



Home attachment, homesickness, and psychological well-being among the first-year students

ESRAD ONLINE CONFERENCE 2021

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Supported by RFBR, Project 20-513-05014.

Topicality and relevance

Transition to university is an important life event which is accompanied by **stress** and many **changes**: change their life style; separate from the parents' home; move to another city; meet new university mates; sometimes start their job, etc.

The first-year students' adjustment to university is an essential predictor of their academic achievements.

Most of the students experience stress because of separation from home (Claborn & Kane, 2012; Stroebe et al., 2002).

In the context of globalization, more and more people find themselves in conditions of long-term stay away from home.

Homesickness – what is it?

Depression as a result of absence from home (The Oxford Dictionary)

Longing for home and family while absent from them (Webster's Dictionary)

Medical texts: a form of grief

Fisher & Hood (1988): homesickness 'would appear to be a state with properties relating to grieving, yearning, and constant preoccupation with the past'

Homesick people miss their parents and family, friends and other familiar persons, their familiar surroundings and home comforts, and they feel extremely insecure (Baier & Welch, 1992; Eurelings-Bontekoe, Vingerhoets & Fontijn, 1994; Fisher, 1989).

In students, their homesickness includes 'disliking the university' as well as 'attachment to the home'.

This grief for homeland

Marina Tsvetaeva (Translation by Andrey Kneller)

<https://ruverses.com/marina-tsvetaeva/homesickening/1269/>

This grief for homeland! It's despair
And hopelessness of daily worry!
I'm equally indifferent where
— Alone, entirely and wholly, —

I am, which way I slowly stagger,
Back from the market, walking homeward,
Into a home, that like a barrack,
Still doesn't know that I'm the owner!

...

Each temple's vacant, every home
Is strange to me, — I care for no one.
But if a tree blooms where I roam, —
Especially, if it's the rowan...



The current study

Aim: investigated the role of home attachment and homesickness in students' adaptation to university. We assumed that home attachment would contribute to their well-being, whereas homesickness will not.

Hypothesis: we assumed that home attachment would contribute to their well-being, whereas homesickness will not.

Participants: 406 Russian first-year students (329 female, aged 17 to 20).

Method

Convenience sampling, correlational design

Tools:

the *Utrecht Homesickness Scale* consisting of 5 subscales: *Missing family, Loneliness, Missing friends, Adjustment difficulties, and Ruminations about home* (van Vliet, Stroebe, & Schut, 1998)

the *Home attachment scale* (Reznichenko, 2016)

the *Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale* (Tennant et al., 2007)

the *Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale* (Radloff, 1977).

Additional variables:

sex

Type of dwelling (1 – dormitory, 2 – with relatives, 3 – rented apartment, 4 – own apartment)

Intention (1 – I would like to come to university, 2 – it was not my decision, to come to university)

Results

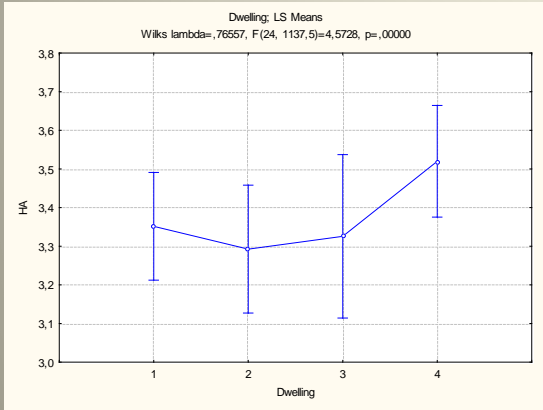
General results

There were not sex differences found (except for depression score that was higher in females).

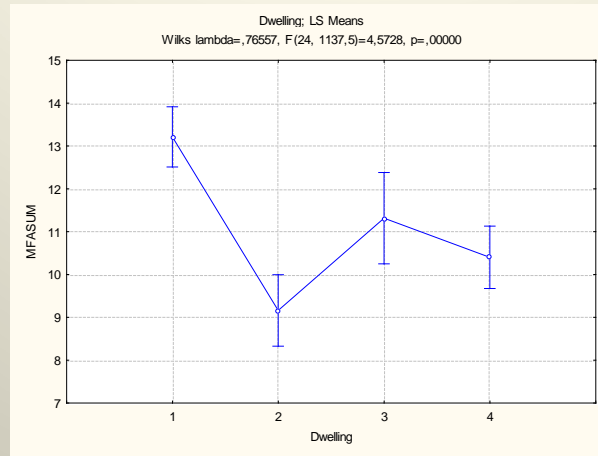
Home attachment positively correlated with home missing (except for Loneliness: students who are not attached to their homes feel less alone).

