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# Notions of Life Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction in Children and Adolescents of Low Socioeconomic Status in Chile

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## Abstract

The study of subjective well-being in childhood and adolescence has had a recent and dynamic growth, however, there still exist few qualitative studies that contribute to getting to know about and discussing the sociocultural diversity of well-being, in particular those considering the socioeconomic belonging of the studied groups. The aim of this study is to identify and describe the notions of life satisfaction and dissatisfaction in children and adolescents between 10 and 14 years old, who belong to families of low socioeconomic status. For this, we used a qualitative methodology and qualitative techniques of 12 individual interviews and 6 group interviews, with a total of 52 children and adolescents. Thematic content analysis of emerging categories was carried out. The results indicate that the main and most relevant aspects of children's and adolescents' well-being are: the value of close and harmonious relationships; and feeling cared for, loved and supported by significant adults. In turn, they assess entertainment and playing with their friends as satisfactory. At school they value entertaining and participatory learning. It is also significant for them that they feel supported with their personal life projects and that they have opportunities for personal and family progress. Finally, it is noted that they attribute importance to social justice for all persons in situations of inequality or exclusion; and that they assess having clean and safe public spaces as satisfactory.

**Keywords** Well-being · Life satisfaction · Children · Adolescence · Qualitative studies

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## 1 Introduction

A growing interest in the study of well-being has been developing in various disciplines and within the context of the study on quality of life, aimed at knowing and better understanding positive development (not only disease and social problems), its causes and other dimensions related to human development and the prevention of risk behaviors, as well as situations of social exclusion and vulnerability.

The notion of Subjective Well-Being refers to a broad category of phenomena that includes people's emotional responses, areas in which they experience satisfaction, and their overall judgments of life satisfaction (Diener et al. 1999). This overall evaluation that the person makes of his/her quality of life is understood as the person's life satisfaction (Seligson et al. 2003); thus, giving an account of the degree to which he/she cognitively evaluates in a positive way his/her life as a whole, or in relation to specific areas such as in the case of children and adolescents: the family, friends, the school (Huebner 2004; Seligson et al. 2005), amongst others; and it refers to a current, yet not momentary, state (Veenhoven 2002). Subjective Well-Being, although not exactly the same, is related to concepts such as Happiness, Quality of Life, Personal Well-Being and Life Satisfaction (Casas and Bello 2012).

The relevance of the notion of Subjective Well-Being has to do with the fact that it allows for studying and evaluating the quality of life of a human collective, and therefore makes possible the development of public policies which aim to improve its living conditions and which at the same time allow to generate empirical evidence on what the necessary conditions for "living well" are, in order to be able to inform on what a "good society" is, thus facilitating the design of social development strategies (Veenhoven 2002). International research shows that higher life satisfaction is positively related to physical health, mental health, good relationships and educational and professional success (Park 2004). It is also related to the absence of risk behaviors such as substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs), violence, aggression and sexual victimization (Proctor et al. 2009). On the contrary, lower life satisfaction in adolescents is related to various psychological and social problems, such as depressive symptoms, violent and aggressive behavior, substance abuse, suicide attempts, suicidal thoughts, low self-esteem, and lack of harmony in relationships (Valois et al. 2004, 2009; Zullig et al. 2001). Other studies have pointed to the possible function of life satisfaction as a buffer against the negative effects of stress and the development of psychopathological behavior (Suldo and Huebner 2004).

We gather from Casas et al. (2015) the need to make progress in the development of intercultural research, which is a first priority in the current state of development of this field of study. This contributes to having a more advanced knowledge of the determinants of well-being and of satisfaction with life, based on research frameworks that are qualitative, integrated, and in dialogue with quantitative-based studies, which allows to strengthen the field of well-being studies and its related notions (Crivello et al. 2009; Delle Fave et al. 2011).

