well-being within the school environment. This finding is consistent with evidence showing that internalizing problems, including anxiety, depressive symptoms, and social withdrawal, as well as externalizing problems, such as aggression, impulsivity, and rule-breaking, are associated with poorer psychological adjustment among adolescents (Babicka-Wirkus, Kozłowski, Wirkus, & Stasiak, 2023). Recent evidence also indicates that internalizing and externalizing problems are important concerns when assessing psychological difficulties among adolescents and may be associated with impaired emotional and behavioural functioning (Weeks, Renshaw, Rainey, & Hiatt, 2024). These findings suggest that students experiencing greater emotional and behavioural difficulties may encounter more challenges in maintaining positive educational experiences and psychological functioning at school.

The descriptive findings further indicated that emotional exhaustion was one of the most prominent symptoms experienced by the students. This pattern may indicate that psychological difficulties were more likely to be expressed through internalizing experiences than through overt externalizing behaviours. Students experiencing emotional distress may have greater difficulty enjoying learning activities, maintaining positive peer relationships, and developing a sense of belonging within the school environment. Consistent with this interpretation, school connectedness was the lowest dimension of SSWB in the present study. School connectedness is

Ghina Aliya Mufidah*, Asri Mutiara Putri, Prida Harkina

Universitas Malahayati

Corresponding author: *E-mail: ghinaaliyamufidah@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56922/mhc.v5i5.3572>

an important component of adolescent well-being because students who feel connected to their school are more likely to experience positive relationships, engagement, and psychological adjustment (McCabe et al., 2022). In addition, research on children's well-being at school has emphasized that emotional and behavioural functioning is closely related to students' experiences across multiple domains of school well-being (Tobia, Greco, Steca, & Marzocchi, 2019).

In contrast, parental socioeconomic status was not significantly associated with SSWB ($B = -.142$, $t = -1.363$, $p = .174$). One possible explanation for this finding is the relatively limited variation in socioeconomic conditions among the participants. Most students came from families with relatively similar socioeconomic backgrounds, with many households relying on agriculture and fisheries as primary sources of livelihood. When socioeconomic characteristics are relatively homogeneous within a population, SES may have limited explanatory capacity for differences in individual well-being. Previous research has shown that the relationship between income, wealth, and subjective well-being is complex and may vary according to individuals' social and economic circumstances (D'Ambrosio, Jäntti, & Lepinteur, 2020). Therefore, the nonsignificant association observed in this study may partly reflect the limited variability of SES within the sample rather than indicating that socioeconomic conditions are unrelated to adolescent well-being.

Another possible explanation is that socioeconomic conditions may influence adolescent well-being indirectly through family and psychosocial mechanisms that were not assessed in the present study. Socioeconomic circumstances may shape adolescents' experiences through family stress, emotional support, parenting practices, and access to educational resources rather than through financial conditions alone (Christner, Essler, Hazzam, & Paulus, 2021). Accordingly, the absence of a significant direct association between SES and SSWB does not necessarily imply that socioeconomic circumstances are unimportant. Instead, the relationship may involve mediating or moderating factors that were outside the scope of the current regression model. In addition, despite the predominantly lower-middle socioeconomic background of the participants, students reported

relatively favourable levels of joy of learning and educational purpose. This pattern suggests that positive experiences within the school environment may contribute to students' well-being even when socioeconomic resources are relatively limited. School connectedness, supportive relationships, and academic engagement have been identified as important factors supporting adolescent well-being and motivation (Han, 2021; McCabe et al., 2022).

The simultaneous significance of SES and IEB, despite the nonsignificant partial association of SES, also warrants consideration. This pattern indicates that the contribution of the predictors to SSWB may not be equivalent. IEB demonstrated a significant negative partial association with SSWB, whereas SES did not demonstrate a significant independent association after the predictors were considered together. Thus, behavioural and psychological characteristics may have greater relevance to differences in students' subjective well-being within this particular sample than parental socioeconomic status. Nevertheless, the relatively small adjusted R^2 indicates that substantial variation in SSWB remains unexplained. Other factors, including peer relationships, teacher–student relationships, school climate, academic self-efficacy, resilience, and family support, may contribute to students' subjective well-being and should be considered in future research (Han, 2021; McCabe et al., 2022).