Home attachment positively correlated with well-being and negatively with depressive symptoms, whereas the missing home score formed opposite connections.

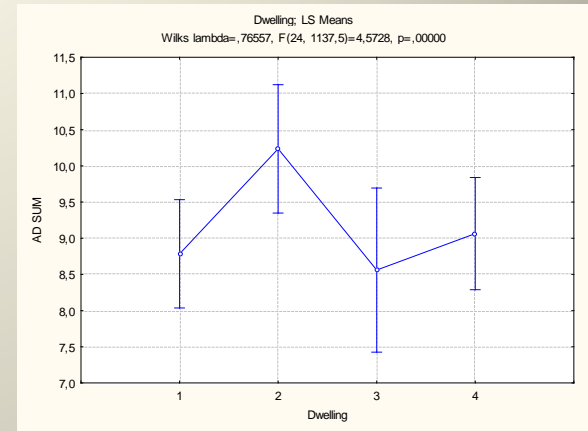
Variables measured depending on the dwelling type



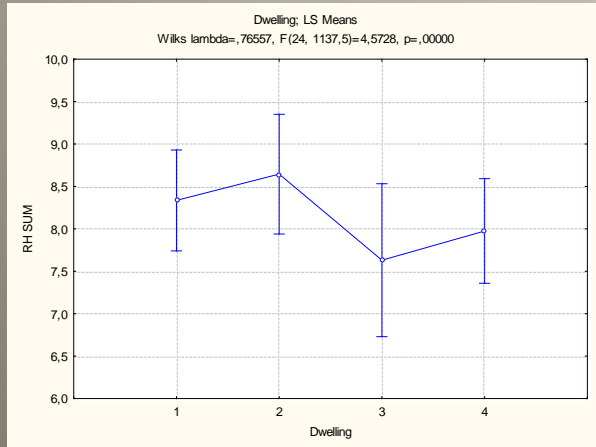
Home attachment



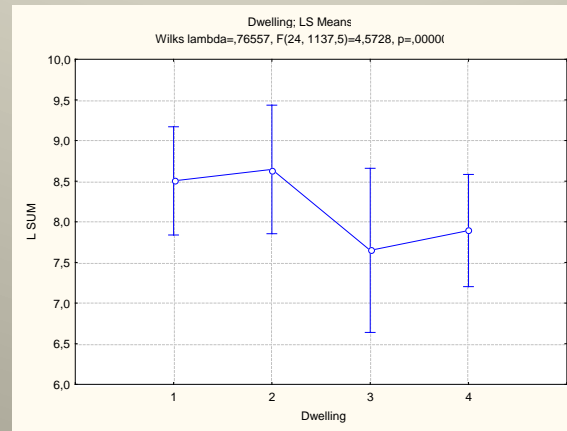
Missing family



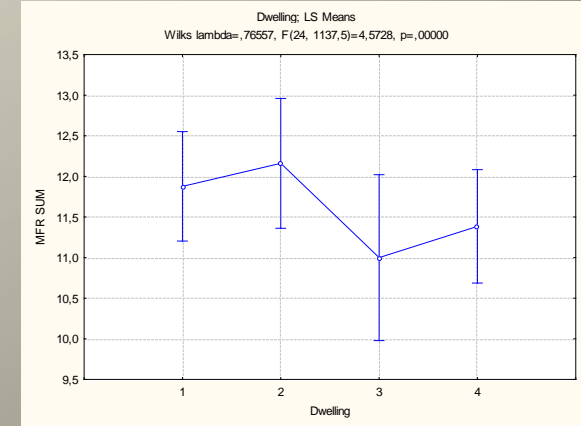
Adjustment problems



Rumination about the home



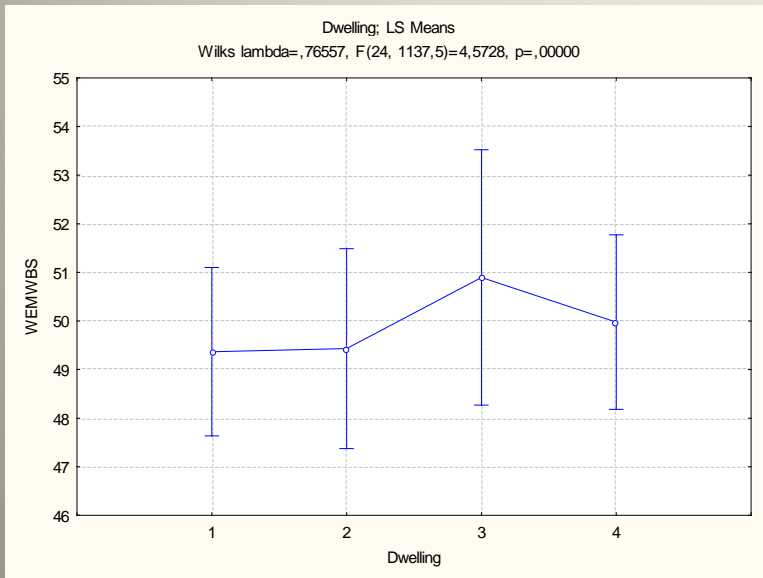
