

# Life Satisfaction and Influencing Factors Among Korean Adolescents During COVID-19: A Latent Growth Model Analysis Based on the PERMA Framework

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected various aspects of adolescents' lives, including their education, social relationships, and overall well-being. This study aims to examine the changes in life satisfaction and the factors influencing these changes among Korean adolescents during the pandemic period from 2019 to 2021, through the theoretical lens of the Positive Psychology Theory. Specifically, it explores how adolescents' life satisfaction (P), academic engagement and study time (E), educational expectations and career decisions (M), and satisfaction with grades and grit (A) have evolved during this period. The study utilized data from the 2019-2020 Korea Children and Youth Panel Survey (KCYPS), involving a sample of 2,133 Korean adolescents. It analyzed the trajectories of life satisfaction and the potential influencing factors during the pandemic using the latent growth model (LGM). The findings indicated that the adolescents' study time (Mslp=.039,  $p<.05$ ) and friendships (Mslp=.032,  $p<.001$ ) exhibited an increasing trend during the pandemic, whereas life satisfaction (Mslp= -.025,  $p<.01$ ), academic engagement (Mslp= -.023,  $p<.01$ ), teacher relationships (Mslp= -.038,  $p<.001$ ), grade satisfaction (Mslp= -.119,  $p<.001$ ), and grit (Mslp= -.023,  $p<.01$ ) all showed a downward trajectory. The latent growth model demonstrated a good fit with the data,  $\chi^2 = 1078.612$  ( $p<.001$ ), RMSEA=.054, CFI=.912, SRMR=.031. In terms of the intercept for life satisfaction, higher initial values of academic engagement ( $\beta=.450$ ,  $p<.001$ ), teacher relationships ( $\beta=.471$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and satisfaction with grades ( $\beta=.149$ ,  $p<.05$ ) were positively associated with higher levels of life satisfaction. In contrast, higher initial values of study time ( $\beta= -.376$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and friendships ( $\beta= -.182$ ,  $p<.01$ ) were associated with lower levels of life satisfaction. Regarding the slope of life satisfaction, faster declines in academic engagement were associated with a more rapid decline in life satisfaction ( $\beta=.409$ ,  $p<.05$ ). In sum, longer study time was also associated with a quicker decline in life satisfaction ( $\beta=.634$ ,  $p<.01$ ), although an accelerated increase in study time partially mitigated this decline ( $\beta= -.260$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Also, positive teacher relationships were found to reduce the tendency for adolescents to experience declines in life satisfaction ( $\beta= -.403$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Based on the PERMA framework, the study examined the complex interactions between various factors that influence adolescents' life satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. While adolescents' study time and social relationships showed positive trends, their life satisfaction were negatively affected by declines in academic engagement, teacher relationships, and grade satisfaction. The findings suggest that some interventions aimed at fostering positive social relationships, and balanced academic engagement and study time could help mitigate the adverse effects on adolescents' well-being. Future research should focus on developing

and testing intervention programs that can improve adolescents' mental health and life satisfaction during disasters such as COVID-19.

## **Keywords**

Life Satisfaction, Positive Psychology Theory, Latent Growth Model, The COVID-19 Pandemic, Adolescents