

# **Life Satisfaction Among College Students: The Role of Self-Monitoring Through Peer Education**

**Hazhira Qudsyi, Achmad Sholeh, Nyda Afsari**

Universitas Islam Indonesia  
*hazhira.qudsyi@uii.ac.id*

## ***Abstract***

Purpose of this study is to identify the effectiveness of self-monitoring training through peer education to improve life satisfaction for college students through peer education. This study uses a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method. Participants in the study were 30 students of Universitas Islam Indonesia at Yogyakarta City, Indonesia, which consisted of 14 students in the experimental group and 16 students in the control group. This research instrument uses a self-report scale, namely Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLWS) to measure life satisfaction variable, and also uses focus group discussion to gain more responses. The analysis technique used was ANOVA mixed design analysis to test the difference between pre-test and post-test scores in experimental group and control group. In this study, self-monitoring carried out by individuals through peer education media is assumed to be one of the strategies to increase life satisfaction felt by students. Design of the self-monitoring intervention program was provided in 8 sessions, which generally consisted of program orientation, psycho-education, reflection, and practice. Result of data analysis showed that self-monitoring training through peer education does not have a significant effect to improve life satisfaction. However, based on focus group discussion, some respondents said that respondents were able to understand themselves, know the right and wrong things, feel always watched, and be able to do self-introspection. Some participants conveyed in the focus group discussion process that the process of self-monitoring through peer education gave rise to the determination to be better after the program took place.

**Keywords:** life satisfaction, self-monitoring, peer education

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Positive psychology is a relatively new study in psychology, but now the topics in this study are becoming increasingly popular. Until now, research in positive psychology still has many opportunities to continue to be studied by researchers. Life satisfaction is one of the studies in positive psychology that is still being researched to this day. Various studies have even shown that life satisfaction has an important role for individual mental health.

Hurlock (2009) explains that life satisfaction is a condition regarding welfare or satisfaction which is a pleasant condition and arises when needs and expectations meet or can be fulfilled. Life satisfaction is conceptualized as a cognitive judgmental process in which individuals assess their quality of life based on the unique criteria possessed by individuals (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin, 1985), however, this cognitive assessment is separate from individual interpretations of affective events (emotional) (Suldo, Savage, & Mercer, 2014). Although life satisfaction is a separate aspect of affection, Prasoong and Chaturvedi (2016) explain, that life satisfaction has been conceptualized as a cognitive aspect of individual subjective well-being. Prasoong and Chaturvedi (2016) also added that individuals who have high life satisfaction would show a good quality of life.

Meanwhile, low life satisfaction will cause problems in various forms.

Various studies have shown the role of life satisfaction in peoples' lives, including students. Life satisfaction can predict students' attitudes and behavior in the face of depression (Khrantsova, Saarnio, Gordeeva, & Williams, 2007), positively related to meaningfulness in student learning experiences (Fakunmoju, Donahue, McCoy, and Mengel, 2016), predicting positive student functions in academic aspects, social, and health (Renshaw and Cohen, 2013), predictors of individual health (Rissanen, 2015), predict withdrawal behavior and aggression (Elmore & Huebner, 2010), predict behavior of involvement in schools (Elmore & Huebner, 2010). Not only that, research shows that the low life satisfaction felt by adolescents is one of the risk factors for the emergence of victimization behavior and the low prosocial behavior in adolescents (Martin, Huebner, & Valois, 2008). Based on several previous studies, it can be seen that life satisfaction felt by individuals has a positive impact on individual behavior and life. Specifically, for students, life satisfaction can also predict aspects of student life, not just academic aspects.

