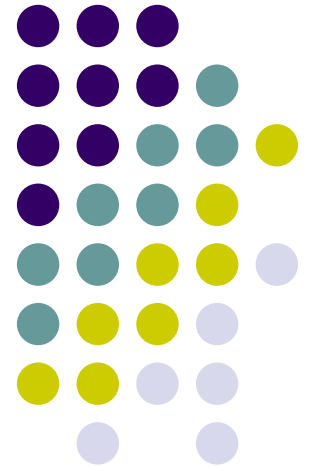


# Adjustment to College and Student Life Satisfaction

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# Life satisfaction



- Important aspect of subjective well-being
- Low life satisfaction – major risk factor for psychological disturbance (e.g. depression, substance abuse and negative peer interactions in adolescents)

# Life satisfaction in college students



Frisch et al. (2005) -  
Life satisfaction  
predicts:

- academic failure,
- retention at college





# Our previous results

- Sex differences in adjustment to college – girls show better academic and social, but poorer emotional adjustment
- Different big five personality factors are correlated with specific aspects of college adjustment in girls and boys
- Optimism is consistently positively correlated with all aspects of college adjustment
- No results re. life satisfaction

# Aims/Hypothesis



- Gender and residence status will have significant effects on student life satisfaction
- College adjustment (academic, emotional and social) will have significant contribution to student overall life satisfaction, after controlling the contribution of personality factors (big five and optimism)
- Different factors will predict life satisfaction in specific groups of students

# Measures:

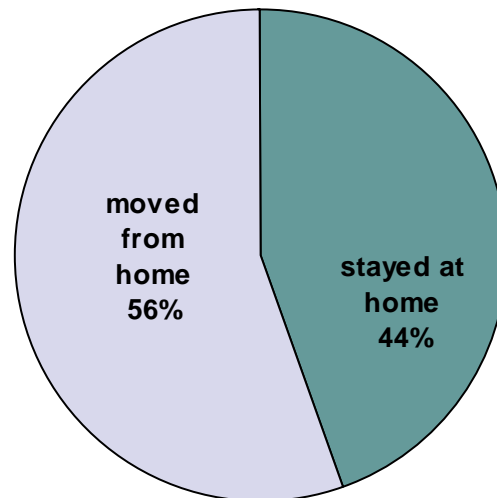
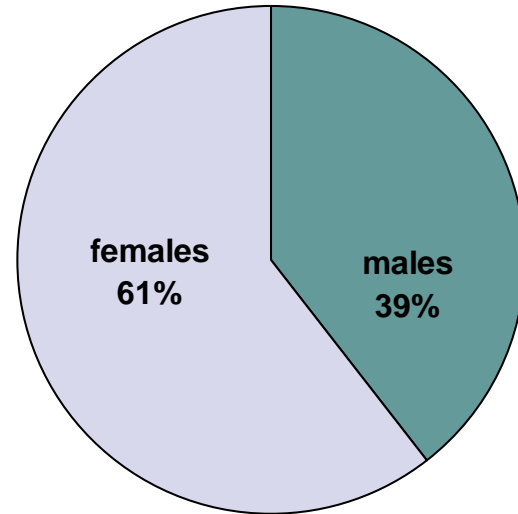


- **Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire** (SACQ, Baker & Siryk, 1999)
- **Big Five Inventory** (Beneth-Martinez & John, 1998)
- **The Life Orientation Test - Revised** (Scheier, Carver and Bridges, 1994)
- **Life Satisfaction** (8-point Likert-type scale)



# Participants

- 488 freshmen from different schools at University of Rijeka (randomized sample)
- Average age 19.12 years

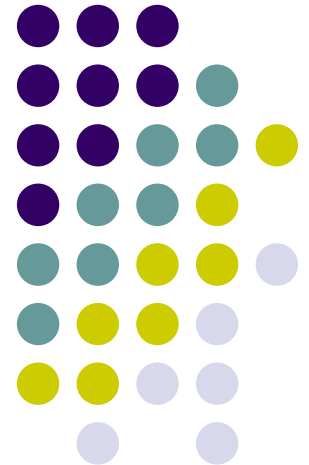


# Results

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Statistical analysis:

