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Well-being from the understandings of children and adolescents: a qualitativemetasynthesis.
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Well-being from the understandings of children and adolescents: a qualitative metasynthesis[1]

Summary:

Within the framework of the increasing academic valuation of the use of qualitative methodologies for the study of the well-being of children and adolescents, a systematic review of the available empirical production was developed through the "Qualitative Metasynthesis" methodology. The purpose of the study was to analyze and describe, jointly and integratively, the main common and shared aspects of the available knowledge on the dimensions that, according to the children and adolescent's understandings, are significant for their well-being.

During the second semester of the year 2018, the SCOPUS and Web of Science databases were reviewed, identifying a total of 76 articles of which 13 met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed following the methodology of constant comparison, interpretation of results and conceptual reinterpretation proposed by Sandelowski and Barroso (2007).

The results brought about the delimitation and description of five categories: "Positive notion of oneself"; "Good treatment and support relations"; "Recognition"; "Significant activities"; and "Contextual aspects".

The obtained results contribute to the systematization of the knowledge about well-being provided from qualitative methodologies, thus contributing to the development of indicators for the study of well-being with information on domains and significant areas for children and adolescents.

Keywords: Understandings of well-being in children and adolescents; Qualitative metasynthesis; Qualitative research.

Introduction

From within various disciplines a growing interest in the study of well-being in children and adolescents has been developing, oriented towards knowing and better understanding their positive development (Savahl et al., 2015). The academic and political importance that this study has acquired is based on the fact that evidence shows that high levels of well-being are a key psychological strength, linked to a broad range of indicators of emotional health and social functioning, and of great relevance for the promotion, prevention and early detection of needs and risks in children and adolescents (Proctor, Linleym & Maltby, 2009).

In this way, this study becomes especially relevant and valued for the development of public policies promoting health and social development, especially in the framework of mandates of international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013) and the World Health Organization (WHO, 2013) which propose well-being as the development goal of their respective missions. It has also become relevant in the academic setting, and particularly in the theoretical disciplinary production of the "new sociology of childhood", which has been increasingly developing since the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), perspectives have been promoted more extensively which conceive the category of childhood as culturally and historically situated (Gómez & Alzate, 2014; Gaitán, 2010), strained by the distribution of power in society (Pascual, 2019), and as competent citizens in their own right (Fegter et al. 2010; Dockett & Perry 2011), who must be recognized as subjects of law and thus participate in decisions that affect their lives (Earls, 2011; Gómez & Alzate, 2014). This perspective gives academic context to the relevance of the study of well-being, inasmuch as it allows to recognise and rescue the voice of children and adolescents by means of studying their opinions, attitudes and perceptions on issues that affect them (Newton & Ponting, 2013; Casas et al., 2012).

Within this framework, a well-known momentum of research on well-being and subjective experience of life satisfaction in children and adolescents has been encouraged from a qualitative-based research paradigm (Camfield, Streuli & Woodhead, 2009) aimed at generating evidence that, together with information from quantitative studies,

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would strengthen the field of well-being studies and their related notions (Delle Fave Brdar, Freire, Vella-Brodrick & Wissing, 2011). Based on qualitative methodologies, it is possible to investigate areas of life that are influential and important for the understanding of the determinants of well-being, but which are not usually easily accessible from traditional quantitative frames, which present limits for the study of experiences, lived events and understandings of the dynamics from the perspective of the children and adolescents themselves (Crivello, Camfield & Woodhead, 2008). Qualitative methods, therefore, help respond to the weak incorporation of subjectivity in research on well-being and the use of indicators based primarily on adults´ conceptions of what is important for the well-being of children and adolescents (Fattore, Manson & Watson, 2009; Newton & Ponting, 2012).

Qualitative methodologies can contribute to the development of better and more appropriate indicators for the study and understandings of well-being, as they broaden the range of subjective experience and the studied living conditions. This generates observations that reflect, with greater breadth and depth, the experiences that are influential and important but to which instruments and methods, until now predominantly used, do not allow easy access (Camfield et al., 2009; Newton & Ponting, 2012; Hood, 2007).

In this way, there is a growing agreement in the literature regarding the need to broaden the perspectives of well-being research, integrating the systematic study of the meanings, understandings, notions and perceptions that children and adolescents have about well-being and about the characteristics and particularities of related areas and domains (Thoilliez, 2011; Casas & Bello, 2012). This would allow for the broadening of the knowledge of aspects of their daily lives and the multiple contexts in which it takes place, relative to their group belongings, of specific personal, social and cultural exchange relationships (Thoilliez, 2011; Delle Fave et al., 2011).

As we will see in this systematization, qualitative studies have increasingly developed over the recent years and have produced important knowledge regarding children's and adolescents' understandings and experiences of well-being, systematically collecting their own voices. These studies report valuable knowledge, in terms of collecting from the children's point of view, their understandings of the areas and domains that contribute to well-being and satisfaction in their lives.

However, these qualitative investigations have not been sufficiently systematized nor studied in an integrative manner with the aim of establishing common and shared aspects of their findings and observations. This limits their contribution to the knowledge of the dimensions of daily experiences associated with well-being, from the voices of the children themselves. This is done in such a way that, at present, there are not yet sufficiently systematized frameworks of evidence and results of publications on the understandings of children and adolescents that will help influence from this perspective the development of indicators (Wood & Selwyn, 2017; Newton & Ponting, 2012) that can nourish extensive population-level studies with knowledge about the main domains and specific and significant areas for the well-being of children and adolescents (Wood & Selwyn, 2017; Hood, 2007).

The two systematic reviews of well-known qualitative research on the well-being of children and adolescents, however valuable they are, do not allow progress on the indicated need, since they are focused on specific populations and life experiences. The first one focuses on the health and well-being of young children in their transition to school (Fane, MacDougall, Redmond, Jovanovic & Ward 2016) and the second one focuses on siblings of children with mental health problems (Ma, Roberts, Winefield & Furber, 2015).

Thus, the gap that defines the research problem of this study is constituted by the scarce development of integrated reviews of the literature available in the field of qualitative research on the understandings and experiences of the well-being of children and adolescents. Based on this, it is formulated as a Research Question, what are the main findings generated by qualitative research on the understandings and experiences of well-being, and in particular to establish: What are the main common and shared aspects of the findings and observations on the understandings and meanings of well-being in children and adolescents?

In order to advance with this problem, there exist tools such as the qualitative metasynthesis, which allows the integration of findings through a systematic review process of the qualitative empirical research available, with the aim of interpreting the whole production of a primary field of study (Carreño & Chaparro, 2015). Qualitative metasynthesis summarizes, compares and describes the accumulation of results, inductively ordering them into more abstract categories that integrate and extend the knowledge generated in a field of research (Finlayson & Dixson, 2008).

