



Social Infrastructures and Life Satisfaction

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Abstract

The Inland Empire, a major economic hub in Southern California, continues to face disparities in income, homeownership, and education. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between social infrastructures, demographic variables, and life satisfaction in the region. Survey data were collected from 1,138 participants between December 2024 and March 2025 through the Loma Linda University Health Institute for Community Partnerships and its community partner organizations. Bivariate correlations and stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted. Results indicated that age, income, employment status, and access to social infrastructures significantly predicted life satisfaction, accounting for 8.1% of the variance. A follow-up analysis identified specific types of social infrastructures—school and family’s residence—as significant predictors, increasing explained variance to 8.7%. These findings highlight the importance of economic stability, social support networks, and targeted interventions for older adults in enhancing well-being. The results offer actionable insights for nonprofit organizations and policymakers working to improve life satisfaction across the Inland Empire.

Objectives

The Inland Empire is a key economic region that has been instrumental in fostering economic expansion in Southern California; however, disparities in income, homeownership, and education continue to persist across the region. Given these ongoing challenges, there is a growing need to gain a deeper understanding of the community's needs to guide nonprofit organizations and policymakers in their efforts to improve overall community health. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between social infrastructures, demographic variables, and life satisfaction within the Inland Empire.

Methods

Data collection took place from December of 2024 to March of 2025, with surveys distributed through Loma Linda University Health Institute for Community Partnerships (ICP) and its community partner organizations across the region. A total of 1,138 participants completed the survey. Of the participants, 757 identified as female, 360 as male, and 21 selected a different gender identity. A bivariate correlation was conducted to examine the relationships between life satisfaction, social infrastructures, and other demographic variables. Following bivariate correlations, stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to identify significant predictors of life satisfaction.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics (Demographics and Social Infrastructures)

Variables	N	M	SD	Yes	No
Life Satisfaction	1130	2.40	.584		
AgeCode	1135	3.75	1.749		
IncomeCode	1138	2.99	2.380		
EmployCode	1123	2.46	.659		
SumSocial	1138	2.05	1.669		
Church	1093			542	596
Friend’s residence	1093			391	747
School	1093			223	915
Family’s residence	1093			414	724
Park	1093			323	815
Community centers	1093			323	815
Online/Social media	1093			116	1022



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Table 2

Bivariate Correlation (Demographics and Social Infrastructures)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Life Satisfaction	—													
2. Age	-.13**	—												
3. GenderCode	.01	.02	—											
4. EduCode	.13**	-.13**	-.04	—										
5. EmployCode	.19**	-.26**	.07*	.21**	—									
6. IncomeCode	.21**	-.09**	.04	.37**	.25**	—								
7. Church	.03	.16**	-.09**	-.02	-.05	-.01	—							
8. Friend’s Residence	.13**	-.14**	.02	.21**	.10**	.22**	.01	—						
9. School	.13**	-.21**	-.08*	.01	.08*	.07*	.04	.03	—					
10. Family’s Residence	.15**	-.14**	-.06*	.16**	.10**	.21**	.02	.49**	.01	—				
11. Park	.03	-.12**	.05	.07*	.02	.03	.08*	.22**	.22**	.18**	—			
12. Community Centers	.03	-.12**	.05	.07*	.02	.03	.08*	.22**	.22**	.18**	1.00**	—		
13. Online/ Social Media	.07*	-.11**	-.01	.21**	.13**	.16**	-.02	.26**	.01	.24**	.07*	.07*	—	
14. SumSocial	.15**	-.17**	-.03	.19**	.10**	.19**	.37**	.61**	.34**	.58**	.71**	.71**	.32**	—

Table 3

Regression Coefficients for Predicting Life Satisfaction

Variables	B	95% CI	β	t	p
Gender	.023	-.048	.019	.642	.521
Age	-.028	-.048	-.085	-2.81	.005
Education	.008	-.011	.027	.854	.394
Employment	.094	.040	-.106	3.44	<.001
Income	.039	.023	.159	4.92	<.001
SumSocial	.035	.014	.100	3.32	<.001

Results

Bivariate correlations revealed significant associations between life satisfaction and access to social infrastructures. Additionally, demographic factors such as age, educational level, employment status, and income were significantly correlated with life satisfaction. A stepwise multiple regression was conducted to determine which independent variables were predictors of life satisfaction. Regression results indicated an overall model of four predictors (age, income, employment status, access to social infrastructures) that significantly predict life satisfaction, $R^2 = .086$, $R^{2\text{adjusted}} = .081$, $F(6, 1086) = 17.03$, $p < .001$. This model accounted for 8.1% of the variance in life satisfaction. An additional stepwise multiple regression was conducted to examine the types of social infrastructures that were predictive of life satisfaction. The study examined the following social infrastructures: church or place of worship, friend’s residence, family member’s residence, school, community resource centers or organizations, parks or public spaces, and online communities or social media. Regression results suggested an overall model of five predictors (age, income, employment status, school, family’s residence) that significantly predict life satisfaction, $R^2 = .096$, $R^{2\text{adjusted}} = .087$, $F(11, 1081) = 10.49$, $p < .001$. This model accounted for 8.7% of the variance in life satisfaction.

Table 4

Regression Coefficients for Predicting Life Satisfaction—Types of Social Infrastructures

Variables	B	95% CI	β	t	p
Gender	.042	-.030	.034	1.142	.254
Age	-.025	-.048	-.075	-2.403	.016
Education	.010	-.009	.034	1.042	.298
Employment	.090	.037	-.101	3.310	<.001
Income	.036	.020	.147	4.462	<.001
Church	.053	-.015	.045	1.518	.129
Friend	.047	-.037	.039	1.108	.268
School	.154	.066	.105	3.442	<.001
Family	.087	.006	.072	2.117	.035
Community Centers	-.029	-.107	.022	-.718	.473
Online/Social Media	-.014	-.117	.000	-.015	.988

Conclusion

The multiple regression analysis identified higher income and full-time employment as the strongest predictors of life satisfaction, consistent with findings from previous studies. In addition, access to more social infrastructures—particularly schools and family residences—also made a meaningful contribution to life satisfaction. Age emerged as a consistent predictor across all models, with older adults reporting lower levels of life satisfaction compared to younger individuals. These findings carry important implications for policies and programs aimed at enhancing life satisfaction in the Inland Empire. Beyond emphasizing income growth and employment opportunities, efforts to promote economic mobility should also prioritize education and investment in social infrastructures. These programs should also consider incorporating resources specifically designed for older adults, as the results indicated that older individuals reported lower life satisfaction compared to their younger counterparts. Finally, future research could further investigate the roles of perceived health and quality of life as predictors of life satisfaction. Such insights would support nonprofit organizations and policymakers in program design and resource allocation.

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