- 2-way ANOVA
- Hierarchical regression analysis

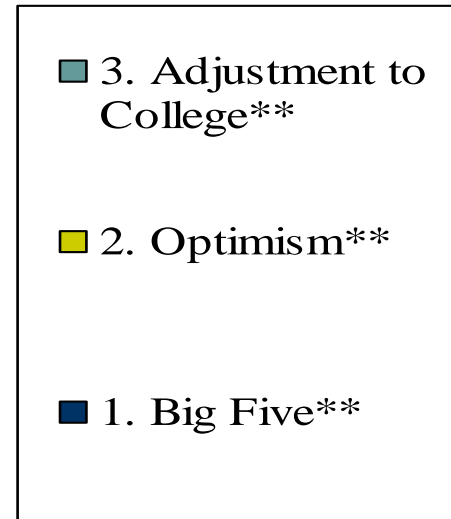
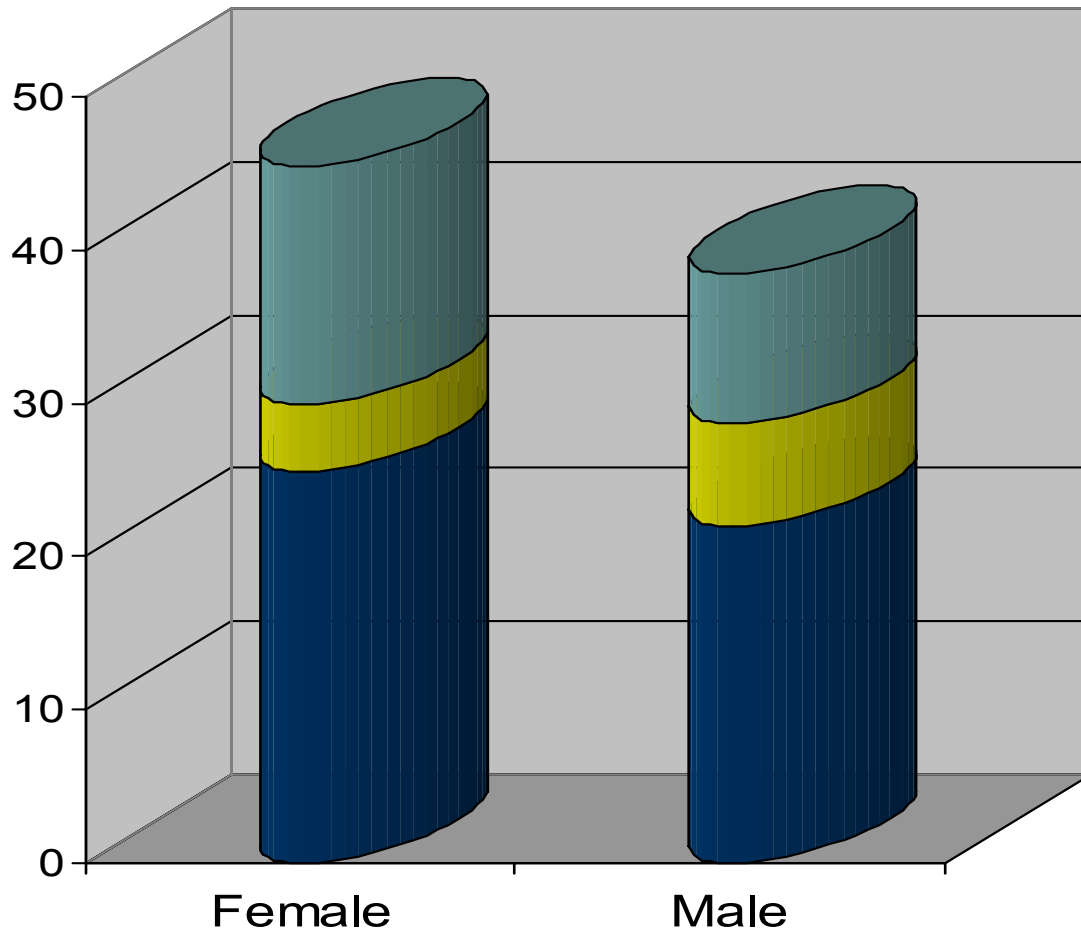