Based on the above, the results of the available qualitative research are describe, analyze and integrate the main common and shared aspects of the findings and observations about the understandings and meanings of children's well-being, present in the available literature in the field of qualitative well-being research.

Method

The methodology used to systematize the literature was "qualitative metasynthesis" (Finlayson & Dixson, 2008), which refers to a set of procedures for reviewing, interpreting and integrating findings, and producing a new interpretation of these, beyond the primary studies (Carreño & Chaparro, 2015). Thus, it summarizes, compares and describes the results of qualitative empirical studies and performs a re-integration of them (Finlayson & Dixson, 2008).

Its implementation requires a rigorous search for research reports, according to explicit and consistently articulated selection criteria, followed by a review of their quality by means of a critical reading based on operationally pre-defined criteria, in order to then transform the findings into a new analytical integration of them (Carreño & Chaparro, 2015). Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) propose specific analytical strategies: a) creation of a taxonomy of findings through the inductive grouping of data into codes and categories; b) use of continuous comparisons in order to clarify the characteristics of the study phenomenon and its interrelationships; c) translation of *In Vivo* concepts from the data of the primary sources, which are used to elaborate the central concepts in the reinterpretation of the results; and d) use of concepts imported for the creation of categories and concepts.

1.- Process of searching for information and selection of studies.

During the second semester of the year 2018, the SCOPUS and Web of Science databases were reviewed through the "TITLE-ABS-KEY" (well-being AND child) criteria, limited to the Psychology sub-area. 2,316 studies were obtained from the SCOPUS base, whilst in the case of Web of Science, with the "well-being child" criteria, there were 3,896 articles. Two researchers reviewed the summaries of all the articles, selecting those that described qualitative or mixed methodologies. In both databases together, 76 articles met this criterion. Subsequently, duplicate articles were eliminated, leaving a total of 59 articles. These were reviewed by a research team composed of academics with experience in the field of child well-being, who selected 35 articles considered relevant for answering the research question. For the detailed review of the articles, a quality analysis was carried out, using the following criteria: explanation of ethical safeguards; data production from the children's and adolescents' point of view, and presentation of data analysis and results. This review excluded work focused on a specific population, such as refugee children or HIV children (7 cases); articles without a clear notion of well-being (3 cases); systematic review articles (2 cases); theoretical review articles (5 cases); articles that did not report final results (2 cases); articles focused only on the analysis of qualitative data production techniques (1 case); and articles whose sample exceeded the generally agreed age limit for adolescence (2 cases). The final sample was composed of 13 articles, which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of selected articles

Authors	Year	Language	Aims	Sample and characteristics of the participants[2]	Design
Anderson, D.L. & Graham, A.P.	2015	English	To explore students' visions of well-being at school.	606 children and adolescents, between 6 and 18 years old, Australia	Mixed
Businaro, N., Pons, F. & Albanese, O.	2014	English	To explore factors associated with well-being; focusing on personal factors.	132 children, between 8 and 11 years old, Italy.	Mixed
Eriksson, U., Asplund, K. &	2010	English	To describe the perception of social capital in the neighborhood	28 children, between 11 and	Qualitative

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[2] Only information regarding children and adolescent participants is presented.

Sellström, E.			and its relationship with subjective well-being, in rural areas.	12 years old, Sweden.	
Fattore, T., Manson, J. & Watson, E.	2009	English	To explore opinions about well-being, elements that constitute it, dimensions and characteristics.	123 children, between 8 and 15 years old, Australia.	Qualitative
Fattore, T., Mason, J. & Watson, E.	2012	English	To explore the opinions and domains of well-being and the development of research methods focused on children.	126 children and adolescents (no age range mentioned), Australia.	Qualitative
Hall, S.	2010	English	To identify emotional aspects to support their mental health and well-being at school.	18 children in Key Stage 1 y 2 (between 5 and 11 years old), Great Britain.	Qualitative
Malo, S., Navarro, D. & Casas, F.	2012	Spanish	To explore, from the intergenerational and gender perspective, the form of audiovisual media influence on subjective well-being in adolescence.	24 female adolescents, between 12 and 18 years old, Spain.	Qualitative
Matthews, N., Kilgour, L., Christian, P., Mori, K. & Hill, D.M.	2015	English	To understand the experiences of subjective well-being and the influencing factors.	18 adolescents in Key Stage 3 and 4 (between 11 and 16 years old). 12% with SEN and ⅕ eligible to receive free school meals), Great Britain.	Mixed
Moore, A. & Lynch, H.	2017	English	To explore conceptualizations about play and happiness.	31 children, between 6 and 8 years old, Ireland.	Qualitative
Newton, J. & Ponting, C.	2012	English	To understand the vision about well-being.	129 adolescents, between 16 and 19 years old, Great Britain.	Qualitative
Powell, M.A., Graham, A., Fitzgerald, R., Thomas, N. & White, N.E.	2018	English	To understand students' visions and meanings about well-being and elements that facilitate it.	606 children and adolescents, in Year 1 and 2 (between 6 and 8 years old), Year 5 and 6 (between 10 and 12 years old), Year 8 (between 13 and 14 years old) and Year 11 (between 16 and 17 years old), Australia	Qualitative
Ramírez-Casas del Valle, L., & Alfaro-Inzunza, J.	2018	Spanish	To analyze how well-being is discursively constructed at school.	39 children, between 10 and 12 years old, Chile.	Qualitative
Rose, T., Shdaimah, C., de Tablan, D. & Sharpe, T.L.	2016	English	To explore the perceptions of subjective well-being and agency in an urban group of marginalized neighborhoods.	12 adolescents, from the 9th and 11th grade, United States.	Qualitative

Source: self-made

2.- Analysis of selected articles.

The analysis of the selected articles was carried out using the proposal of Sandelowski and Barroso (2007). For this purpose, a detailed review and systematization was developed of the following: basis for studying well-being; basis for using qualitative methodology; methodological description (organization of data production instruments); definition of well-being; research question; aims; ethical considerations; results; conclusions and other relevant aspects.

Afterwards, a team of two researchers performed an initial coding and emerging annotations, focusing on the results of the articles. Subsequently, this analysis was triangulated with four researchers with whom the codes were agreed upon and, based on the formation of categories, a taxonomy of findings was created. It should be noted that the *in vivo* concepts, which were presented as relevant in the reviewed preliminary studies, were used in the process of reinterpreting the results. Thus, based on a process of constant comparison of the results of the articles, the central categories and their attributes were identified.