Loneliness



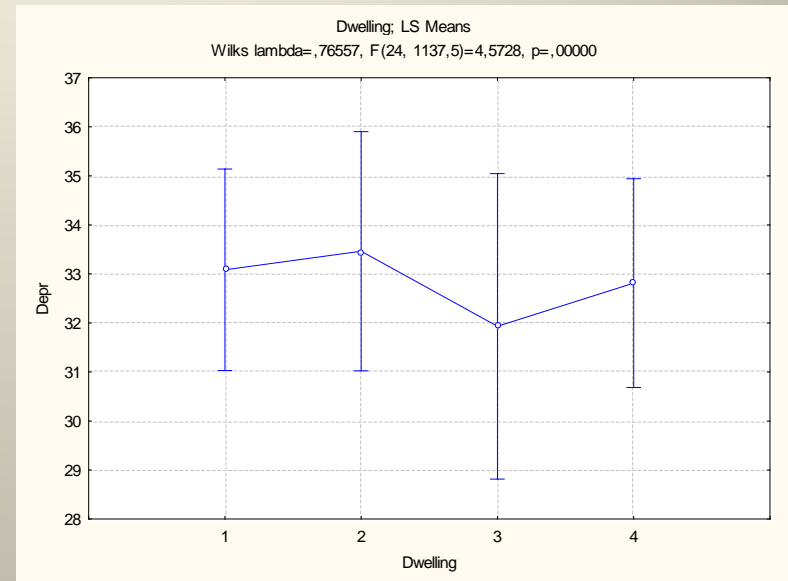
Missing friends

**1 - dormitory, 2 - with relatives,
3 - rented apartment, 4 - own apartment**

Well-being depending on the dwelling type



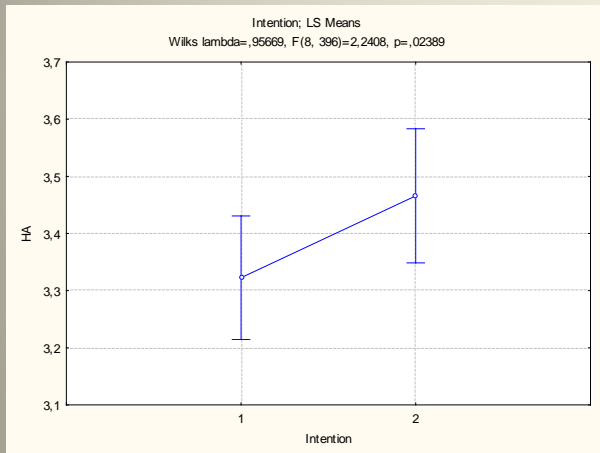
General well-being



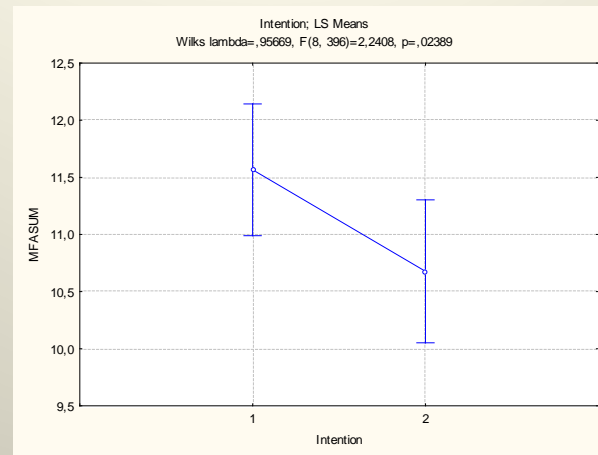
Depressive symptoms

**1 - dormitory, 2 - with relatives,
3 - rented apartment, 4 - own apartment**

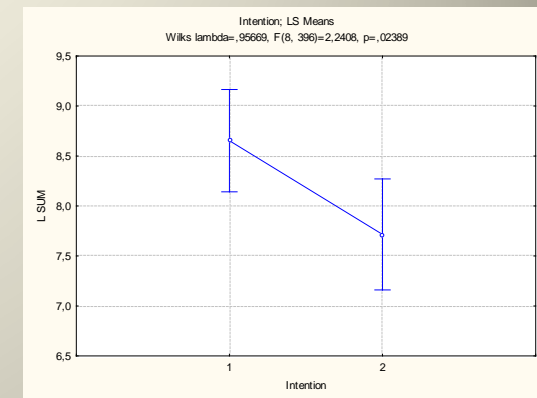
Variables measured depending on the intention