# Effect of sex and separation from family on student life satisfaction



# Prediction of life satisfaction in female and male students



\*\* p<.001

# Specific predictors of life satisfaction (in the 3rd step)



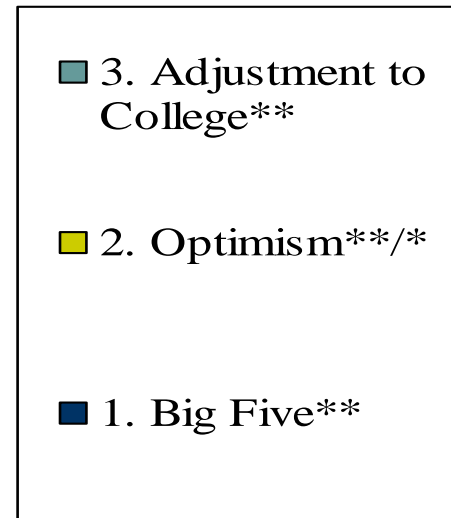
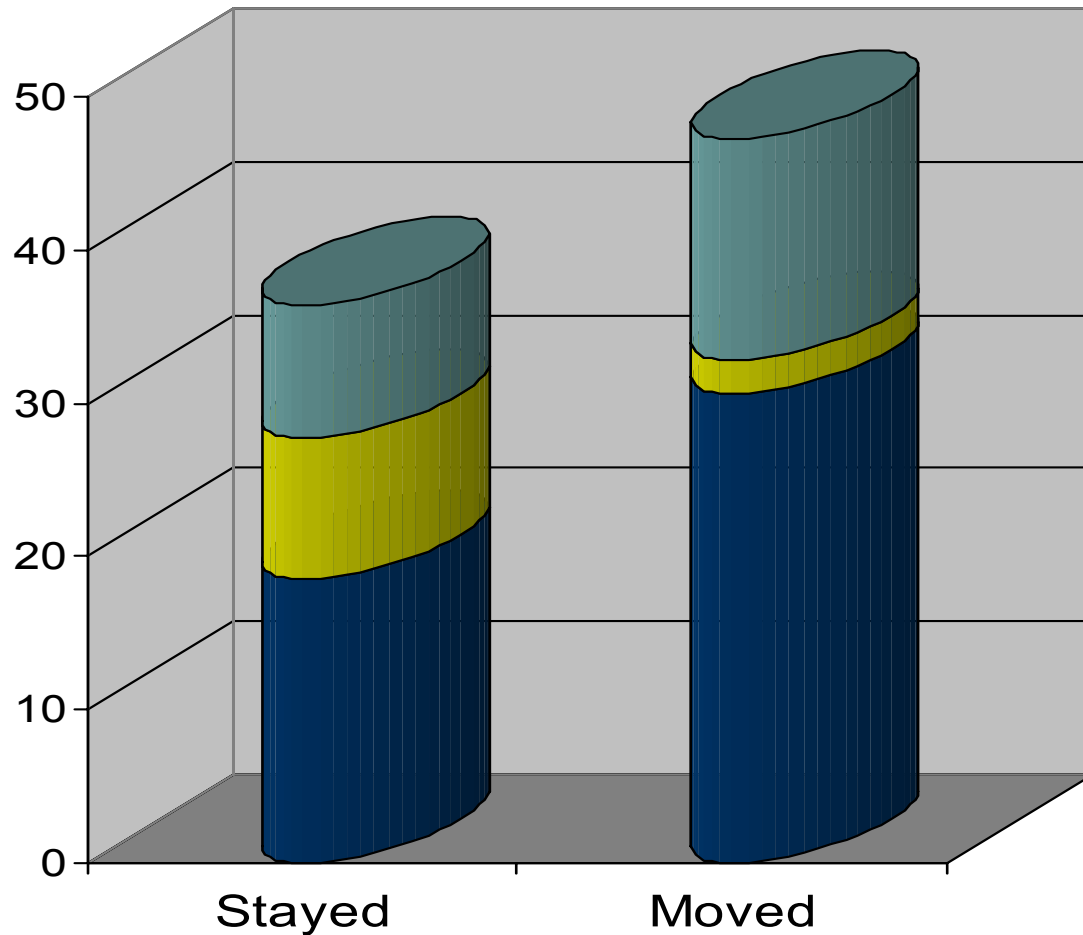
## Female