Results

The produced metasynthesis identified five categories, referring to dimensions that, according to the children's and adolescents' understandings, affect their experiences of well-being which have a set of specific attributes, presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Dimensions that affect children's and adolescents' experiences of well-being.

Category	Properties
Positive notion of oneself	Sense of being oneself Valuation and development of one's own capacities Sense of being a good person
Good treatment and support relations	Provide protection and safety Provide positive affection Provide support for daily life
Recognition	Being respected in one's uniqueness Active participation
Significant activities	Healthy activities Recreational activities
Contextual aspects	Habitability characteristics of the immediate physical environment Material resources and service provision

Source: self-made

1.- Positive notion of oneself

According to the children's and adolescents' understandings, reported in the analyzed studies, the notions that they have about themselves and the capacities that are recognized and valued as their own, are relevant dimensions of their well-being. This is especially important when the notion of oneself is positive and allows for a coherent, adaptive and empowering experience of who one is. As reported by children and adolescents from the analyzed publications, notions about themselves are actively experienced as a process that is self-reflective, dynamic and sustained in relation to the environment and to others.

According to the analyzed reports, the positive notion of oneself considers three distinctive properties that characterize it. These properties are the **Sense of being oneself**, the **Valuation and development of one's own capacities**, and the **Sense of being a good person**.

The **Sense of being oneself** property refers to experiencing a personal sense of coherence regarding who one is and how one acts, which, based on the children's and adolescents' point of view, produces and strengthens a positive notion of themselves. As reported by children, this personal sense of coherence is present in their own opinions and feelings about themselves, as well as emerging in relationships with others who act as reference points regarding the self, therefore, being able to be interfered with by the expectations of others. These expectations can generate pressure, prompting children to act in a certain way in order to meet them, and to that extent, generate the feeling of not being able to be themselves, thus interfering in their experience of well-being.

In the study by Fattore, Mason and Watson (2009), children and adolescents between 8 and 15 years old, from urban and rural locations in Australia, relate the *sense of self-integrity* to *the positive sense of self*, which is shown in the following phrase from one of the participants: "being yourself rather than pretending to be someone else for the sake of others" (Fattore et al., 2009, p. 64), thus realizing the importance of being oneself. In the same study, an adolescent participant reflects on the need for spaces for self-reflection that enhance the integration of experiences and the construction of the self, which would contribute to well-being: "I think even being on your own can often make you feel good. Um, I think giving yourself time to think and process everything that is going on around you..." (Fattore et al., 2009, p. 64). Regarding the interference of the sense of being oneself, in the study by Powell, Graham, Fitzgerald, Thomas and White (2018), primary and secondary students from Catholic schools in Australia reflect on how the high expectations of parents and the imposition of values negatively affect their experiences of well-being.

The **Valuation and development of one's own capacities** property describes how according to the children's and adolescents' understandings of well-being, reported in the analyzed studies, the positive valuation of their personal capacities, understood as capacities to cope in the world, as well as the possibility of developing and improving these capacities, are dimensions of great relevance for their well-being. This is so as long as these capacities allow for the learning and development of roles, facing the demands of daily life, taking care of oneself, obtaining successful results in different areas, among others, as well as insofar as they significantly contribute to autonomy development processes. In the children's understandings it is highlighted that these capacities are developed within the framework of the relationship with oneself, as well as in the relationship with others.

In the study by Rose, Shdaimah, de Tablan and Sharpe (2016), adolescents from a US school from a low-income community, refer to how being positive with themselves and having the capacity for self-care holds an importance for well-being, as illustrated below: "fixing your mind" and "taking care of yourself, being mature, being good to yourself" (Rose et al., 2016, p. 116). Similarly, in the study by Powell et al. (2018), children highlight the relationship between self-confidence regarding their own capacities and well-being, as stated by a participant: "standing up to things; what you can do- being confident about yourself" (Powell et al., 2018, p. 523).

The study by Fattore et al. (2009) reports on how the interconnection of well-being experiences and relationships with others takes place, and how the latter can contribute to the recognition of children's capacities. Thus, according to the children's understandings, feelings of competence emerge from the interaction with others, in such a way that the possibility of becoming aware of and recognizing their own capacities to face future circumstances, which contributes to the positive notion of themselves, arise or strengthen in these relationships. Likewise, in the study by Newton and Ponting (2012), adolescents from schools in South Wales reflect on how the relationship with family and friends is considered key to well-being, since it offers the conditions necessary to develop self-confidence and to develop the ability to socialize with others, thus making it possible to have new relationships.

In a similar sense, the study by Hall (2010), whose participants were boys and girls between 5 and 11 years old from a school in Great Britain, establishes that the adult world of the school context can contribute to the recognition of their own abilities, letting children know that they are doing well through different specific mechanisms (awarding of stickers, possibility of choosing an activity, etc.), which allow students to feel good about themselves in the school context. Likewise, in the research by Businaro, Pons and Albanese (2014), Italian boys and girls between 8 and 11 years old report that having their own skills validated by others, in the school context, is relevant to their well-being, as illustrated in the following answer to the question "What makes you feel good?": "When the teacher

gives me a compliment" (Businaro et al., 2014, p. 445). Similarly, the experience of others positively recognizing their abilities is associated, by children from the study by Fattore and colleagues (2009), with a positive evaluation of themselves, and could be related to the general feeling of doing well.

The **Sense of being a good person** property refers to the fact that, according to the children's and adolescents' understandings, reported by the analyzed studies, it is of importance for their well-being to perceive themselves as people who act in tune with sociocultural norms of harmonious coexistence and a positive relationship with others, this being an aspect that contributes to a positive notion of themselves. According to the children's and adolescents' understandings, being a good person is related to perceiving oneself as someone who treats others well, cares about others and supports others. Likewise, children link this with possessing and developing sociocultural values of respectful coexistence with others, learned and tried in relationships with others, within the framework of the culture they belong to.

In the study by Fattore et al. (2009) it is reported that, according to the children's understandings, the learning and development of values such as generosity and solidarity, especially in the relationship with parents, testing them in various everyday settings and contexts of belonging, is relevant to children's well-being Along these same lines, a teenager from Newton and Ponting's (2012) study mentions that family and friends are key figures for well-being, as "... they establish their morals and norms" (Newton and Ponting, 2012, p. 80), giving an account of how the relationship with these actors enables moral development.