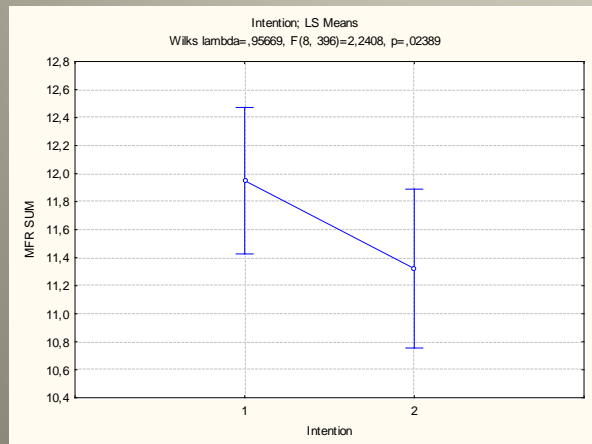
Home attachment



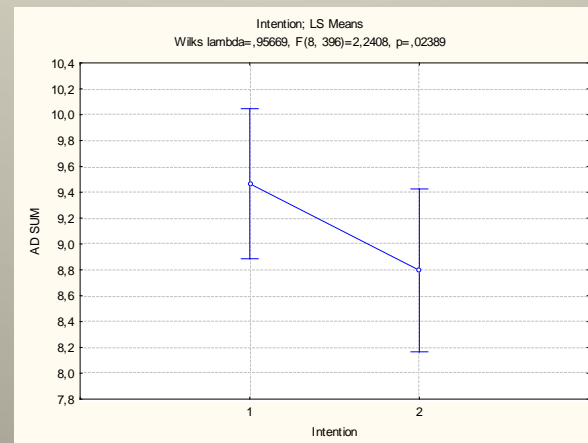
Missing family



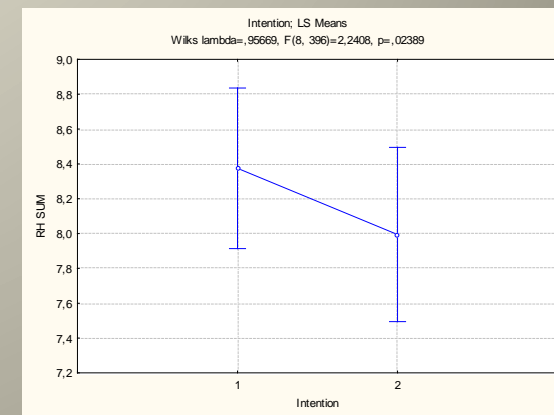
Loneliness



Missing friends



Adjustment problems

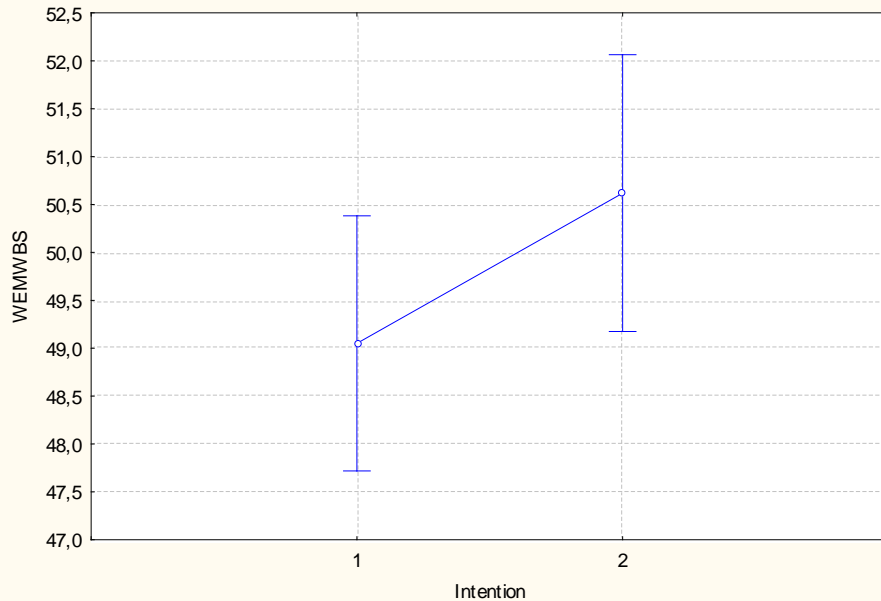