Furthermore, the above is academically and socially relevant insofar as it allows for the integration of intersubjectively constructed categories that are part of social and cultural environments, coupled with personal, individual and microsocial variables (Díaz et al. 2011). It is also relevant, as proposed by Sarriera (2015) and Sarriera and Bedin (2015), for the integration of the traditional dimensions of well-being, the

collective variables related to the feelings and values of the community. In addition, as established by Prilleltensky et al. (2013), qualitative studies allow us to advance in the investigation of the importance for well-being of dimensions such as respect for diversity, the values and feelings of equality, or the participation in family, work, civic and community life.

In this line of research, the works of Crivello et al. (2009) highlight the importance of integrating into the study of well-being and satisfaction with life in childhood and adolescence, dimensions such as the subjective perception in diverse cultural contexts. This highlights the fact that the well-being experience in childhood and adolescence is diverse and contingent on its social context, in such a way that the frameworks of social belonging in which these subjective perceptions are anchored, are of a particular relevance. The assessment and perception of life events, the relevance of aspirations, the perception of talents and fears, among other aspects, are of great importance for the experience of life satisfaction or dissatisfaction, whilst at the same time they are configured in the framework of symbolic exchange relationships of which people are a part (Delle Fave et al. 2011; Camfield et al. 2009a; Thoilliez 2011). In such a way so as to have a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the perceptions and experiences involved in well-being, it is crucial to know the way in which children understand and give meaning to their life experiences, as well as how they are framed within structures of specific social and cultural relationships (Camfield et al. 2009b; Crivello et al. 2009; Delle Fave et al. 2011; Thoilliez 2011).

Moreover, it also becomes relevant to advance in the description of the subjective experience of well-being in childhood and adolescence from the voices of the children and adolescents themselves; even if we take into account that in the last 25 years there have been advances in perspectives that socially, culturally and politically consider children and adolescents as subjects, still in diverse technical and academic environments the issue of childhood is addressed from a traditional, adult-centric perspective (Torres 2015), thus generating an invisibilization of childhood and limitations in the development of research instruments that allow for the study and generation of spaces which allow children and adolescents to express themselves (Sepúlveda et al. 2015).

As recently explained, well-being and life satisfaction/dissatisfaction, in so far as being subjective productions, can be studied as culturally anchored social constructions, which is produced and transformed into a dynamic and contingent relationship with the sociocultural context in which they occur, as we have taken from Crivello et al. (2009).

The advancements in the qualitative study of well-being reveal significant contextual differences in the meanings associated with the experience of life satisfaction and well-being. The study by Camfield and colleagues (Camfield et al. 2009a) reports that for children in Vietnam well-being is associated with the value of healthy living and being loved by the people around them. Discomfort is referred to in relation to the centrality of the family, the affective and caring bonds between the members of the family, and their assets, in particular that of owning a home. The children's concerns include that their siblings can attend school, that their families have enough to eat and that their parents do not have conflicts between them. Crivello et al. (2009) also report that in the case of Ethiopian children, well-being is associated with the value of the school and the importance of finishing their studies with good results, as this will allow them to have the capacity to financially help their parents and to form their own family. On the other

hand, children from rural areas do not value the continuity of studies in the same way. Furthermore, in this group of children, well-being is associated with having resources to satisfy basic needs, including having enough food.

For Peruvian children, the family is presented as the main aspect associated with their well-being, specifically family presence and love and support received from the family. At the same time, the absence of one or both parents generates feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction, especially amongst girls who consider themselves more vulnerable. Well-being in the family is associated with being understood and cared for by the adults. At the same time it is associated with the presence of poverty, specifically the lack of basic social services, the presence of the use of drugs and alcohol, and for girls, sexual abuse (Crivello et al. 2009).

Fattore et al. (2007), in a study conducted with children and adolescents between the ages of 8 and 15, and who belong to urban and rural locations in New South Wales (Australia), report that well-being is associated with the capacity to act freely, to make decisions and to exert influence in everyday situations. On the other hand, it is associated with having opportunities for carrying out their personal goals and dreams, where the consumption of material and cultural goods is relevant. It is also relevant to emphasize that for this population well-being is related to the value of the access to urban spaces that allow them to carry out leisure activities, highlighting the importance of parks and green areas. Thoilliez (2011), in a study carried out with children from 6 to 12 years old, in three locations in Spain, emphasizes that the family is the area that most generates happiness, especially feeling loved and cared for, whilst on the contrary the experience of scolding, divorce or death of one of their parents generates sadness. Moreover, the study reveals the importance of relationships with friends, which generate happiness due to feeling accepted by the other, whilst on the contrary, sadness is associated with feeling rejected.

