Current Psychology
https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02637-z

Gender attitudes, school violence and well-being among Chilean adolescents

Jorge J. Varela[1] · Paulina A. Sánchez[1] · Francisco Aguayo[2] · Constanza González[1] · Jaime Alfaro[1] · Pablo De Tezanos-Pinto[3]

Accepted: 13 December 2021

Abstract

Gender attitudes are of interest to psychology due to their correlation with various risk behaviors such as aggressive behavior among adolescents, greater violence in their romantic relationships, perpetration of physical violence against the female partner and homophobic attacks. In Chile, gender attitudes are of public concern due to the rates of violence in the adolescent population; however, the association between gender attitudes, school violence and subjective well-being in this population has been scarcely studied. For this reason, the objective of this article is to examine the relationship between gender attitudes, school violence and subjective well-being in Chilean adolescents. The sample was based on 882 adolescents from 7 to 12th grade (48.5% female, average age of 12.4 years). Four scales were used to examine the relationship between gender attitudes, school violence and subjective well-being, using structural equations modeling. We modeled multiple mediations, where the relationship between gender attitudes and well-being was mediated by perpetration, but not for victimization. The results show that gender attitudes are associated with higher reports of school violence, both as perpetrator and as victim. At the same time, school violence is associated with lower subjective well-being in perpetrators, but not in victims. Addressing this problem is vital as a way to educate on equitable gender attitudes, prevent the development of violent behavior and promote subjective well-being of adolescents in Chile.

Keywords Gender attitudes · School violence · Subjective well-being · Adolescence · Chile

Adolescent subjective well-being is an important dimension of development which can be influenced by different individual and contextual variables. School experiences are significant considering the importance of peers at this age to promote subjective well-being (Eccles & Roeser, 2010; Huebner et al., 2014). The school experience, however, can also be significant due to negative experiences such as school violence and the development of different attitudes that can encourage violent behaviour. In particular, gender attitudes can be linked to more violent behavior among adolescents and can also be associated with a negative impact on subjective well-being (Fleming & Agnew-Brune, 2015; Shattuck et al., 2013). Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between gender attitudes, school violence and subjective well-being among adolescents in the Chilean context.

Gender Attitudes

Gender attitudes are defined by Kågesten et al. (2016) as perceptions, beliefs or adherence to gender norms. Gender norms, on the other hand, are defined as the socially accepted rules about the roles, traits and behaviors associated with masculinity and femininity in a given cultural context. Gender attitudes are considered important as a factor that can trigger or increase different violent behaviors (Krug et al., 2002; Ramiro-Sánchez et al., 2018). Gender attitude development is especially important in adolescence, a key stage for the socialization and construction of these norms and attitudes in different cultural contexts (John et al., 2017).

✉ Jorge J. Varela

[1] [a]Facultad de Psicología, Universidad del Desarrollo, Santiago, Chile

[2] Facultad de Psicología, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Valparaíso, Chile

[3] Department of Psychology, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

Published online: 23 January 2022

For instance, in a systematic review based on studies from 1984 to 2014, Kågesten et al. (2016) found that preadolescence (10–14 years of age) is a stage of increasing adherence in boys and girls to inequitable gender norms. Moreover, the attitudes of the parents are associated with the attitudes of the children, home task divisions are associated with the gender attitudes of the children, and families with more schooling show more support for equitable gender norms. Regarding peer socialization, the attributes of hegemonic masculinity are promoted in men and the attributes of hegemonic femininity are promoted in women. In addition, men had greater adherence to inequitable gender attitudes than women, though other studies have instead found no differences in support for inequitable gender attitudes between men and women (Fattah & Camellia, 2017; Vu et al., 2017). Early adolescence can be considered a critical window of opportunity in which gender attitudes are constructed and therefore more equitable attitudes can be taught (Amin et al., 2018).

According to the First Survey of Dating Violence in Chile (INJUV, 2018), with participants between 15 to 29 years old, 37% agree that schools encourage and reproduce gender roles that put women at a disadvantage compared to men; 26% assert that they have witnessed *macho* or sexist behaviors or comments among students often (41% assert that they have witnessed them frequently); 14% assert that they have witnessed *macho* or sexist behavior or comments between students and teachers or between students and school staff often (31% say that they have been witnessed them frequently). According to these results, the educational context can be considered an essential socializing agent of inequitable gender attitudes and Chile's behavior.

In addition, gender stereotypes linked to the search for power and privileges by men can configure social practices and behaviors that put them at risk. For instance, men repress their needs, refuse to recognize pain, deny vulnerability, emotional and physical control, appearance of robustness, aggressive behavior, among others, which in turn negatively affect their subjective well-being (Courtenay, 2000; Kaufman, 1994). Therefore, the use of violence for males is related to some mandates or attributes of hegemonic masculinity culture, such as being strong, rude, harsh, dominant, defending honor and manhood, or demonstrating that one is really a man (Jewkes et al., 2015).