Rumination about the home

**1 – I would like to come to university,
2 – it was not my decision, to come to university**

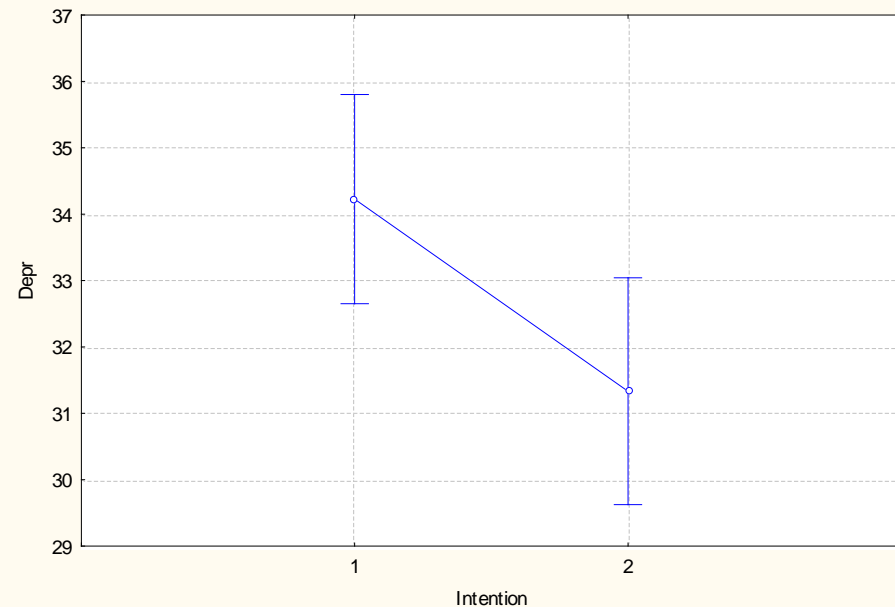
Well-being depending on the intention

Intention; LS Means
Wilks lambda=,95669, F(8, 396)=2,2408, p=,02389