Also reported in Fattore et al. (2009) is how children and adolescents reflect on the importance of positive feelings about themselves that arise from helping their friends, caring for their parents, and acting in a fair and honest way, among other aspects. In this same sense, the research by Fattore, Mason and Watson (2012), with boys and girls from urban and rural locations in Australia, realizes the relevance of having the feeling that they are *good people*, especially regarding how they treat others and regarding seeing themselves as doing the right thing. It is also specified that acts of generosity or kindness are linked to experiences of well-being, which is shown through the following quote by one of the adolescent participants in the work of Powell et al. (2018): "looking out for others around you" (Powell et al., 20129, p. 524), therefore associating this type of action with being well. Another type of relation between well-being and a sense of being a *good person* is raised by the adolescents in the study by Rose et al. (2016), who reflect on how the experience of being well helps them and allows them to help others, showing that well-being makes you a better person: "Well-being helps you develop a sense of humanity, gives you a sense of humanity..." (Rose et al., 2016, p. 117).

2.- Good treatment and support relations

According to the children's and adolescents' understandings, reported in the analyzed studies, receiving a good treatment and maintaining supportive links with others, adults and peers, has an important positive effect on their experiences of well-being. Specifically for children, well-being is associated with participation in interpersonal relations which provide protection and security, consider the exchange of positive emotions, and provide support through means of resources and tools for facing tasks and needs of daily life.

According to the analyzed studies, children and adolescents understand the relationships where they are treated well, which favor and are associated with their well-being as having the following characterizing properties: **Provide Protection and Safety**; **Provide Positive Affection;** and **Provide Support for daily life**.

The **Provide Protection and Safety** property refers to the fact that, according to the reported understandings of the children and adolescents of the analyzed studies, well-being is associated with experiences of participation in interpersonal links with family, peers and school, which generate trust and security and which are experienced as protective relationships, in a stable way, in terms of their permanence and temporality.

In the study by Businaro et al. (2014), whose sample considers Italian boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 11, it is reported that one of the key dimensions for well-being is the relationship with others who satisfy needs such as feeling loved and protected, as described by one of the participants in the following quote: "It makes me feel at home, protected and loved" (Businaro et al., 2014, p. 447). Similarly, in the study by Matthews, Kilgour, Christian, Mori and Hill (2015), boys and girls between 11 to 16 years old, from a school in the United Kingdom, express that the experience of protection in relationships with others is a relevant aspect of experiencing well-being, pointing out

that these links are characterized by providing security, such as the relationships that occur in the family, between friends, or with people in the local community to which they belong. This is also reported in the study by Malo, Navarro and Casas (2012), whose sample was made up of adolescent girls, between 12 and 18 years old, from Spain. In this study, one of the participating adolescents highlights security and stability as elements that promote relationships that provide well-being, as it is expressed that the family generates well-being due to the fact that "...the family is always there..." (Malo et al., 2012, p. 33).

Similarly, in the research by Anderson and Graham (2015), children and adolescents between 6 and 18 years old, from Catholic school regions in rural and urban areas of Australia, relate the experience of well-being to participating in interactions that generate security, in terms of being able to express an opinion in the school context, as one of the participating adolescents refers to: "...like right now, I feel very safe - that's why I'm putting my opinion in ..." (Anderson and Graham, 2015, p. 356). Likewise, in the research by Rose et al. (2016), adolescents from a school located in a low socioeconomic neighborhood in the United States described that the relationships that generate well-being in their school were characterized by providing "a safe environment that's like a second family" (Rose et al., 2016, p. 117), thus generating in them the experience of refuge.

The **Provide Positive Affection** property refers to the importance of participating in daily interpersonal relationships that provide positive emotions through the delivery of personal care and affection, as well as in which there's spontaneous expression of emotional support in the understandings of well-being that the children and adolescents from the analyzed studies have.

This is how, in the study by Businaro et al. (2014), when faced with the question "What makes you feel good?", Italian boys and girls between 8 and 11 years old express that receiving affection and attention makes them feel good, as reported by one of the participants in the following quote:

> When my dad cuddles me, when the teacher gives me a compliment, when I am with my cousin and when I play with my friends. When my dad cuddles me I feel protected, when I play with my cousin I like it a lot (Businaro et al., 2014, p. 445).

In the same study another participant describes well-being in terms of expression of affection and love, as we can see in the following quote: "Mom and Dad give me a lot of hugs and kisses" (Businaro et al., 2014, p.448).

Similarly, the study by Powell et al. (2018) reports the importance of socio-emotional aspects in the understandings of well-being of primary and secondary students from Catholic schools in Australia, as we can see when one of the participants points out the relevance of feeling "rich in love, treated well, wanted" (Powell et al., 2018, p. 522), which shows the strength of emotional aspects for well-being experiences.

The authors also add that, for the study participants, one of the ways that their parents and family supported their well-being was by loving them and making them feel special (Powell et al., 2018). In this same work one of the students explains how having the attention and care of significant others in the school context significantly contributes to their well-being, as we can see in the following quote: "talking to someone - helps you when you are down - you know you have someone there to look after you" (Powell et al., 2018, p. 523). Finally, as reported in the study by Malo et al. (2012), whose sample was made up of adolescent girls between 12 and 18 years old in Spain, we see that not having positive emotions, support or understandings from others, in this case of the parents, negatively interferes with well-being, as one adolescent participant points out in the following quote: "...that you think that parents do not understand you... that greatly influences [well-being]..." (Malo et al., 2012, p. 34).

The **Provide Support for daily life** property is related to the association proposed, from the child's understandings, between well-being and maintaining relationships with others, particularly with adults who provide tools and instrumental resources to cope and interact with circumstances, demands and everyday needs that are appropriate to their age and which they must face in order to learn and develop.

In this regard, the study by Newton and Ponting (2012) highlights that for adolescents from schools in South Wales it is crucial to have the support of their family, as expressed in the following quote: "We put family as most important for us because they always support you..." (Newton and Ponting, 2012, p. 80). The study also highlights that moral and normative support that the family provides is also of great importance as a relevant resource and

guide for interacting in the world, as one of the participants in the same study points out: "Without them [family], you wouldn't be where you are today, they set your morals and your norms" (Newton and Ponting, 2012, p. 80).

Also regarding the family, in the study by Powell et al. (2018), primary and secondary students from Catholic schools in Australia point out that the provision of tools is one of the ways in which the family promotes their well-being. Just as in the study by Eriksson, Asplund and Sellström (2010), children between 11 and 12 years old, from rural schools in Sweden, identify the practical support provided by the family as crucial for their well-being, taking as an example the support provided by parents when they drop them off at friends' houses, thus highlighting the reciprocity between children and parents in the provision of practical support.

In the work of Powell et al. (2018), primary and secondary students report that having support from the adult world, specifically in academic aspects, is a dimension of great importance for well-being. For example, having adult support to help them create or to read was described as a contribution to their well-being. In accordance with the above, Anderson and Graham (2015) report that secondary students from Catholic school regions in rural and urban areas of Australia reflected on their desire and need for more support from adults, thus highlighting the importance of the fact that their needs are supported and welcomed in school decision-making, as a way to increase their well-being.