In students, life satisfaction is influenced by many factors. In general, factors that affect life satisfaction in students are divided into two, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are factors that come from within the

individual, expectations (Raats, 2015), involvement in activities (Utami, 2009), spiritual intelligence (Ramdani, 2015), personality, orientation to happiness (Peterson, Park, and Seligman, 2005), academic fatigue (Ocal, 2016), *self-monitoring* (Triana, Mashoedi, & Koentary, 2014), gratitude (Robustelli & Whisman, 2016), determination of life goals (Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib, and Finch, 2009), stress and resilience (Cazan & Truta, 2015), *self-esteem*, and cognitive needs (Coutinho & Woolery, 2004).

Meanwhile, external factors are factors that originate outside the individual. External factors that influence life satisfaction include family support (Ramdani, 2015), income (Proto & Rustichini, 2015), quality of family cohesion, parental support, and peer relations (Rabotec-Saric, Brajsa-Zganec, & Sakic, 2008), classmate support (Minch, 2009), school climate (Zullig, Huebner, & Patton, 2011), and peer closeness (Ma and Huebner, 2008). Based on several previous studies, it can be seen that self-monitoring and peers become one of factors that influence life satisfaction in students.

Bandura, Turner, and Sheperd (in Klein, Ritchie, Nathan, & Wutzke, 2014) explained that several theories of behavior change apply peer education. According to social cognitive theory, peer education is considered as a role model of healthy behavior, and allows behaviors that can change others behavior. Burke and Mancuso (Abdi & Simbar, 2013) also explained, that in Social Learning Theory, some individuals can function as role models of other human behavior, because they have talent or strength to stimulate behavior changes in other individuals.

In the context of peer education, individuals are very likely to carry out a self-monitoring process. Covarrubias and Stone (2015) explain, that in the context of friendship, self-monitoring can be described through a self-monitor learning process where each student can adopt his friend behavior to increase academic success, as well as a media to engage in behavior which guarantees popularity in groups. This self-monitoring can be interpreted by how one manages, acts, and controls himself in social (Carter, McCullough, & Carver, 2012; Gangestad and Snyder, 2000).

Life satisfaction becomes one of the important studies in positive psychology. Life satisfaction has been conceptualized as one aspect of individual subjective well-being. Individuals will feel prosperous or not in his life, one of which can be seen through life satisfaction he feels. Life satisfaction becomes one of the important aspects in individual development, because of the many positive impacts that can result from life satisfaction felt by individuals, including students. There are several factors that are considered to affect life satisfaction for students, namely internal and external factors. One external factor is peers (peer). Through peer education, life satisfaction on students can be increased. Moreover, in peer education, life satisfaction felt by students can be carried out a process of self-monitoring on individuals. In this study, self-monitoring conducted by individuals through peer education media is assumed to be one of the strategies to increase life satisfaction felt by students.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### 2.1 Participants

Participants in this study were 30 students. Consisting of 16 students included in the experimental group and 14 students in the control group. Characteristics of respondent are students in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, both men and women.

### 2.2 Research Design

Research design used in this study was to use a quasi-experimental research design. Quasi-experiment is an experiment that has treatment, measurement of impact, unit of experiment, but does not use random assignments to create comparisons in order to deduce changes caused by treatment (Shadish, Cook, and Campbell, 2002). In this study, type of quasi-experimental research used is a non-equivalent group designs, where the behavior of experimental group and control group is usually measured before and after treatment (Shadish et al., 2002). In this case, grouping of respondents in the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG) is done not randomly (*non-random assignment*) (Shadish et al., 2002).

### 2.3 Measurements

Data collection in this study used a self-report scale and focus group discussion. The self-report scale used is adaptation of Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLWS) developed by Diener et al., (1985) which consists of 5 items. The original scale has a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.82 and an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.87. *Focus group discussion*, is used as a supporting instrument to see the changes that occur related to the variables measured in this study, and to gain more responses from respondents.

### 2.4 Research Procedure

This study uses a quasi-experimental design, namely the giving of treatment or intervention to respondents who were included in experimental group (EG). And the effectiveness of treatment in experimental group will be compared with the measurement in control group (CG), which is not given treatment according to the context of this study. As for this study, there are 2 main agendas to be carried out, namely the intervention that will be given to EG and placebo activities that will be given to CG. The intervention plan that will be given to EG includes the following activities.