In a study conducted in Chile, with children and adolescents of different socioeconomic statuses, we see that well-being is associated with the value of affective bonds in the broad spectrum of their relationships with others, including the nuclear family, as well as with the extended family and the teachers. Dissatisfaction is associated with hostility and abuse, mainly by peers. The children and adolescents also refer to the value of public safety (delinquency) in the neighborhood, contact with nature and the freedom in everyday spaces. Finally, well-being is also associated with material achievements and with the carrying out of their personal life projects in order to have a good life in the future (Ramírez et al. 2017).

In turn, in a study conducted in Chile with children between 10 and 12 years old, Ramírez-Casas del Valle and Alfaro-Inzunza (2018) report that the experience of well-being in school has to do, on the one hand, with having the possibility to liberate oneself from teacher norms and surveillance; as well as with feeling recognized in their uniqueness and respected in their different paces of learning; along with estimating as relevant that the school grants them opportunities to participate actively in their own learning process. With the aim of delving more into these findings there is currently an article in press that has looked at understanding the well-being experiences of adolescents in Chile according to the particularities of the social relationships that prevail in their schools, conducting a differentiated analysis by socioeconomic status (high, medium, low) in children and adolescents between 10 and 14 years old. The results give an account of the similarities between socioeconomic statuses in the well-being

experience associated with interpersonal bonds between classmates; however, differences by socioeconomic status are noted in regard to the bonds that they establish with the teachers; the value given to the working atmosphere of the classroom as a way of contributing to their learning; as well as their experiences in relation to the physical space.

Considering the mentioned studies, differences are noted in the notions and experiences of well-being, be it due to cultural or socioeconomic conditions, which make it important to make progress with the studies of well-being in childhood, taking into consideration each one of the contexts as well as the social conditions that prevail in each one.

Within this background context, this study seeks to contribute to the analysis of the notion of life satisfaction and dissatisfaction in children and adolescents of low socioeconomic status, as a way of contributing to the understanding and differentiation of the experiences of well-being in this specific and socio-economically different population.

This is of vital importance if we consider that Chile, in the year 1990, ratified its adherence to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, advancing in the new policies aimed at guaranteeing the rights of children. However, vulnerability gaps that directly affect the poorest sector, which corresponds to 25% of the children and adolescents population, continue to exist. The main gaps between the different socioeconomic statuses are territorial ones which give priority to the segregation and social inequities expressed in unequal conditions of material life, permanence in the educational system, and dimensions relative to participation and civil liberties of childhood and adolescence, amongst others (Sepúlveda et al. 2015), all of which make it relevant to study this particular population. On the other hand, investigations such as those carried out by Manzoor and colleagues (Manzoor et al. 2015) report that the socioeconomic status (SES) plays an essential role in the levels of subjective well-being, considering that high SES is linked to a better environment and to greater material and emotional resources, as opposed to the disadvantaged situations experienced by those of low SES. At the same time, in a study carried out in Chile in which the level of well-being of children between 10 to 14 years old was evaluated, amongst the main results that stand out are the existence of differences in the levels of well-being, both by age and socioeconomic status (Oyanedel et al. 2014).

The thus far mentioned background serves as a base for the relevance of answering the following study question: What are the notions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction within the different areas of daily life in Chilean children and adolescents, between 10 to 14 years old, of low socioeconomic status?

## 2 Methods

### 2.1 Methodological Approach

This work uses a qualitative descriptive-exploratory research approach (Denman and Haro 2002) as a research strategy relevant to the study of subjective productions which occur in everyday conditions (Tonon 2015), such as the notions of satisfaction and

dissatisfaction in children and adolescents of low socioeconomic status on which the purpose of the research is focused.