Regarding relationships with their peers, according to the children's understandings from the study of Fattore and colleagues (2009), it is relevant for their well-being to receive help from friends, as suggested by boys and girls between 8 and 15 years old from urban and rural locations in Australia. The above is illustrated by one of the participants who highlights the relevance of feeling that peers contribute with understandings and support.

> ... I can tell my friends and know that they will be able to understand what I feel and everything. And when I have had a fight with my Mum I always tell [my friend] that what's happened and she is always like, 'Oh, all right then' (Fattore et al., 2009, p. 67).

This is corroborated by the work of Powell et al. (2018) where it is reported that, according to the understandings of primary and secondary students of Australian Catholic schools, the bonds with friends are experienced as an important source of well-being, as a result of the support and understandings they provide: "they understand you, they understand the problems you might be having in life or something and they'll help you out, they'll give you moral support I guess" (Powell et al., 2018, p. 525). In the same way, in the study by Rose et al. (2016), adolescents from a US school from a low-income community show the importance that, according to their understandings, support and collaboration with friends has, as they express in the following quote: "we come together as one" (Rose et al., 2016, p. 117). Similarly, the study by Eriksson et al. (2010) reports that practical support relationships and reciprocal collaboration between neighbors are of great importance for the well-being of children between 11 and 12 years old, in rural schools in Sweden.

3.- Recognition

A third category that emerges as relevant in the children's understandings of well-being from the analyzed studies, focuses on the importance of being recognized and respected as unique subjects, with capacities and with the right to participate, express themselves and contribute actively and autonomously to the decisions that affect them in their daily lives, mainly in the school context. According to the analyzed publications, the Recognition category is characterized by two basic properties. Firstly, the **Being respected in one's uniqueness** property, and secondly, the **Active participation** property.

Regarding the **Being respected in one's uniqueness** property, the analyzed studies describe that being recognized and valued as a particular and singular being is a highly relevant experience, which significantly favors the well-being of children and adolescents, in the same way that their absence is experienced as having a significant negative interference in it.

As reported by Powell et al. (2018), primary and secondary school students from Catholic schools in Australia acknowledge being visible and recognized as relevant experiences for their well-being, as expressed by a participant of the study: "[being] visible, like everyone knows you're there and they just don't forget about you" (Powell et al., 2018, p. 522). Moreover, as another participant in this study points out, being recognized and accepted by others,

regardless of one's particularities, is relevant to their experience of well-being: "to accept everyone no matter what or who they are" (Powell et al., 2018, p. 524). Likewise, in their study, Ramírez-Casas del Valle and Alfaro-Inzunza (2018) point out that being respected as unique and different beings in the school context, and the discomfort generated by types of relationships in which one's particularities are not recognized, is relevant for the understandings of well-being that boys and girls, between 10 and 12 years old, have as well as of educational establishments with different indexes of school vulnerability in Chile, as evidenced in the following extract:

> He only sees flaws in the students, he doesn't see the good things that each one has, he only criticizes the things that one has. Also, he does not understand, he believes that we are all going at the same pace, we do not all learn in the same way (Ramírez-Casas del Valle and Alfaro-Inzunza, 2018, p. 7).

Similarly, Anderson and Graham (2015) report that, for secondary students of Catholic schools in rural and urban areas of Australia, an element that threatens their well-being is that their opinions are not respected, as we can see in the following quote: "It's pretty hard to come across a teacher that really respects and values your opinion..." (Anderson and Graham, 2015, p. 355). Likewise, according to the study by Powell et al. (2018), whose sample was made up of primary and secondary students from Catholic schools in Australia, not being valued as someone unique when compared to others would be an experience that affects and negatively interferes with their well-being.

The **Active Participation** property refers to the fact that, according to the children's and adolescents' understandings, having experiences of active participation, in which they can express their own opinions, autonomously and spontaneously, in regards to decision-making on matters relevant to their daily lives, especially in school contexts, would be a meaningful experience that would positively affect their well-being.

In this regard, Fattore et al. (2009; 2012) establish that for children and adolescents, active and democratic participation in decisions that affect the relevant issues of their daily lives is a relevant component of the well-being experience. Specifically in Fattore et al. (2009), whose sample was made up of boys and girls between 8 and 15 years old, from urban and rural locations in Australia, the importance of agency and participation in the school context is highlighted, illustrating, through the response of a participant, the idea that children and adults should jointly participate in the elaboration of school rules, as a relevant aspect of their well-being: "Well, I think, that both sides should co-operate together should have, like, meetings together and make up the rules because it is more fair that way" (Fattore et al., 2009, p. 65).

Similarly, the research of Anderson and Graham (2015) indicates that, for high school participants from Catholic school regions in rural and urban areas of Australia, of great importance to their well-being is: "Being able to communicate and share your ideas. Having your say" (Anderson and Graham, 2015, p. 354), establishing, at the same time, that authoritarian relationships that limit participation in the school system are considered as an aspect that negatively interferes with their well-being experience. In the same study, primary school students highlighted the importance for their well-being of actively influencing decisions on aspects relevant to their lives, such as those illustrated in the following quote: "being allowed to sit with friends [in the classroom]" (Anderson and Graham, 2015, p. 355).

As reported by Ramírez-Casas del Valle and Alfaro-Inzunza (2018), in a study with boys and girls between 10 and 12 years old, from educational establishments with different levels of vulnerability in Chile, experiences that promote well-being in everyday life are associated with participatory methodologies that give an active role to students, as observed in the following quotes: "...Because [the teacher] made us laugh, made us participate, made us dance..." (Ramírez-Casas del Valle and Alfaro-Inzunza, 2018, p. 8) and "...when we were with him [teacher], we learned by playing..." (Ramírez-Casas del Valle and Alfaro-Inzunza, 2018, p. 8). Also, in the studies of Hall (2010), with boys and girls between 4 and 10 years old from a school in Great Britain, and Anderson and Graham (2015), with boys and girls between 6 and 18 years old from Catholic school regions in rural and urban areas of Australia, active participation in the school context is reported by students to be central and important for feeling good at school.

Likewise, according to the children's understandings, their well-being is related to having a voice and being taken into consideration, especially in terms of freedom of speech and expression of their opinions, as reported by the research by Powell et al. (2018) with students from primary and secondary schools in Catholic schools in Australia, as observed in the following quote: "having to say, having to say so people actually listen to you" (Powell et al.,

2018, p. 523). This is also reported in the research by Anderson and Graham (2015) with Australian high school students who mentioned that "Freedom of speech… Having your rights" (Anderson and Graham, 2015, p. 354) is a relevant element of their well-being. Finally, the study of Ramírez-Casas del Valle and Alfaro-Inzunza (2018) also reports that well-being experiences in the school context are related, for Chilean boys and girls, to the freedom to make decisions regarding their bodies and to have less institutional surveillance.

