



The More, the Merrier:

The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status, Well-being, and Friendship

Shirley W. Bi, Ashley V. Whillans, & Frances S. Chen

Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia

Although social support from family and friends can buffer the negative effects of stress and life stressors affect well-being,^{3,5} students with low socioeconomic status (SES) may have a harder time forming friendships in university as there are fewer low SES students and people become friends with those similar to oneself.^{2,4}

Hence, we hypothesized that low SES students have fewer friends and lower psychological well-being.

METHODS

188 first year UBC students were surveyed.

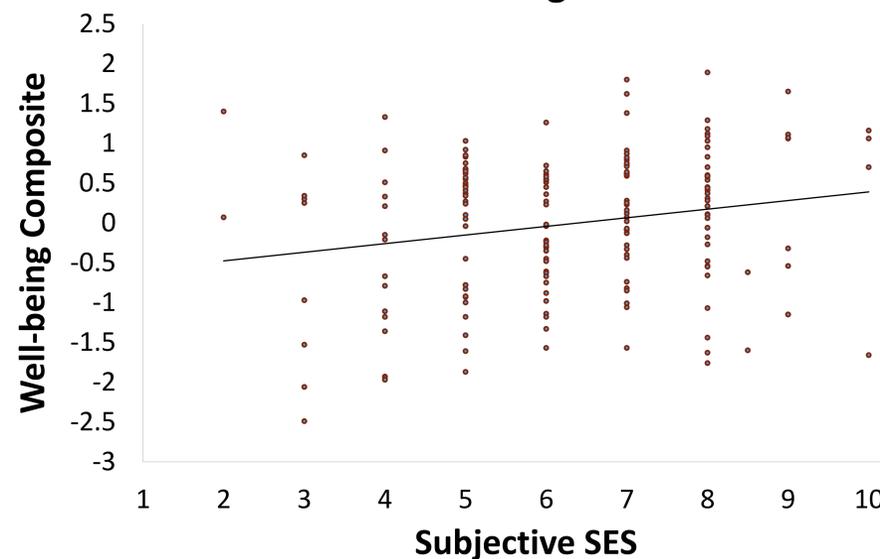
Type: Longitudinal (September to January)

Key Variables:

- Objective SES
 - Annual Family Income
 - Mother's Education
 - Father's Education
- Subjective SES
 - MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status
- Well-being
 - SPANE (Positive Affect)
 - SWLS
 - FS
- Friendship
 - Change in # of close friends

RESULTS

Relationship between Subjective SES and Well-being



	Friendship	Well-being
Objective SES	$r(97) = .046$ <i>n.s.</i>	$r(95) = .057$ <i>n.s.</i>
Subjective SES	$r(182) = .081$ <i>n.s.</i>	$r(181) = .197$ $p < .01$

No Relationship: Objective SES and Well-being

- We may not have detected a relationship between these variables because selective answering of the objective SES question reduced our sample size.

No Relationship: SES and Friendship

- Although people have been found to form friendships based on similarities, SES may not be a salient dimension for similarity judgments.
- Change in close friends may not be a sensitive enough measure for assessing friendship formation.

Limitations and Future Directions

- Use different friendship measures such as time spent with friends, types of friendships, etc.
- Experimental design to see if causal relationships exist

Importance

- A stepping stone towards interventions aimed at helping low SES students

DISCUSSION

Positive Relationship: Subjective SES and Well-being

- Subjective SES has been found to be more strongly related to health outcomes than objective SES.¹ Consistent with prior research, a similar relationship may be present for well-being, suggesting that relative standing may be more important than absolute standing.

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