We define the notions as a subjective production which reclaims everyday life as a basic scenario for the understanding of sociocultural reality, recognizing subjective individual experience as an important source of social knowledge (Mieles-Barrera and Tonon 2015), integrating into it opinions, evaluations, assessments and perceptions regarding the daily life experiences of the studied subjects, which in the specific case of this research are part of the individual cognitive processes (children and adolescents), whilst at the same time being an integral part and circulating as legitimate components accepted in the sociocultural contexts of belonging. The study favored an open, unstructured and emergent research strategy which integrates the issues and contents that emerge during the information production process (Mella 1998). In this sense, and following the principles of qualitative research, the approach taken is an inductive one which is more related to the discovery and production of results, in comparison with the verification of data. In addition, it is based on a holistic vision in which the situation or the scenario is presumed from an overall perspective (Mieles-Barrera and Tonon 2015).

## 2.2 Participants

This research is part of a larger study on the meanings of well-being for Chilean children and adolescents. The sampling strategy was by convenience (Vasilachis 2006), based on accessibility to the schools and the subjects investigated. The participation of boys and girls was sought in the research. We focused on participants of low socioeconomic status (SES), which was determined by the criteria of vulnerability defined by the IVE-SINAE.<sup>1</sup>

The socioeconomic status, the age, as well as the interest of the children and adolescents for participating in the study, together with the parents approval by means of an informed consent, were within the inclusion criteria for the children to participate in the study. The participants included 52 children and adolescents, between 10 and 14 years old and of low socioeconomic status, coming from different geographical areas of the country. Of the total sample, 29 were female and 23 were male, from the 6th and 8th grades of primary education.

## 2.3 Procedure

In each school establishment, the research team went to the sixth and eighth grades, as these are the school levels which correspond to the age criteria of the study. In each of the grades, a brief presentation of the research team and the objectives of the study was made to all the children present.

After this research presentation in each of the grades, volunteer participants for the study were asked for and only those who had the authorization and the informed consent signed by the parents could participate. All the selected students were read the

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<sup>1</sup> This is a methodology for measuring the vulnerability status of students belonging to municipal and subsidized private schools, which has been created with inputs from different information sources of each student, and which translates into a score calculated by the National Board of School Aid and Scholarships (Comejo et al. 2005).

informed assent in order to explain to them the study characteristics and to emphasize the confidentiality and the right to stop participating if they considered it relevant to do so.

In the three schools we attended we worked in parallel with children between 10 and 12 years old who were studying in the sixth grade; and with adolescents between the ages of 13 and 14 who were studying in the eighth grade. The above implied a deployment within the school of all the main researchers and research assistants.

For each group of students per grade we divided the total number of boys, girls and/or adolescents into two groups. One group was composed of those who participated in an individual interview; and the rest participated in a group interview. In each school, in the individual interview the participation of one male and one female per grade was achieved, making a total of 4 individual interviews in each school. The rest of the volunteer adolescents participated in a group interview which consisted of between 6 to 8 members per group. The following table specifies sample characteristics and the research group in which they participated (Table 1).

Both the individual and the group interviews were guided by the study's main researchers, and all the material was recorded and subsequently transcribed.

## 2.4 Research Instruments

As a data production technique, a methodological tool was designed that incorporates drawing and group performances as stimulus for facilitating the children's and adolescents' expressions (Crivello et al. 2009) regarding their satisfaction and dissatisfaction in different areas of their daily lives, such as family life, school life, and life within their neighborhood, as well as in other aspects which they deem relevant. Based on what was expressed in their drawings and performances, the semi-structured individual and group interview technique was used (Ruiz-Olabuénaga 2012).

Concretely, to investigate satisfaction and dissatisfaction regarding their family life and life within their neighborhood, an individual interview was conducted where, firstly, the participants were asked to make a drawing in which they gave an account of what they most like and dislike about their family life, as well as about life in their neighborhood. After the children and adolescents made their drawings, an individual interview was conducted whose axes focused on: a) explaining what their drawings

**Table 1** Sample characterization and participant number by instrument type

Geographic zone	Female	Male	Ages					Data production instrument	
			10 years	11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years	Individual interview	Group interview
North zone	9	7	4	4		6	1	4	12
Country capital	8	10		1	4	6	7	4	14
South zone	12	6	3		6	3	7	4	14
Total	29	23	7	5	10	15	15	12	40

were about; b) explaining what made them feel good and bad about the drawn situation; and c) explaining what changes they would make to feel better.