- Optimism ( $\beta = .162, p < .05$ )
- College adjustment:
  - Social ( $\beta = .196, p < .01$ )
  - Academic ( $\beta = .185, p < .01$ )
  - Emotional ( $\beta = .213, p < .01$ )

## Male

- Optimism ( $\beta = .359, p < .001$ )
- College adjustment
  - Social ( $\beta = .360, p < .001$ )

# Prediction of life satisfaction in students who stayed/moved from home



\*  $p < .01$

\*\*  $p < .001$

# Specific predictors of life satisfaction (in the 3rd step)



## Stayed at home

- Agreeableness ( $\beta = -.142$ ,  $p < .05$ )
- Optimism ( $\beta = .350$ ,  $p < .001$ )
- College adjustment
  - Academic ( $\beta = .211$ ,  $p < .05$ )
  - Social ( $\beta = .168$ ,  $p < .05$ )

## Moved from home

- Neuroticism ( $\beta = -.167$ ,  $p < .05$ )
- Optimism ( $\beta = .146$ ,  $p < .05$ )
- College adjustment
  - Emotional ( $\beta = .178$ ,  $p = .01$ )
  - Social ( $\beta = .354$ ,  $p < .001$ )

# Conclusions – sex differences



- Students of both sex who stayed at home are more satisfied with their life
- Girls who moved from home are the least satisfied group of students – may be at the greatest risk for developing psychological symptoms or giving up from college

# Conclusions – personality factors



- **Optimism** is again the consistent significant individual predictor of life satisfaction in all groups of students
- Students with **high neuroticism** who moved from home are prone to lower life satisfaction and consequently....
- Even if there are no other significant individual predictors, **personality factors** (Big Five) as a group significantly contribute to life satisfaction in all groups of students

# Conclusions – college adjustment



- Adjustment to college is more important for general life satisfaction in girls than in boys, as well as in the group of students who moved from their home
- Helping students at the beginning of the college in their overall adjustment to university life might be a reasonable and cost-effective preventive strategy

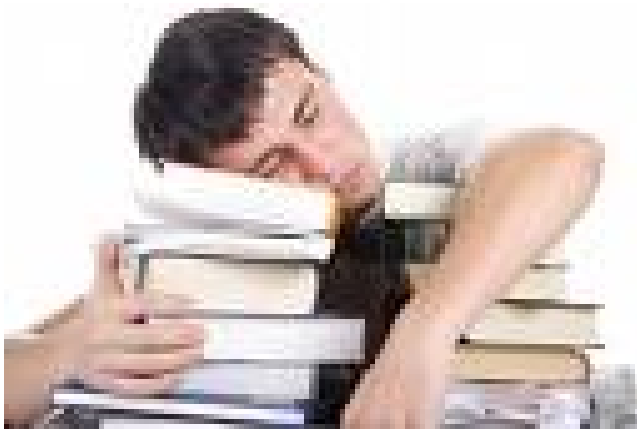


# Implications for interventions



- It is more important to work with groups of students who moved from home (especially girls) on their adjustment to college, particularly on their social and emotional adjustment (which is lower in this group)
- Students who stayed at home could benefit more from the interventions focused on their academic adjustment

# Goals of interventions



# Plans for further research



- Follow up longitudinal adjustment of students
- Investigate the prediction of life satisfaction and college adjustment of freshmen to their later academic achievement and retention
- Include other possible factors of student adjustment and academic achievement

*Thank you for your attention*