General well-being

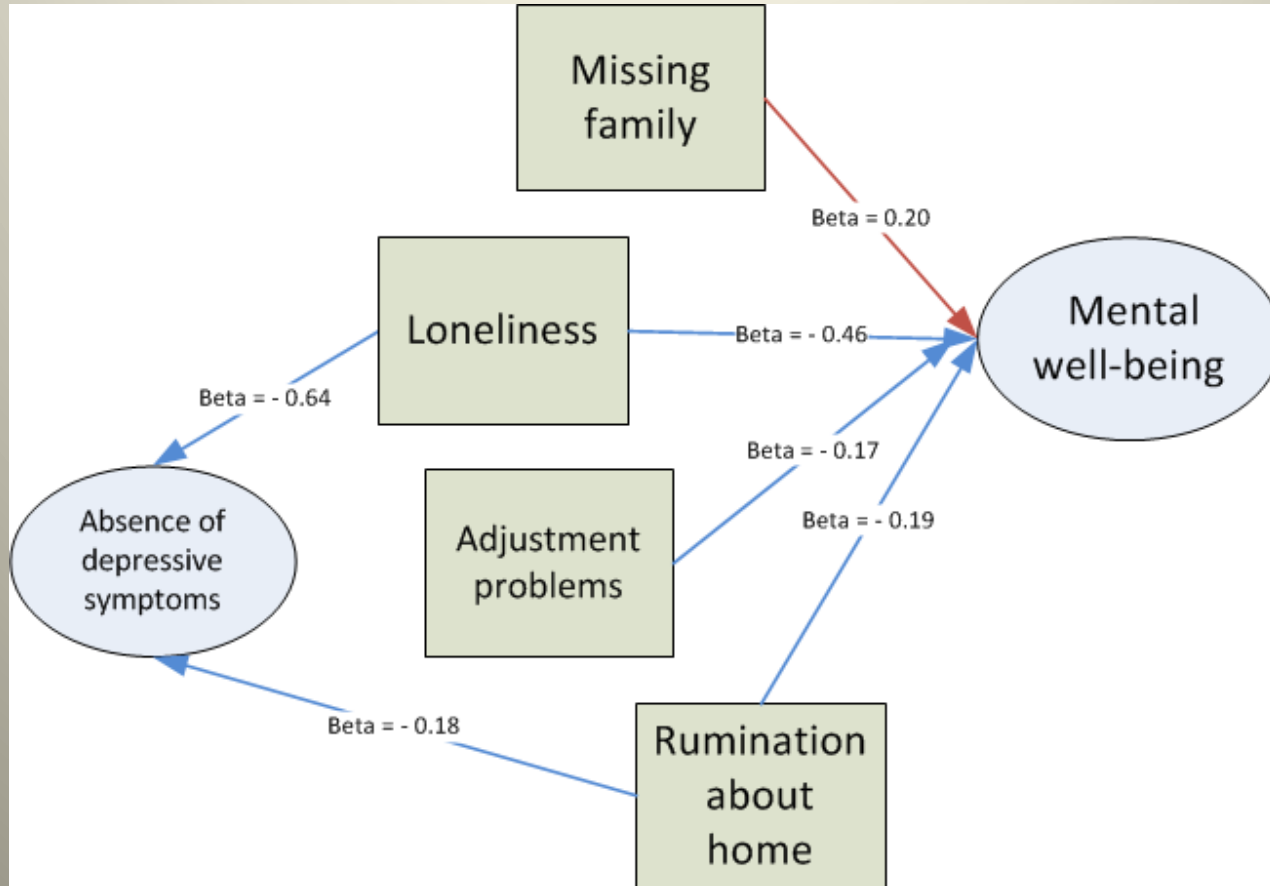
Intention; LS Means
Wilks lambda=,95669, F(8, 396)=2,2408, p=,02389



Depressive symptoms

- 1 – I would like to come to university,
- 2 – it was not my decision, to come to university