In order to go into more depth in regard to their school life, a methodology that incorporates group performances was used as a data production technique. Specifically, each group was subdivided into pairs or trios and were then asked to demonstrate to the rest of their classmates situations that please and displease them in regard to their school experience. After each performance, and according to the criteria of a semi-structured interview (Ruiz-Olabuénaga 2012), the conversation of the subgroup was encouraged around two questions: what situation did you represent?; and, why do you feel good/bad in that situation? Based on their comments, we encouraged conversation with the rest of the group, taking into consideration the following questions: 1) have similar or very different things happened to you?; 2) how did you feel when that happened?; and 3) what changes would you make to feel better? Finally, they were asked to give an account of other situations in their daily lives that they considered relevant, in so doing delving into more depth regarding the following: a) what makes you feel good or bad about the situation you point to?; b) why does it make you feel that way?; and c) in what would you like to change in order to feel good?

## 2.5 Data Analysis Procedures

According to Miele-Barrera et al. (2012) the analysis was made considering the following phases: a) familiarization with the data, which allowed the researchers to write down ideas and general meanings of the studied transcribed interviews; b) initial codings that allowed to organize the information into categories of the same meaning, specifically associated with the areas in which Subjective Well-Being is traditionally studied; c) searches for categories/topics that could allow for generating information about the research questions; d) recoding and construction of new categories with final definitions; and e) development and description of the central categories-themes that emerged.

## 3 Results

In regard to the notions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in children and adolescents of low socioeconomic status, eight categories, which are specified in different areas of their daily lives, emerge, as indicated in Table 2.

### 3.1 Value of Unity and Harmonious Relationships

The satisfaction of children and adolescents of low socioeconomic status is associated with the importance assigned to unity within the family, as well as with one's neighbors. Regarding their family life, children and adolescents consider coming together and sharing moments with their nuclear and extended family as satisfactory. In this way, they assess as significant the possibility of coming together to share and celebrate special events and birthdays. The above-mentioned is expressed as follows:

**Table 2** Summary of categories and areas related to satisfaction and dissatisfaction

Categories	Family	School	Neighborhood	Friendship	Social
Value of unity and harmonious relationships	x		x		
Value of care and affection	x	x			
Value of entertainment		x		x	
Value of entertaining and participatory learning		x			
Value of social justice					x
Personal and family progress	x	x			
Support with personal life project	x				
Value of clean and safe public spaces			x		

Something I like is that there are celebrations for something special, that we get together and spend time as a family, my uncles cook and stuff and we have a good time. They also celebrate birthdays, sometimes they invite us and stuff (boy, 8th grade).

Children and adolescents value spending time with the whole family, and satisfaction is associated with getting together both with their parents and grandparents, as well as having pleasant and happy gatherings, as mentioned in the following quote:

I think like a happy family but, the truth is not like that. But I would like us to be a happy family like all of them, like that, they all have a grandma, dad, mom, and stuff. All together as a family, spending time together happily (girl, 6th grade).

Getting together with the nuclear family is considered part of those moments which give them joy and a feeling of being able to count on “those of own flesh and blood” and feel supported by them, as can be seen in the following quote:

Because when you think about the family you feel more supported, more cheerful, because you are with your blood and stuff. And we spend time together. And we forget all the problems we have (girl, 8th grade).

Likewise, the relevance assigned to family unity is manifested in the evaluations of dissatisfaction relating to the lack of unity and the distance between family members. This dissatisfaction is mainly associated with the absence of one of their parents in their daily lives, as is indicated below:

... I mean, I have one, but I haven't seen him for 8 years. And I don't want to see him either because he abandoned me. I mean, he acknowledged me and that's it. He just deposits my allowance (girl, 8th grade).