Thus, gender attitudes are also of interest for researchers due to their correlation with risk behaviors among adolescents (Fleming & Agnew-Brune, 2015; Shattuck et al., 2013), such as aggression (Poteat et al., 2011), dating violence (Reed et al., 2010), perpetration of physical violence against the female partner (Fleming et al., 2015), and homophobic behavior (Carrera-Fernández et al., 2013; Parrott, 2009). For instance, a recent study by Ramiro-Sánchez et al. (2018), based on 20 different studies, concluded that adolescents who hold sexist gender attitudes have higher risky sexual behaviors, more favorable attitudes towards partner violence, greater attraction towards partners who hold sexist beliefs, greater support for the myth of the love-abuse relationship, greater emotional dependence on relationships, and lower quality of their relationships. Therefore, sexist gender attitudes could be related to more harmful forms of interaction between adolescents.

International comparisons have found that inequitable gender attitudes in men, and attitudes that justify violence, are factors that influence the perpetration of violence against female partners (Fleming et al., 2015). Recent studies have also found that inequitable gender attitudes in men are associated with a greater exercise of violence against women and antisocial behavior (Jewkes & Morrell, 2018). Vu et al. (2017), based on a sample of 970 youth, found that inequitable gender attitudes were significantly associated with exposure to physical and sexual violence and early sexual initiation. Moreover, it was also found that preadolescents exhibited greater support to inequitable attitudes than did young people, which accounts for an early assimilation of inequitable gender norms. In another study with 1,040 male preadolescents and adolescents who play cricket (10 to 16 years old) in Mumbai, India, it was found that those with equitable gender attitudes reported lower perpetration of any form of violence. In contrast, inequitable attitudes were associated with justification for violence against women (Das et al., 2015).

Although the aforementioned studies account for the negative effects of inequitable gender attitudes, there is evidence to hypothesize that such attitudes could fulfill an adaptive function according to the context, contributing to subjective well-being (e.g. Napier et al., 2010; Vantieghem et al., 2014; Young & Sweeting, 2004). Behavioral differences based on gender and biological sex have been evaluated as gender diagnosis, using the notation of "atypical gender" when there are differences between gender stereotype and sex (Lippa & Connelly, 1990). For instance, Young and Sweeting (2004) examined the associations between atypical behavior of gender, masculinity, femininity, bullying (perpetration and victimization), peer relations and subjective well-being in a sample of 15-year-old adolescents (1,115 male and 1,079 female). They found that male adolescents categorized with atypical gender behavior reported a higher probability of victimization, greater loneliness, had higher prevalence of depression and a higher presence of symptoms that are detrimental to well-being, whereas these results were not found in female adolescents. Moreover, masculinity has a positive relationship with perpetration, regardless of sex, while femininity has a negative relationship with perpetration (Young & Sweeting, 2004).

These results highlight that those who engage in behaviors that are not in accordance with traditional social norms

of gender are exposed to social exclusion and are at risk of present lower levels of subjective well-being (Young & Sweeting, 2004). According to this, we can argue that masculine behaviors based on gender stereotypes could have an adaptive purpose because they avoid the negative consequences that are associated with gender stereotypes and transgression of social norms. Moreover, males are socialized in the use of violence, and violence is considered part of hegemonic masculinity, being used on occasions to defend or sustain some attributes of masculinity such as honor or heterosexuality (Connell, 2003). Therefore, gender attitudes are linked to risky behaviors (Fleming & Agnew-Brune, 2015), greater approval of gender violence and greater engagement in violent behavior in adolescent populations (Das et al., 2014; Fleming et al., 2015; Krug et al., 2002; Ramiro-Sánchez et al., 2018; Shattuck et al., 2013), but they can also be associated with higher levels of subjective well-being in adolescents (Young & Sweeting, 2004). Yet, less is known about whether these attitudes have any relation to school violence in particular, either as a victim or as a perpetrator, and whether this relationship has a correlation with adolescents´ subjective well-being.

School Violence

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as those intentional acts towards oneself or others that increase the possibility of generating harm and/or negative consequences to a person, group or community (Krug et al., 2002). Thus, violence corresponds to an extreme, especially destructive and cruel form of aggression (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2011). However, aggression has an adaptive base in human development, characterized by its functionality and its different forms of manifestation, having a fundamental evolutionary role for survival, where the environment, in a combined effect between socialization and brain maturation, is the one which fulfills the function of modeling aggressive behavior in the course of its development (Vitaro et al., 2006). The influence of the environment on behavior is developed by modifying the cognitive schemes and beliefs, and emotional predisposition of the subjects (Huesmann & Kirwil, 2007). Therefore, aggression is adaptive within human development but violent behavior is considered maladaptive.