This research is a series of interventions related to self-monitoring through peer education to students. The process of providing interventions lasted eight meetings which referred to the intervention module. The method used to conduct self-monitoring leads to a process of reflection on experiences and monitoring of behavior, before, during, and after the intervention process takes place. The intervention process is carried out in small groups of approximately 6-8 people of the

same age range and guided by a facilitator to do some of tasks given by trainer.

Table 1. Intervention Program of Self-Monitoring\* through Peer Education (experimental group)

Session	Activities	Methods	Source of Self-Monitoring
1	Program orientation, warming up, and grouping for peer education	Classical Peer education	-
2	Psycho-education about self-monitoring	Classical	<i>Self-Monitoring</i>
3	Reflection for the experience of self-monitoring	Peer education	<i>Self-Monitoring</i>
4	Psycho-education about monitoring by God	Classical	<i>Monitoring by God</i>
5	Reflection for the experience of monitoring by God	Peer education	<i>Monitoring by God</i>
6	Psycho education in team	Peer education	<i>Monitoring by Others</i>
7	Practice in team	Peer education	<i>Monitoring by Others</i>
8	Final reflection and closing	Classical	-

\*Carter, McCullough, and Carver (2012)

### 2.5 Data Analysis Method

Statistical technique used to test the effectiveness of intervention program in this study was an analysis of ANOVA mixed design to test the differences between pre-test and post test scores in experimental and control group.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of self-monitoring training through peer education to improve life satisfaction among college students. Based on the results of data analysis using multivariate tests with ANOVA mixed design the following results were obtained.

Table 2. Result Interaction Between Groups

Variable	Greenhouse-Geisser		
	df	F	P
RESMI * Group	1.481	0.296	0.746

The results above show that the provision of self-monitoring training through peer education does not have a significant effect to improve life satisfaction.

This is shown from the value of  $F = 0.296$  with a significance of  $0.7 (p > 0.05)$  which means that there was no change in life satisfaction caused by self-monitoring training.

Table 3. Result Effectiveness of Self-Monitoring Training

Variable	Multivariate Tests (Wilks' Lambda)		
	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Life Satisfaction	1.243	0.30	0.084

If the explored further, this self-monitoring training program only contributes to life satisfaction of 8.4%.

These results indicate that self-monitoring training to improve life satisfaction is considered less effective.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistic

Variable	Group	Descriptive Statistic	
		Mean	Mean Difference
<i>Life Satisfaction Pre-test</i>	Experiment	22.75	0.61
	Control	22.14	
<i>Life Satisfaction Post-test</i>	Experiment	23.37	1.52
	Control	21.85	
<i>Life Satisfaction Follow Up</i>	Experiment	21.83	0.26
	Control	21.57	

Based on result above, it can be seen that the intervention only gave an effective contribution 8.4%. Those scores show that intervention of self-monitoring through peer education is considered not effective to increase life satisfaction among college students.

Even so, if we see the results of descriptive statistics, it shows that the experimental group experienced a score increase in the posttest stage, that is equal to  $M = 23.37$ , while the control group experienced a decrease of  $M = 21.85$ . However, at the follow-up stage, both experienced a decrease in scores. This is indicated by the value of  $M = 21.83$  in the experimental group, and  $M = 21.57$  in the control group.

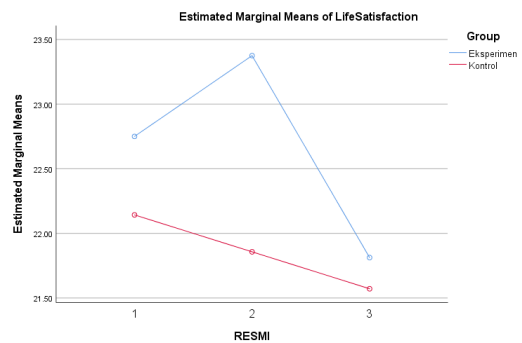


Figure 1. Result of intervention

Based on the results above, overall the training provided has not been able to improve life satisfaction so there is a need for further studies. Results of this study are in line with research conducted by Morrison (Kim & Bardi, 2012) which indicates that self-monitoring is usually not significantly related to life satisfaction.