In the same way, the lack of harmony and the fights between the parents are considered as sources of discomfort, which bring up in the children and the

adolescents the fear of a possible family disintegration, thus threatening the unity, as is mentioned below:

There [in those moments] I am sad because my dad and my mom are arguing and sometimes they fight a lot. My mom tells him that she will take me and she will leave, so I don't like to hear them fight (girl, 8th grade).

Children and adolescents also value the unity between their neighbors and especially that harmonious and collaborative relationships prevail amongst them, as seen in the following two quotes:

What I like the most is the connection they have in the neighborhood, they are very close to each other. For example, if there is a fire, everyone will help. They take part in many activities that involve the whole neighborhood in general (child, 8th grade).

For example, if people don't have electricity we offer our electricity (girl, 8th grade).

### 3.2 Value of Care and Affection

What the children and adolescents consider as satisfactory is directly related to being cared for and loved by family and teachers. In regard to their family, they value being cared for at times when they feel sad. In this way they value the expressions of affection, such as hugs, or simply being consoled when they feel sad. They also value that members of their family are attentive to their needs or take care of them when they are sick, as indicated in the following passages:

My grandmother is very affectionate, she likes to cook. I like it when I'm crying, or if I fall, like, she comforts me and says "everything will be fine" and hugs me. She is like my second mom, she has always been with me for the good and bad times. For example, when I get angry, and stuff, because of things like, like, my cousins take a toy away from me, so, she tells me "you do not have to worry about those things because those things are material things". And she comforts me in everything, in everything (girl, 6th grade).

She cares about me, for example, if I fall, like, here at school and they call my guardian and for example, if my grandmother is making some cakes, she comes to get me and she starts to be like my mom, she starts to put clothes on me when I'm sick, and stuff, she gives me medicine, she cares about me, she takes me to the doctor, and stuff. She is very nice with me (girl, 6th grade).

On the other hand, children and adolescents understand satisfaction in relation to the presence of affective bonds with the teachers and the possibility of feeling cared for by them whenever they need it. The above-mentioned is expressed as follows:

I have a lot of affection for the teachers because whenever I need something they always help me and they have always been there because they have been a long time at the school (child, 8th grade).

In the same way, they assess as satisfactory being cared for and looked after by the teachers when a child suffers an accident, as indicated:

It is really good when they always walk in the yard watching everything that happens during break, if someone falls they will see them, help them and stuff ... (girl, 8th grade).

In this sense, children value that teachers support them both in their own learning tasks and in relation to other needs which may arise for them while they are at school, as seen in the following quote:

I find that they should be important, because they are not only those who teach us, but also those who sometimes wait for us at break, they watch us, they support you in a certain way, they help you to study, obviously. And they are like our second parents in life (child, 8th grade).

### 3.3 Value of Entertainment

For children and adolescents, satisfaction is associated with entertaining themselves with their peers. In this regard, the school is the social space which allows them to meet with their friends and, in turn, to be able to meet new children with whom to play and have fun, as indicated in the following passages:

Because I like to play football with my classmates (child, 8th grade).

And spend time with my classmates (child, 8th grade).

You can tell your deepest thoughts to your friends (child, 8th grade).

In this way, in the group interview they mention that the most satisfactory part of their stay at school is sharing and playing with their peers, as mentioned:

The best ... the break ... we play tag. Because we can spend time together (girl, 6th grade).

### 3.4 Value of Entertaining and Participatory Learning

Children and adolescents consider participating actively in school activities as a component of their satisfaction. In this sense, satisfaction at school is associated with entertaining and participatory pedagogical practices which allow them to talk and to laugh in class, as well as to be able to leave the space of the classroom.

He taught us things, not like in English class where they teach in a fast way and erase the blackboard quickly just to keep writing. He made us talk and made us pick out a piece of paper with all the names and told us to go in front, and one had to talk about things, and he made us laugh, even taught us to dance, like this... .we went on a school trip...