Overall, most students demonstrated moderate levels of SSWB, indicating that their well-being was generally adequate but still had room for improvement. The relatively lower scores for school connectedness and academic efficacy highlight potential areas for school-based intervention. Programs that strengthen students' sense of belonging, provide accessible psychological support, promote positive peer and teacher–student relationships, and enhance academic confidence may help create a more supportive school environment. School-based approaches are particularly relevant because school connectedness and supportive educational relationships are closely associated with adolescent health and well-being (McCabe et al., 2022). Given the coastal and socioeconomically vulnerable context of the study setting, future interventions should therefore address both students' psychological and behavioural needs and the broader

Ghina Aliya Mufidah*, Asri Mutiara Putri, Prida Harkina

Universitas Malahayati

Corresponding author: *E-mail: ghinaaliyamufidah@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56922/mhc.v5i5.3572>

Socioeconomic status and internalizing–externalizing behaviours as predictors of student subjective well-being among adolescents

social and educational environment in which students develop.

CONCLUSION

Parental socioeconomic status and internalizing–externalizing behaviours were jointly associated with student subjective well-being, although the overall explained variance was small. Internalizing–externalizing behaviours showed a significant negative association with SSWB, whereas socioeconomic status did not make a significant unique contribution in this sample. The limited variability in socioeconomic status may have partly contributed to the nonsignificant association. The regression model explained 3.7% of the variance in SSWB ($R^2 = .037$), while the adjusted R^2 was .029. Other personal, family, peer, and school-related factors should be considered in future research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of student subjective well-being.

REFERENCES

- Arslan, G., & Coşkun, M. (2020). Student subjective wellbeing, school functioning, and psychological adjustment in high school adolescents: A latent variable analysis. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 4(2), 153–164.
- Babicka-Wirkus, A., Kozłowski, P., Wirkus, Ł., & Stasiak, K. (2023). Internalizing and externalizing disorder levels among adolescents: Data from Poland. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(3), 2752.
- Bashar, M. A. (2019). Updating the Kuppaswamy's socioeconomic status scale for the year 2019. *Indian Journal of Community and Family Medicine*, 5(2), 162–163.
- Christner, N., Essler, S., Hazzam, A., & Paulus, M. (2021). Children's psychological well-being and problem behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic: An online study during the lockdown period in Germany. *PLOS ONE*, 16(6), e0253473.
- D'Ambrosio, C., Jäntti, M., & Lepinteur, A. (2020). Money and happiness: Income, wealth and subjective well-being. *Social Indicators Research*, 148(1), 47–66.
- de Abreu, P. M. E., Neumann, S., Wealer, C., Abreu, N., Macedo, E. C., & Kirsch, C. (2021). Subjective well-being of adolescents in Luxembourg, Germany, and Brazil during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 69(2), 211–218.
- DeBoer, J. L., & Long, A. C. (2024). A comparison of self-report measures to screen for mental health concerns in youth. *School Mental Health*, 16(1), 25–40.
- Fornander, M. J., & Kearney, C. A. (2020). Internalizing symptoms as predictors of school absenteeism severity at multiple levels: Ensemble and classification and regression tree analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 3079.
- Han, K. (2021). Students' well-being: The mediating roles of grit and school connectedness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 787861.
- McCabe, E. M., Davis, C., Mandy, L., & Wong, C. (2022). The role of school connectedness in supporting the health and well-being of youth: Recommendations for school nurses. *NASN School Nurse*, 37(1), 42–47.
- Statistics Indonesia. (2025). *Poverty profile in Indonesia, September 2024*. Statistics Indonesia.
- Statistics Indonesia of Pesawaran Regency. (2025). *Pesawaran Regency in figures 2025*. Statistics Indonesia of Pesawaran Regency.
- Tian, L., Zheng, J., Huebner, E. S., & Liu, W. (2022). Brief adolescents' subjective well-being in school scale: Measurement invariance and latent mean differences across school levels among Chinese students. *Current Psychology*, 41(5), 3135–3143.

Ghina Aliya Mufidah*, Asri Mutiara Putri, Prida Harkina

Universitas Malahayati

Corresponding author: *E-mail: ghinaaliyamufidah@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56922/mhc.v5i5.3572>

Socioeconomic status and internalizing–externalizing behaviours as predictors of student subjective well-being among adolescents

Tobia, V., Greco, A., Steca, P., & Marzocchi, G. M. (2019). Children's wellbeing at school: A multi-dimensional and multi-informant approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 20(3), 841–861.

Weeks, S. N., Renshaw, T. L., Rainey, A. A., & Hiatt, A. (2024). Evaluating a unified screener for adolescent internalizing and externalizing problems. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*, 32(1), 24–35.

Ghina Aliya Mufidah*, Asri Mutiara Putri, Prida Harkina

Universitas Malahayati

Corresponding author: *E-mail: ghinaaliyamufidah@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56922/mhc.v5i5.3572>