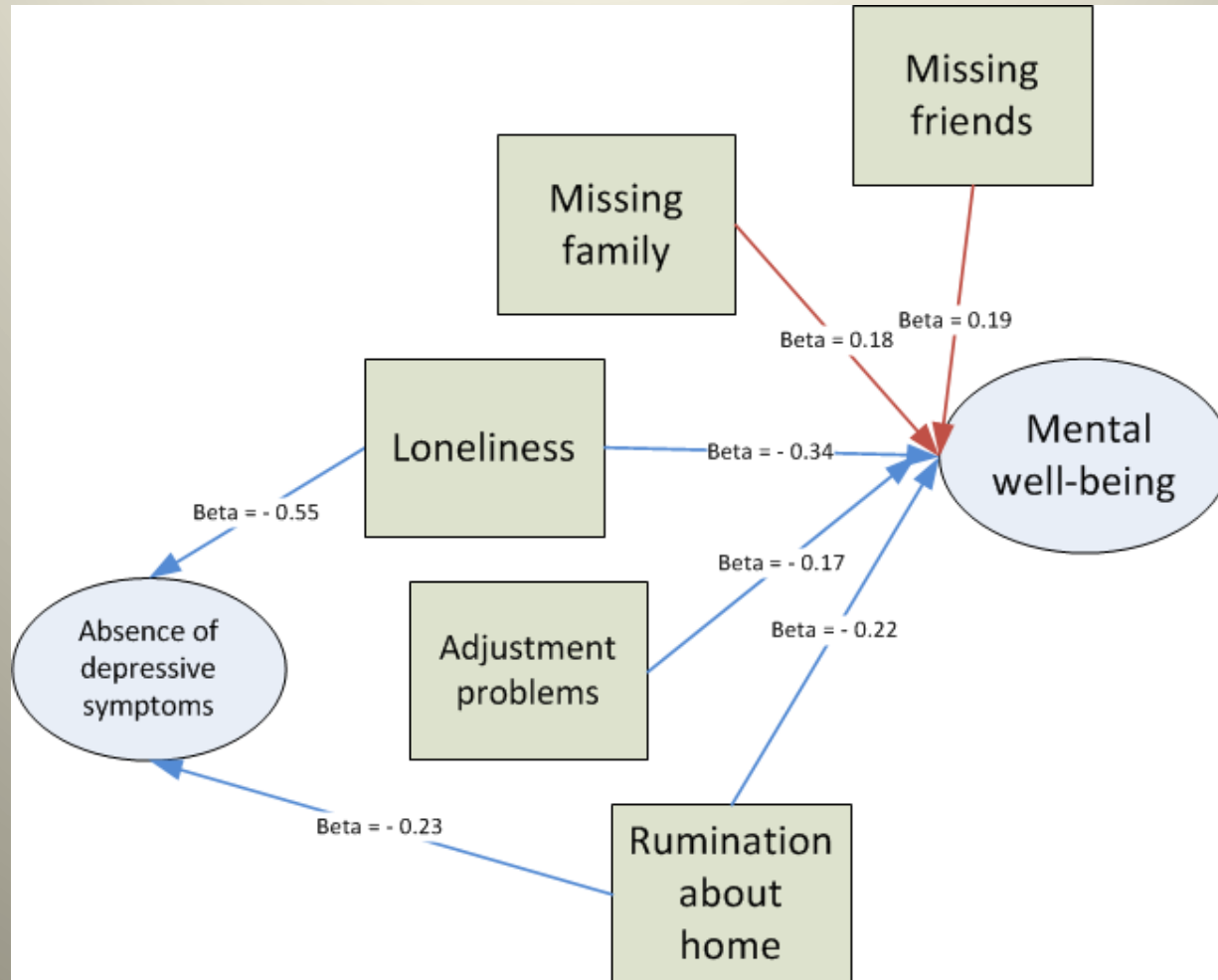
Regression models: a non-residents sample



For WEMWBS adjusted $R^2 = .44$, $F(9,213) = 20.63$ $p < 0.0000$

For Depressive symptoms adjusted $R^2 = .64$, $F(9,213) = 43.831$ $p < 0.0000$

Regression models: a residents (Muscovites) sample



For WEMWBS adjusted $R^2 = .26$, $F(9,169) = 8.0454$ $p < .00000$

For Depressive symptoms adjusted $R^2 = .45$, $F(9,169) = 15.080$ $p < .00000$

Conclusion

All freshmen (residents and non-residents of the university city) are attached to their homes and missing them


We can distinguish between “great” missing (in students who are away from their homes) and “little” missing (in students who leave their homes for a student day only)

No sex differences were found (except for depressive symptoms whose level is higher in females)

Conclusion

In both residents and non-residents groups mental well-being is positively predicted by missing family (in residents, in addition, by missing friends), and negatively by loneliness, adjustment problems, and rumination about the home.

Absence of depressive symptoms is negatively predicted by loneliness and rumination about the home.

A large, ornate building with a central spire, reflected in a pond, under a blue sky with clouds. The building is white with red accents and has a prominent central tower with a spire. The pond in the foreground is calm, reflecting the building and the sky. The sky is a deep blue with some white clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Thank you for your attention!
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