

International Workshop
**Impact of Poverty and Social Exclusion on Children's Lives
and their Well-being**

8th – 9th September 2008 (til noon), Bratislava, Slovakia

Hosted by the Institute for Labour and Family Research, Bratislava

Funded by Childwatch International Research Network

Abstract

The relationship between family socio-economic status and children's personal well-being, quality of school life and out-of-school activities

Zora Raboteg-Šarić, IVO PILAR Institute of Social Sciences, Croatia

This research aimed to examine the differences in academic achievement, socioemotional adjustment, perceived quality of school life and out-of-school activities among children who live in families with different economic status. The influence of parents' education and family structure as well as children's gender and age on children's subjective well-being is also examined.

Data were obtained from the national survey on education and schooling in Croatia which included 5302 male and 4920 female elementary school students, aged 10 through 15 years. Scales measuring children's self-esteem, general satisfaction with school and negative feelings about the school, the experiences of being bullied by the peers, somatic complaints, self-defined health status, self-reported frequency of milder and more severe forms of school misconduct, and the amount of time students spend in different after-school activities were selected from a larger questionnaire. Parents provided information on their educational status, employment status and family living arrangements. Parents' perception of family financial situation when compared with others was also assessed.

We conducted a series of one-way ANOVAs to test the differences in subjective well-being measures between children grouped into five categories according to their family economic status, while controlling for the effects of children's gender and age. Children living in families with lower economic status had lower grade point average but they also reported higher general satisfaction with school. They spent more of their out-of-school time in activities related to school, as well as participating in chores and watching television and less in organised after school activities. Children who experience lower material well-being were also more frequently bullied by their peers and had lower self-esteem.

Family socio-economic characteristics were most strongly related to children's educational achievement. Using linear regression analysis we found that, after controlling the differences in parents' educational status and family structure, family economic status had significant independent effect only on children's academic achievement and time spent in some after school activities (5 of the 15 dependent variables). Mother's education was a major factor predicting children's educational achievement, personal well-being and developmental outcomes (12 of the 15 dependent variables). Parents' higher educational status was generally related to children's higher personal well-being and more favourable developmental outcomes. In addition, children living in single-parent families were more vulnerable and tended to have worse outcomes (being bullied, school misconduct, psychosomatic complaints, lower self-esteem).

Contact:

Dr. Zora Raboteg-Šarić, IVO PILAR Institute of Social Sciences, Zagreb

Email: Zora.Raboteg-Saric@pillar.hr