Regarding the self-monitoring intervention implemented in peer education, it basically can be a good opportunity to increase positive behavior in groups when viewed from social cognitive theory. In the context of life satisfaction, several studies mention that life satisfaction is related to high social support (Funk, Huebner, & Valois, 2006) and with the existence of sources of individual strength, one of which is social relationships, it can predict an increase in life satisfaction (Suldo et al., 2014). Application of peer education principles related to social support is also applied to the Positive Psychology Group Interventions (PPIs) program (Kashaniyan and Koolae, 2015). The study uses PPIs interventions to improve life satisfaction and is proven to increase life satisfaction.

While the use of self-monitoring as a form of intervention is also one of the internal factors for increasing life satisfaction. In Leontopoulou's research (2015) relating to positive psychology intervention, it was mentioned that self-monitoring activities can help the imbalance that occurs between expectation and reality so that it can help a person to refocus his goals. This is supported by the results of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in respondents. However, if we look at the results of focus group discussion, some respondents said that respondents were able to understand themselves, know the right and wrong things, feel always watched, and be able to do self-introspection. Not only that, self-monitoring activities from participants can also be more involved both during and after the intervention is done (Seligman, 2011). Some participants conveyed in the focus group discussion process that the process of self-monitoring through peer education gave rise to the determination to be better after the program took place.

The existence of different factors such as high self-monitoring and low self-monitoring that is owned by each individual also contributes to the level of life satisfaction of the individual (Triana et al., 2014). Individuals who basically have high self-monitoring will tend to do activities with people who have certain skills, so that in the context of peer education will show high interest. While individuals with low self-monitoring will only focus on themselves, so that peer education used in these characteristics can be less effective (Triana et al., 2014).

Some limitations possibility made this research not proven. *First*, the initial design of self-monitoring training module was designed to be held in eight meetings with the duration of each meeting being 1-1.5 hours. But in its implementation, this research can only be held in four meetings, with duration of 1.5-2 hours each. In addition, the measurements in this study were also conducted three times, namely pretest, posttest, and follow-up. Meanwhile, posttest measurements were carried out at the third meeting directly after the training material was given and not given a pause for some time before being given the posttest. Regarding the reality of such implementation, participants did not have enough time to reflect, even though this self-reflection

process was an important part of self-monitoring interventions for individuals. As stated by Grant, Franklin, and Langford (2002) that self-reflection is needed for the process of changing one's behavior. Not only that, in the end, the role of peer educators became less than optimal because there was no time lag between giving time and post-test measurements, thus minimizing the role of the peer educator in self-monitoring interventions. This is similar to that stated by Burke and Mancuso (Abdi & Simbar, 2013) that peer educator has a role as a role model and can stimulate changes in individual behavior.

*Second*, preparation of material content in the self-monitoring training module is still too general and has not been directed at the context of life satisfaction or general well-being of individuals. Ideally, content in self-monitoring interventions can lead individuals to be able to evaluate their lives. As the results of the study (Kim & Bardi, 2012) show, that respondents whose behavior is directed through inner attitudes, dispositions, and values, they tend to have higher subjective well-being.