### 3.5 Value of Social Justice

In regard to their experience of satisfaction/dissatisfaction children and adolescents mention the relevance of the value of social justice in relation to people in situations of vulnerability and poverty; such as the elderly, the sick and even animals; being treated in a respectful and dignified manner. In this way, dissatisfaction is associated with seeing the sick suffer and not be treated in a timely manner, or the elderly not being cared for as they require, as well as the discomfort related to seeing practices of animal mistreatment, such as noted in the following quotes:

I would like to change ... I don't know, like when we go to the health center suddenly there are people who are sick or in the hospital, there are a lot of people waiting or if they give an appointment they have to wait a long time for the appointment, and when the doctors arrive, I don't think there is just one doctor in the whole hospital, I don't know, I would change that too (girl, 6<sup>th</sup> grade).

It's bad ... people usually, especially the elderly because they do not take care of them as they should, because I've seen on TV many times that they mistreat them, and stuff, and also they violate people's rights (girl, 8<sup>th</sup> grade).

The way people are (...) because they are bad people, because they hit animals without any reason (child, 6<sup>th</sup> grade).

### 3.6 Personal and Family Progress

For children and adolescents of low socioeconomic status, satisfaction is associated with having opportunities in the present that allow both them and their families to have access to better material and social life conditions in the future. In this sense the value of studies emerges as the way that they have to obtain adequate living conditions ("to get ahead"), as indicated in the following passage:

Here I drew myself studying, because I think that it is the most important thing for me.

I: Why do you think that is the most important thing for you?

Because when I grow up I will have to work and I will need my studies to work (child, 6<sup>th</sup> grade).

Children and adolescents assess studies as giving them the possibility to obtain a profession, which will allow them to "be someone in life", this being very related to professional success, as indicated in the following quote:

Getting a profession I have better protection. It's important to have a good education and to be someone in life (child, 6th grade).

In the same way, studying is a component of their satisfaction in that it is considered a main means by which they can “get ahead”, and thus also be able to contribute financially to their families, as indicated in the following quote:

To study and succeed with my family. And the most special thing when my mom is an old lady, there are children who leave their mothers alone and I don't want that. And ... the most important thing for me is my mom, my grandmother, and me (girl, 8th grade).

### 3.7 Support with Personal Life Project

For the studied children and adolescents, satisfaction is seen as associated with the achievement of their personal aims in life. This is especially relevant in relation to the family since they value that family members support, accompany and motivate them to achieve their goals and their dreams, as shown in the following quote:

... I will train every day ... on Sundays, around Casas Viejas [name of locality] ... and my parents help to motivate me to be a soccer player and little by little achieve my dreams ... (8th grade child).

### 3.8 Value of Clean and Safe Public Spaces

The children assess as satisfactory the existence of and access to adequate public spaces with games that allow them to perform recreational activities, as indicated below:

The different activities that we do sometimes, because now they are fixing our neighborhood, they are constructing squares and stuff, I like that, or else going to the park and doing zumba or things like that (girl, 8th grade).

On the contrary, discomfort is associated with the filth of public spaces, which for them shows a lack of organization on the part of the neighbors and little care for the common spaces, as mentioned in the following quote:

I don't like that on the ground there are dead animals. There are smells that are so strong and people don't like it. There is a lot of trash and there are dogs that break it open and then it is scattered all over next to the trash can and it looks like it's a disorganization of the neighborhood and stuff (girl, 8th grade).

In turn, children and adolescents assess as important feeling a sense of security in the public spaces near their homes. However, in this aspect, for the majority of the interviewed children the feeling that prevails is one of dissatisfaction due to the lack of security and the feeling of danger in relation to the public spaces that they frequent,

where violence predominates and where they constantly feel at risk, as indicated in the following quotes:

There have been fights, it was during vacation and once, in the second fight, the last one that was, was that they were drinking and ... they started to fight and one boy tripped and knocked over another boy's woman and then he started to hit him and he hit him with bottles on the head and then they tried to get into a neighbor's house and the man whose wife fell, hit the mother of another neighbor. And my neighbor, he went to hit him because he hit his mom and another kid was running like that and he stabbed him. He was in the intensive care unit. There are problems. There is also drug dealing in front of my house (child, 5th grade).