4.- Significant activities

A fourth category that emerges from the understandings of children and adolescents, relates to the activities that are carried out daily, whose characteristics play a role in their state of well-being. Activities that are characterized by allowing a positive experience contribute to improving and maintaining your well-being.

In particular, these can be characterized by being physical as well as being experienced as pleasant, allowing them to be with themselves and with others, and being experienced as a way of taking care of themselves physically and emotionally.

Significant activities are characterized by activating the feeling of being healthy and by producing enjoyment and recreation, thus integrating two distinctive properties: **Healthy Activities** and **Recreational Activities**.

The **Healthy Activities** property emerges from the relevance that children and adolescents give, according to their understandings of well-being, to activities that allow them to feel active and physically healthy. Thus, it carries out activities aimed at caring for their bodies, their physical state, feeling healthy, and having positive experiences in relation to their body and to themselves, which has an effect on feeling good.

Within this framework are activities such as: eating healthy, performing physical activity (Fattore et al., 2009; Matthews et al., 2015; Newton & Ponting, 2012), taking care of oneself which includes staying active, fit and energetic (Powell et al., 2018), doing sports (Businaro et al., 2014; Fattore et al., 2009; Newton & Ponting, 2012; Powell et al., 2018), getting enough sleep, having a good hygiene (Powell et al., 2018) and eating well (Fattore et al., 2009).

In the study by Fattore et al. (2009) the importance that being physically healthy has for children's well-being arises, identifying three factors as relevant for physical health: healthy food, appropriate care and physical activity. In Newton and Ponting's (2012) study, adolescents from schools in South Wales consider sport as one of the key dimensions of well-being, as illustrated in the following quote: "…if you weren't fit and healthy and like in all emotional ways… then nothing would go right, would they, in your life… you wouldn't have a life" (Newton and Ponting, 2012, p. 82).

Likewise, in the study by Businaro et al. (2014), boys and girls from Italy identified activities with an active and passive physical component as relevant to their well-being. In response to the question "What makes you feel good?", the children mentioned their participation in various sports as a relevant aspect, including activities such as volleyball, basketball, modern dance and horse riding, among others. Similarly, in Rose et al. (2016), adolescents from a US school located in a low-income community highlight the relationship between sport, as a protective factor, and their well-being, stating the following: "The basketball hoop ... can keep you out of trouble and keep you safe ... and it'll keep you in shape" (Rose et al., 2016, p. 116). Also, in Newton and Ponting (2012), adolescents from South Wales reflect on the relationship between diet, health and well-being.

Finally, Matthews et al. (2015) describe that, according to the understandings of boys and girls between 11 and 16 years old from a United Kingdom school, diet and exercise appear to be fundamental for well-being. Thus, in the same study, sedentary practices such as playing computer games and sitting down to watch television are identified as unhealthy; however, in other publications (Businaro et al., 2014; Malo et al., 2012) children and adolescents consider these activities as positive for well-being due to the positive experience that they generate.

The **Recreational Activities** property refers to the fact that, according to the children's and adolescents' understandings, activities that produce enjoyment and recreation are associated with feeling good. Leisure time activities that generate experiences of pleasure and recreation, and that are developed with others and/or alone, are

also included. So, children find several activities important for their well-being, namely playing, participating in fun activities and having leisure activities.

According to the children's and adolescents' understandings, reported in the analyzed studies, it is important that the activities carried out daily are experiences that generate positive emotions, for example generating experiences of fun, enjoyment, happiness, peace, rest, freedom, company and relief, among others (Businaro et al., 2014; Fattore et al., 2009; Powell et al., 2018). Hobbies and participation in educational activities and special family occasions are reported as recreational activities relevant to their well-being (Fattore et al., 2009); for instance the use of the internet to access interesting audiovisual content and connect with friends (Malo et al., 2012); play, go for a walk, sleep, have time to relax, sing and do leisure activities (Businaro et al., 2014); engage in fun occupations at home, school, and community (Moore & Lynch, 2017); entertain themselves by watching television (Businaro et al., 2014; Malo et al., 2012); participate in after school clubs (Hall, 2010); participate in different local associations and activities such as youth recreation centers, public swimming pool, library, church (Eriksson et al., 2010); and socialize by drinking alcohol, mentioned as part of the adolescents' lifestyle in the Newton and Ponting study (2012).

In the study by Businaro et al. (2014), whose sample was made up of boys and girls between 8 and 11 years old from Italy, it was reported that both sports and leisure activities produce well-being because they satisfy different needs such as enjoyment, company and relaxation/ relief. At the same time, it was identified that boys consider motor activity as something fundamental in their daily life, as evidenced in the phrase of one participant:

> "Playing with my friends, fencing… playing the guitar… and playing videogames make me feel good. Because I enjoy playing and fencing, while staying at home and playing the guitar is relaxing… and playing videogames don't make me tired" (Businaro et al., 2014, p. 445).

Meanwhile, for girls, activities do not occupy a place of priority since the fundamental thing for them is the relationship with the people with whom the activities are carried out, as one girl refers to in a quote already mentioned on page 8, paragraph 5, from Businaro and collaborators., 2014, p. 445.

In the study by Moore and Lynch (2017), boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 8 in schools in Ireland identified participation in activities that are fun in their home, school and community as being of utmost importance to their well-being. Along the same lines, the findings suggest that they value participation in games within the context of social relationships with people and animals as a contribution to their general sense of happiness and well-being, as expressed by one participant "[these activities make me feel good] ...because they're really special to me" (Moore and Lynch, 2017, p. 131). In addition, the recurrent appearance of the relationship between doing and/ or being with others and happiness is identified. Finally, the research by Eriksson et al. (2010), whose sample was made up of boys and girls aged between 11 and 12, from rural sectors of Sweden, established that they participate in different associations or local activities, considering that being a member offers opportunities for social interaction, leisure, meeting friends, playing sports, sharing interests and promoting a community spirit, all of which are related to well-being.

5.- Contextual aspects

A fifth category refers to the relevance for well-being that characteristics of the social contexts that determine their material living conditions and those of their families, affecting their chances of being well, have according to the understandings of children and adolescents of the analyzed studies. These social contexts refer to aspects that go beyond the individual or relational aspects, constituted by the and daily environments in which children live, as well as the social contexts that establish access to resources and services.