*Third*, peer educator whose involved in this study lacked control of the assignment of self-reflection given to participants, so that some participants had not collected self-reflection assignments until the intervention program was completed. In its concept, self-reflection is an integral part of the self-monitoring intervention program. If in this process participants do not do optimal self-reflection, of course the results obtained are also not optimal. This goes back again to the nature of life satisfaction which is meaningful as a person's evaluation of his life as a whole both that which has happened and is still in consideration about family, friends, and also his work (Huebner in Nickerson and Nagle, 2004). Similarly stated by Diener et al., (1985), that the assessment of life satisfaction depends on the comparison made by the individual to one situation with what is considered according to the standard or provision. The process of self-reflection carried out by participants was supposed to facilitate participants in evaluating their lives. It's just that, because the participants are not optimal in doing self-reflection, it is very possible if there is no increase in life satisfaction felt by participants. Self-reflection as part of the self-monitoring process is also very important in the process of individual self-evaluation. As stated by Leone and Hawkins (2006), individuals who have high self-monitoring have a pragmatic concept of self where their identity is the product of social interaction and role that played by individuals in different social settings.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that self-monitoring training through peer education is not effective in increasing student life satisfaction. Referring to the previous findings and discussion, the suggestions that can be given include: a) The training program is carried out appropriately in accordance with the intervention modules that have been prepared; b) Content in the intervention material needs to be adjusted to the aspects of life satisfaction measured; c) Control of external and internal validity in the

experimental process is strengthened, so as to ensure that the intervention or treatment provided is in accordance with the research objectives.

## 5. REFERENCES

- Abdi, F., & Simbar, M. (2013). The peer education approach in adolescents narrative review article. *Iranian Journal Public Health*, 42(11), 1200–1206.
- Bronk, K. C., Hill, P. L., Lapsley, D. K., Talib, T. L., & Finch, H. (2009). Purpose, hope, and life satisfaction in three age groups. *Journal of Positive Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760903271439>.
- Carter, E. C., McCullough, M. E., & Carver, C. S. (2012). The mediating role of monitoring in the association of religion with self-control. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 3(6), 691–697. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550612438925>.
- Cazan, A., & Truta, C. (2015). Stress, resilience, and life satisfaction in college students. *Revista de Cercetare Si Interventie Sociala*, 48, 95–108.
- Coutinho, S. A., & Woolery, L. M. (2004). The need for cognition and life satisfaction among college students. *College Student Journal*, 38(2), 203–207.
- Covarrubias, R., & Stone, J. (2015). Self-monitoring strategies as a unique predictor of Latino male student achievement. *Journal of Latinos and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2014.944702>.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71–75. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13).
- Elmore, G. M., & Huebner, E.S. (2010). Adolescents' satisfaction with school experiences: Relationships with demographics, attachment relationships, and school engagement behavior. *Psychology in the Schools*, 47(6), 525–537.
- Fakunmoju, S., Donahue, G. R., McCoy, S., & Mengel, A. S. (2016). Life satisfaction and perceived meaningfulness of learning experience among first-year traditional graduate social work students. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(6), 49–62.
- Funk, B.A., Huebner, E.S., & Valois, R.F. (2006). Reliability and validity of a brief life satisfaction scale with high school sample. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 7(1), 41–54.
- Gangestad, S., & Snyder, M. (2000). Self-monitoring: Appraisal and reappraisal. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, 530–555.
- Grant, A. M., Franklin, J., & Langford, P. (2002). The self-reflection and insight scale: A new measure of private self-consciousness. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 30(8), 821–835. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2002.30.8.821>.
- Hurlock, E. B. (2009). *Psikologi Perkembangan*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Kashaniyan, F., & Koolaee, A.K. (2015). Effectiveness of positive psychology group interventions on meaning of life and life satisfaction among older adults. *Elderly Health Journal*, 1(2), 68–74.
- Khramtsova, I., Saarnio, D. A., Gordeeva, T., & Williams, K. (2007). Happiness, life satisfaction, and depression in college students: Relations with student behaviors and attitudes. *American Journal of Psychological Research*, 3(1), 8–16.
- Kim, J., & Bardi, M. (2012). Living in Alaska: The role of self-monitoring and uniqueness in subjective well-being. *International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology*, 2(5), 41–48.
- Klein, L. A., Ritchie, J. E., Nathan, S., & Wutzke, S. (2014). An explanatory model of peer education within a complex medicines' information exchange setting. *Social Science and Medicine*, 111, 101–109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.04.009>.
- Leone, C., & Hawkins, L. B. (2006). Self-monitoring and close relationships. *Journal of Personality*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2006.00391.x>.
- Leontopoulou, S. (2015). A positive psychology intervention with emerging adults. *The European Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 3(2), 113–136.
- Ma, C. Q., & Huebner, E. S. (2008). Attachment relationships and adolescents' life satisfaction: Some relationships matter more to girls than boys. *Psychology in the Schools*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20288>.
- Martin, K., Huebner, E.S., & Valois, R.F. (2008). Does life satisfaction predict victimization experiences in adolescence?. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(8), 705–714.
- Minch, D. R. (2009). *Interrelationships among personality, perceived classmate support, and life satisfaction in adolescents* (Master Theses and Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu>.
- Nickerson, A. B., & Nagle, R. J. (2004). The influence of parent and peer attachments on life satisfaction in middle childhood and early adolescence. *Social Indicators Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:SOCI.0000007496.42095.2c>.
- Ocal, K. (2016). Predictors of academic procrastination and university life satisfaction among Turkish sport schools' students. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 11(7), 482–490. <https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR2016.2645>.
- Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Orientations to happiness and life satisfaction: The full