#### 4 Conclusion

The objective of this study was to describe the notions of life satisfaction and dissatisfaction in a sample of Chilean boys, girls and adolescents, from 10 to 14 years old and of low socioeconomic status, with the purpose of getting to know the particular assessments, evaluations, perceptions and experiences regarding the different areas of the daily lives of this population. The study aimed, on the one hand, to contribute with knowledge that serves for making relevant decisions regarding policies aimed at the child population in the country; and on the other hand, to recognize the contextual differences in the production of notions of well-being associated with socioeconomic differences.

In regard to the notions of life satisfaction and dissatisfaction that emerged in this study, it should firstly be emphasized that the studied children and adolescents carry with them a notion of life satisfaction that highlights and assigns value to the relationships of interpersonal unity and to the existence of harmonious relationships, integrating within them, in a special and noteworthy way, the relationships with their family, with their teachers and with their neighbors. Of particular emphasis is the importance attributed to the family bond, where all the people who live together are included as part of the family, and where dissatisfaction appears associated in a noteworthy way with the risk of separation and family life disintegration, or with social coexistence conflicts in the neighborhood. It is in this way that the conflicts and problems in the relationships with others (significant adults, such as members of their nuclear and extended family, their teachers at school, and their neighbors) present the main threat and risk to their life satisfaction.

Secondly, in the children's and adolescents' notions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, security, freedom and access to nature as allowed for by the everyday spaces, come up. In this way, within their notions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, having access to harmonious and beautiful open spaces, in a free and autonomous way, without major restrictions and without restrictive regulations, holds and importance place, thus assigning importance to the enjoyment of physical spaces and of nature, in a contemplative way and without their security being at risk.

Thirdly, another central component of the notion of satisfaction that the studied children and adolescents of low socioeconomic status have, refers to the value of

achievement and the expectations for the carrying out of their personal life projects, guided by social and family expectations and rules. In this sense, children and adolescents value financial achievements indicated by family and social mandates, mainly associated with obtaining a professional status and a successful work situation that gives them economic security, as well as being recognized, accepted and valued by the social group to which they belong.

In relation to the qualitative study of well-being in childhood and adolescence carried out in different sociocultural contexts, it is relevant to take note of the presence of common and different themes between our study and previous studies.

In this regard, a similarity is noted between children and adolescents in Chile and the study reports about children in Vietnam, Ethiopia, Peru, Australia and Spain, concerning the importance assigned to the family for contributing to their well-being, in which feeling loved and supported by their relatives is valued the most. It is interesting that in Chile, equally as in Vietnam, Peru and Spain, dissatisfaction is associated with fights and conflicts within the family, where the possible break-up of the family unit generates much insecurity, especially in the case of the children in Peru and Chile. On the other hand, similarities are noted between children in Chile and Australia in relation to the importance assigned to leisure and recreation times, as well as to being able to enjoy beautiful and harmonious spaces.

At the same time, children in Chile find it relevant to attend school since they associate it with the possibility of obtaining the necessary learning that will allow them to have access to better personal life conditions in the future; this is different from the value assigned by children, for example, from Ethiopia, where well-being is associated with being able to attend and finish their school studies in order to in the future be able to take care of their families.

Differences are also noted between children and adolescents of low socioeconomic status in Chile and what has been reported in studies with populations from Vietnam and Ethiopia, which refer to the fact that well-being is associated with being able to satisfy basic needs such as food or housing, an issue not mentioned by children and adolescents in Chile.

Even though we consider it not possible to make in-depth comparisons between our study and that of the reviewed background, the previous exercise serves as relevant in order to account for certain similar and different topics between different sociocultural contexts, which reinforces the need to conduct qualitative studies within the research on well-being, in line with the approach proposed by Diener (2012) who defends the importance of using methodologies based on multiple methods for advancing the current state of knowledge on well-being and improving the results and the contribution derived from previous correlational studies by means of opening up to issues and dimensions that are influential and important but that are not easily accessible from quantitative frameworks, as well as who considers the production of the notions of well-being within the framework of contextual social relations.

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## Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of Interest** The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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