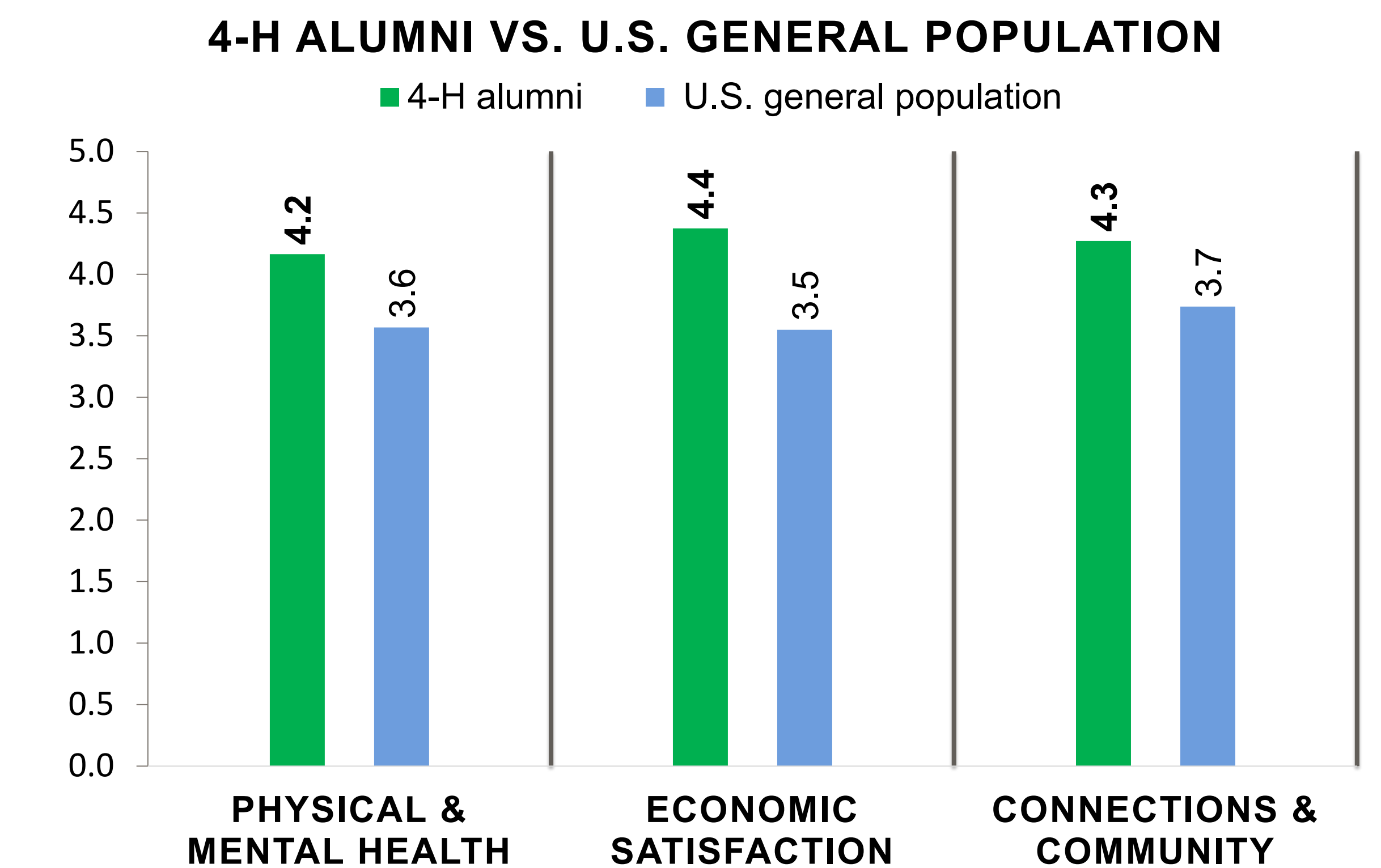


Exploring Life Satisfaction of Young Adult 4-H Alumni

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Introduction

- The long-term goals of Positive Youth Development (PYD) programs are to help young people develop positive norms, skills, and attitudes to successfully negotiate a transition into adulthood
- An implicit expectation of PYD is that by engaging youth in high quality programs as a young people, they will experience better outcomes and fewer adverse health or risk-taking behavior as adults.
- Little research has been published reporting on the long-term outcomes experienced by emerging adults.
- In the present study, we focus on subjective well-being – life satisfaction – a measure of quality of life.
- We conducted survey research to explore life satisfaction (11 items between 3 factors) of young adults (aged 18 to 34) who had participated in the University of California 4-H youth development program as young people (4-H alumni) and compared their responses to a general U.S. population sample.

Method

- The life satisfaction measure (11-items) was adapted from RAND's Comparing Life Satisfaction study (Kapteyn et al., 2009) and Gallup's Americans' Satisfaction with their Lives poll (2019).
- We administered the survey to UC 4-H alumni who were 18 to 34 years old, and in total, 693 (N) alumni completed the survey.
- We obtained the U.S. general population sample (N=373) raw data under a data sharing agreement. The two samples were grouped into two groups: (1) emerging adulthood (age 18-24) and (2) early adulthood (age 25-34).
- The 11 life satisfaction items were grouped into 3 factors based on factor analysis results, and average composite scores were calculated for the factors.
- The composite scores were compared between early and emerging adulthood and UC 4-H alumni and U.S. general population. The effects of sample type and age group on life satisfaction were calculated.

Results

- 4-H alumni in their early adulthood were significantly more satisfied with their physical and mental health ($mean=4.3$) than 4-H alumni in their emerging adulthood ($mean=4.1$) ($t=-2.29, p < .05$).
- 4-H alumni in their early adulthood were significantly more economically satisfied ($mean=4.5$) than emerging adulthood ($mean=4.3$) ($t=-3.46, p < .05$).
- Regression analysis showed that there is no significant effect of age groups (emerging or early adulthoods) on life satisfaction.
- The 4-H alumni sample showed higher life satisfaction compared to the U.S. general population sample.

Scholarly Significance

- The study intends to pave the way for additional empirical efforts to advance understanding of the long-term outcomes experienced by youth who participate in youth development programs.
- *The long-term outcomes demonstrate the value and positive impacts youth development programming can have on individuals.*
- We encourage future researchers to measure and report on the long-term outcomes of previous program participants.
- A better understanding of the long-term outcomes experienced by 4-H alumni may allow the development of stronger, evidence-based youth development frameworks.



References

- Gallup Organization. (2019). Americans' Satisfaction with their Lives Poll. Washington, D.C.
- Kapteyn, A., Smith, J. P., & Van Soest, A. (2009). Comparing Life Satisfaction. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/WR623-1.html.