This category integrates two distinctive properties: **Habitability characteristics of the immediate physical environment** and **Material resources and service provision**.

The **Habitability characteristics of the immediate physical environment** property is related to the conditions of the physical environment that can affect the well-being of children and adolescents. These characteristics are part of the proximate and everyday contexts, including the design and qualities of the built urban environment, infrastructure and school furniture, as well as the natural habitat. They are mainly related to the perception that boys and girls have about the places they inhabit, their satisfaction with them, and, in general, the quality of the experience when inhabiting them.

In this sense, the research carried out by Rose and colleagues (2016), with adolescents from a United States school from a low-income community, identifies gardens and parks as places that promote coexistence and community well-being. According to the authors' analysis, the well-being of these adolescents is associated with the spaces where they play with friends. The conditions of the infrastructure in their neighborhoods are also considered.

In the same study, community institutions where well-being is nurtured and cultivated are described, such as the home, church, recreation centers, and school. Specifically, it is reported that caring for and/ or rebuilding abandoned neighborhood spaces, promotes a sense of community well-being, while abandoned public spaces such as burned houses and broken facilities, and environmental degradation, are experienced as signs of community apathy and as negative dimensions of well-being, as mentioned by an adolescent participating in the research:

> Well-being would be like the fields, the health of the fields, cause that's where a lot of grass in these fields, and you can tell they aren't healthy, they're not well-managed at all. There's just like it's a lot of dead grass. And the reason for that is cause us as a community, we aren't taking care of the things that has been given to us (Rose et al., 2016, p. 117).

Regarding the school context, Hall's study (2010), with a sample made up of boys and girls between 5 and 11 years old from a school in Great Britain, mentions the exterior areas, didactic equipment, toys, proximity of the toilets with respect to the classrooms, and having clean tables in the dining room, as aspects that positively influence well-being. The study also points out the food on the floor, dirty bathrooms, and little space in the patio, as aspects that negatively influence their well-being. In the same sense, the research by Fattore et al. (2009), with participants between 8 and 15 years old from urban and rural locations in Australia, indicates that the characteristics of the immediate physical environment may affect the sense of well-being, according to the opportunity that these spaces provide to children and adolescents to actively participate in the community, to facilitate moments with family and friends, and to be associated with feelings of calmness and relaxation. Therefore, noisy, unsanitary and traffic-dense environments are not conducive to well-being. Furthermore, the lack of safe spaces does not allow children to carry out their activities, as one participant relates:

> I used to be allowed to like ride by myself just around the block and everything with my friends, like when I was really little. My friends used to live next to me and we just rode around but now I can't because it's busy and anything could happen (Fattore et al., 2009, p. 66).

Likewise, in the study by Moore and Lynch (2017), made up of a sample of boys and girls between 6 and 8 years old from Ireland, it is mentioned that those environments that provide children with alternative activities to choose from, as well as those environments that allow them to meet their friends, are valued positively in regards to their experience of well-being. In the same way, in the study by Matthews et al. (2015), where the participants were boys and girls from 11 to 16 years old from a school in the United Kingdom, spatiality was identified as an important aspect of well-being, pointing out that the known environments and the access to spaces with daylight are elements that make children feel safe. One participant recounts her experience regarding insecure conditions: "I don't like [it when] big groups of older people start to walk passed. I get my phone out and start running faster." (Matthews et al., 2015, p. 675).

In relation to the **Material resources and service provision** property, boys and girls point out that the economic resources of their parents and schools are significant and decisive for their well-being, since they allow and/ or limit their daily experiences. For adolescents, this is reflected in having access to basic services, having monetary income that allows them to lead a "reasonable" quality of life, as well as in having secured social rights and opportunities for their future.

In the studies by Fattore et al. (2009; 2012), where the participants were boys and girls from 8 to 15 years old, from urban and rural locations in Australia, schools having good resources, as well as the parents having enough money to provide an adequate standard of living for the family nucleus, were identified as relevant for well-being. The latter refers to parents having good working conditions and receiving an adequate family income to survive. For boys and girls, financial security is related to having enough money to "do things as a family". The above is shown in the quote of a teenage participant who refers to the conditions of family precariousness that have affected her well-being:

> Well, for example, if at Christmas, and my mum is a bit tight for money so she can't go out and buy everything that she wants, I said to her, 'cause my brother is younger and he is still growing up, I said get his presents first

and get mine later because I've seen through it'. I know what it is all about. He is growing up and he believes in the whole Santa thing and everything (Fattore et al., 2009, p. 68).

In the research by Newton and Ponting (2012), adolescent participants from schools in South Wales highlighted the importance of having access to good medical and mental health care, having food, having money to study or being able to opt for an educational maintenance subsidy, and having the expectation of being able to access jobs that provide material security in the future, to which also a concern about the lack of jobs at the local level, whose impact is negative for well-being, was added, as one participant relates:

"Being out of work affects your well-being because it's money, innit. If you haven't got money, you won't be able to afford... if you haven't got money, you haven't got nothing have you. You can't do anything really..." (Newton and Ponting, 2012, p. 81).

Another participant in the study reflects on the possible effects on well-being of not having an adequate education that allows for a good job: "If you didn't have education, how are you going to get a job, and how are you going to get a home if you haven't got a job?" (Newton and Ponting, 2012, p. 82).

In the study by Matthews et al. (2015), with boys and girls between 11 and 16 years old, from a school in the United Kingdom, money appeared as a relevant aspect of being able to become independent from the parental home, going to university and getting a job, especially in discussions with children between 13 and 15 years of age. This can be seen in the following quote: "It's like hearing about people not getting jobs...[who] can't pay off the debt and stuff like that… [...]" (Matthews et al., 2015, p. 674). Finally, the participants in the study by Powell et al. (2018), who were primary and secondary school students from Australian Catholic schools, also expressed concerns about employment, being a topic that generates stress and anxiety for them, negatively impacting their well-being. In the mentioned study, the older participants in particular focused on the fact that a positive well-being state is linked to a strong sense of equity, such as having rights and social justice, together with having essential needs covered.