- life versus the empty life. *Journal of Happiness Studies*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-004-1278-z>.
- Prasoon, R., & Chaturvedi, K. R. (2016). Life satisfaction: A literature review. *International Journal of Management Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 25–32.
- Proto, E., & Rustichini, A. (2015). Life satisfaction, income and personality. *Journal of Economic Psychology*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2015.02.001>.
- Raats, C. (2015). *Investigating the relationship between hope and life satisfaction among children in low and middle-income communities in Cape Town*. University of the Western Cape.
- Rabotec-Saric, Z., Brajsa-Zganec, A., & Sakic, M. (2008). Life satisfaction in adolescents: The effects of perceived family economic status, self-esteem and quality of family and peer relationships. *Drus Istraz Zagreb God*, 3(101), 547–564.
- Ramdani. (2015). Kontribusi kecerdasan spiritual dan dukungan keluarga terhadap kepuasan hidup lansia serta implikasinya dalam pelayanan bimbingan dan konseling. *Jurnal KOPASTA*, 2(2), 1–21.
- Renshaw, T. L., & Cohen, A. S. (2013). Life satisfaction as a distinguishing indicator of college student functioning: further validation of the two-continua model of mental health. *Soc Indic Res*, 1–16.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-013-0342-7>.
- Rissanen, T. (2015). Studies on life satisfaction in samples of the general population and depressive patients (Doctoral Dissertations). Retrieved from <http://epublications.uef.fi>.
- Robustelli, B. L., & Whisman, M. A. (2018). Gratitude and life satisfaction in the United States and Japan. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 19(1), 41-55.
- Seligman, M. E. (2011). Flourish: a visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being. *Policy*, 27(3), 60-1. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2>.
- Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Suldo, S. M., Savage, J. A., & Mercer, S. H. (2014). Increasing middle school students' life satisfaction: Efficacy of a positive psychology group intervention. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 15(1), 19-42.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-013-9414-2>.
- Triana, A. D., Mashoedi, S. F., & Koentary, A. S. S. (2014). Hubungan antara self-monitoring dengan kepuasan hidup pada remaja. *Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Indonesia*. 1(2), 1-16.
- Utami, M. S. (2009). Keterlibatan dalam kegiatan dan kesejahteraan subjektif mahasiswa. *Jurnal Psikologi*, 2(36), 144–163.
- Zullig, K. J., Huebner, E. S., & Patton, J. M. (2011). Relationships among school climate domains and school satisfaction. *Psychology in the Schools*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20532>.