Conclusion and discussion

The Qualitative Metasynthesis analysis shows the delimitation and description of five central categories, referring to aspects present in the children's and adolescents' understandings, reported in the analyzed studies, which have an effect on their well-being experiences. The **"Positive notion of oneself"** category shows that, according to the children's and adolescents' understandings, the notions that they have about themselves, and the capacities that are recognized and valued as their own, present a relevant dimension that is related to their well-being, in a particular and distinctive way when it is positive and allows for a coherent, adaptive and empowering experience of who one is. The **"Good treatment and support relations"** category describes the relevance for well-being, according to the reported children's and adolescents' understandings, of being part of interpersonal links with adults and peers that provide good treatment and support, generating experiences of protection and safety, exchanges of positive emotions, and resources and tools to face tasks and needs of daily life. The **"Recognition"** category describes the importance of being recognized and respected as unique subjects, with capacities and with the right to participate, to express themselves and to contribute actively and autonomously in the decisions that affect them in their daily lives, especially at the school level. The **"Significant activities"** category reports how the ways and characteristics of activities carried out daily play a role in their state of well-being, as reported in the children's and adolescents' understandings of the analyzed studies, describing these activities as those that allow a physical and pleasant experience, allowing them to be with themselves and with others, and as a way of taking care of themselves physically and emotionally. The **"Contextual aspects"** category shows what relevance for well-being exists, according to the children's and adolescents' understandings, in the characteristics of social contexts that affect the material conditions of their lives and of those of their families, specifically referring to aspects that go beyond the individual or relational, constituted by the daily environments in which they live, as well as the social contexts that determine access to resources and services.

In this way, the obtained results allow us to expand our knowledge about well-being, integrating the systematic study of the understandings, notions and perceptions that children and adolescents have about the characteristics and particularities of the areas and domains that are related to their well-being, as has been established as a need and a challenge in the approaches of Thoilliez (2011) and Casas and Bello (2012). Consequently, the results contribute to the expansion of knowledge of particular aspects of their daily lives, and the group contexts of personal, social and cultural exchange that affect their well-being (Thoilliez, 2011; Delle Fave et al., 2011), and to that extent, the obtained results contribute to the development of indicators for the study of well-being (Newton & Ponting, 2012),

favoring the improvement of classic indicators and their limitations in accessing experiences and understandings of well-being (Newton & Ponting, 2012; Powell et al., 2018).

The findings obtained in this study, in particular those specified in each of the properties of the categories that describe the understandings of well-being in children and adolescents, provide valuable indications on relevant aspects to consider when studying and developing indicators.

For example, the property 'Provide support to daily life', in the second category (Good treatment and supportive relationships) provides indications of the relevance that would have for the well-being of children and adolescents, maintaining relationships with adults who provide tools and instrumental resources to interact with circumstances, demands and daily needs that they must face in order to learn and develop, being able to contribute in the development of observation measures that emphasize the presence or absence of this quality in relationships with adults. A second example of property in which this applies is referred to 'Being respected in their uniqueness' (from the Recognition category) which provides indications regarding the relevance, in the experience of children and adolescents, of being recognized and valued as particular and singular, in the same way that its absence is experienced as an interference to their being well. And finally, a third example could be the property 'Habitability of the immediate physical environment' (of the fifth category described) that highlights the importance for the well-being of the conditions of the close and daily physical context, which includes the qualities of the urban environment, the school infrastructure and furniture, as well as natural habitat.

Regarding the above, this metasynthesis contributes specific and distinctive elements that are relevant to consider for the study and understandings of well-being in children and adolescents, which can contribute to the development of indicators such as the several aspects of the experience with oneself, with the daily interpersonal links and the affective exchanges that take place there, thus highlighting the forms of interpersonal treatment and the support received, as well as the respect for its singularity and the participation, especially in the school context. Along with the above, the ways and characteristics of the activities that are carried out daily stand out, in addition to the material conditions, services and, in general, the habitability of the social contexts to which they belong.

At the same time, looking at the results of this meta-synthesis in global terms, other relevant complementary aspects to highlight emerge. Firstly, the results show, according to the children's and adolescents' understandings, the importance that relationships with others have, and therefore, the impact of social links on well-being, distinguishing that the actors involved in the experiences of well-being generally form part of the near environments of the children, including: the family; adults and friends in the school context; and people from the community. Secondly, it is remarkable how children produce elaborate, detailed and differentiated understandings of their well-being, which integrate different dimensions, areas and levels, articulated and interrelated with each other. Therefore, the results are rich, organized and complex understandings, distant from partial perceptions, or atomized and fragmented understandings of their daily life, endorsing the contribution that these studies have for expanding the range of subjective experience and significant and relevant living conditions related to well-being. Thirdly, the results show the possibility that, from the study and analysis of the available qualitative works, it is possible to advance and take steps in the development of more robust integrative models of well-being. This can be done through the systematization of the interrelationships between components and levels that show the children's and adolescents' understandings of their well-being, distinguishing, as seen in these findings, elements of the individual or personal levels; elements of relationships with others; and elements from the material, social and cultural contexts. This can be seen in the different categories proposed.

Similarly, this study shows that the produced body of work in the field that we have analyzed presents some important limitations which should be considered. One of them is related to the fact that the analyzed articles present samples made up of participants of different ages, with a wide and variable age range, fluctuating from 6 to 19 years old in all the articles (as previously mentioned in Table 1.). Each work focuses on different age ranges, which presents a variability that is not always integrated in the analyses, making it difficult to report disaggregated by age, even more when jointly analyzing these works. In consideration of this, it is necessary to look at these results with caution considering the differences produced by the different stages of evolutionary development in which children and adolescents find themselves. It must be taken into consideration that the age dimension is relevant in the well-being experience (Holte et al., 2013; González-Carrasco, Casas, Malo, Viñas & Dinisman, 2016).

In the same sense, another characteristic of the analyzed studies is that they investigate subjects of a wide

sociocultural diversity (for example: poverty, "conditions of favorable integration", rurality, urban context, etc.). These sociocultural belongings, although stated in the articles, are not always analytically integrated, which must be taken as a limitation, since this aspect has been highlighted as a relevant dimension in the experience of well-being (Camfield et al., 2009). In this meta-synthesis, although the social belonging of the participating children has been made explicit each time, they were not specifically analyzed, which constitutes a necessary limitation to take into consideration.

In relation to the above, it should be mentioned that the articles studied have a transversal limitation of not clearly and broadly including the gender perspective. Only the studies by Businaro et al. (2014), Malo et al. (2012) and Matthews et al. (2015) analyze differences by gender in their results. One last limitation is that the incorporated articles work with samples of boys and girls from developed countries, with the exception of only one of them that works with a sample belonging to the Latin American context. This tends to make visible the understandings of well-being of boys and girls growing up in these particular macrosystemic conditions, whilst silencing the understandings of well-being of boys and girls growing up in conditions other than these, such as those of developing countries or the poor of the global south. Considering the limitations described, boys and girls would tend to appear as a homogeneous category, which contravenes the assumption of a sociocultural perspective (Alfaro, Ramírez, Varela, 2019). Therefore, to continue advancing in the incorporation of this perspective it is imperative for new studies to recognize the differences and particularities of each age group, gender and the broad sociocultural conditions.

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