Violent behaviors can be recognized in different contexts such as intimate relations, family, communities and the school. When it occurs in the school environment then this is a case of school violence (Furlong et al., 2003). School violence is a form of interpersonal violence that is expressed between students and other members of the school community, it involves physical, verbal, emotional or sexual aggression, and its magnitude can vary from mild to severe (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005).

In the last decades in Chile there has been an increasing interest from researchers from different disciplines for the study of school violence. According to data from the most recent national survey of violence in the school environment (Ministry of Interior, 2015), 22.3% of students report having been attacked in school that year. This value is higher for males compared to females (26.2% and 18.7%, respectively). Both verbal and social violence occur more frequently in the virtual space of online social networks, compared to face-to-face contact. On the other hand, 24.1% reported having attacked someone during 2014, of which 32.5% were male and 16.1% female. These aggressions were mostly verbal, followed by social and physical, and most of them are self-reported face-to-face, in comparison with the use of social networks.

School violence has negative consequences, in the short and long term, on the mental health of those involved (Daniels et al., 2007; Varela et al., 2021). Several meta-analyses have shown that victims of school violence develop a series of emotional adjustment problems such as depression, psychosomatic problems, suicidal ideation and behaviors, and lower academic achievement (e.g. Gini & Pozzoli, 2013; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Holt et al., 2015; Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010; Ttofi et al., 2012). Moreover, perpetrators of school violence also suffer negative consequences in the future, such as more violent behavior later in life (Farrington & Ttofi, 2011) and greater association with mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (Turcotte et al., 2015). Likewise, both those who are victims and those who are victimizers have greater risks of mental health problems in adolescence (Lereya et al., 2015). For instance, in Chilean samples, Varela et al. (2017) using the Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS), found an association between school violence, whether as a victim or a perpetrator, and levels of life satisfaction in young people. Specifically, the findings of a sample of 802 adolescents indicated that being a victim of school violence has an indirect effect on the subjective well-being of adolescents, negatively influencing it through school satisfaction. In line with these findings, Alfaro et al. (2016a) analyzed a sample of 1,433 Chilean students between 10 and 14 years old, finding that there are some determinants of the school context that can have a significant impact on the subjective well-being of students (such as satisfaction with grades and satisfaction with classmates) and which exert their effect through school-level well-being.

Previous studies have recognized different predictors of school violence in adolescents from an ecological approach, identifying different levels of influence (Espelage et al., 2000; Espelage & De La Rue, 2012). One relevant individual factor is the norms and beliefs of the subjects (Huesmann

& Kirwil, 2007). Therefore, attitudes and beliefs have also been studied to understand violent behavior, evidencing a clear connection. For instance, a positive relationship has been found between violent behavior and favorable cognitions towards violence (Bowes & McMurran, 2013), normative beliefs (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Lim & Ang, 2009; Werner & Nixon, 2005), and attitudes (Mcconville & Cornell, 2003). Inequitable gender norms, on the other hand, have been associated with violent behaviors in romantic relationships (McCauley et al., 2013), violence against women (Fattah & Camellia, 2017) and also violence from male adolescents towards peers (Das et al., 2014).

Even though the relationship between inequitable gender attitudes and different types of violent behavior has been widely reported in the literature, the relationship with school violence has been scarcely studied. In addition, little is known about the effect of these variables on adolescents' subjective well-being. Therefore, it is important to examine in more detail the association with gender attitudes.

Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being is a category that includes three phenomena: positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999). The affective components are based on emotional responses in everyday life (Gilman et al., 2000). These three components are separable (Lucas et al., 1996) and can be assessed as elements of subjective well-being independently (Diener et al., 1999; Pavot & Diener, 2004). Studies of satisfaction with the school environment have included items on school context that measure subjective well-being in child and youth samples in different contexts (Casas et al., 2013, 2014; Tomyn & Cummins, 2011c).

In the subjective well-being of children and adolescents, one aspect to consider is that a single indicator or domain cannot represent it; rather, their lives are experienced in multiple domains that influence well-being (Ben-Arieh et al., 2001; Bradshaw & Mayhew, 2005; Hanafin & Brooks, 2005). The analysis of the contribution of domains located in immediate contexts such as school, neighborhood, or family, is becoming increasingly important among the relational aspects in exploring subjective well-being (Huebner, 1991b, 1991c, 1994).

The instrumentation for measuring dimensions in the broad field of the study of subjective well-being has increased in recent decades. As a result, the assessment of positive and negative emotions and subjective perceptions in the lives of children and adolescents has provided helpful information about how they live their lives and the associations with educational, environmental, social, and psychological context variables (Proctor et al., 2009).

The measurement of subjective well-being through the life satisfaction component has been explored using the so-called Overall Life Satisfaction (OLS) single item of Cantril (1965, cited in Casas, 2010). With students, Huebner's (1991b) Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) have been used as unidimensional measures. Subsequently, multi-item measures covering different domains of life satisfaction have been used, including the Personal Well-Being Index (PWI) (Cummins et al., 2003) and the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) (Seligson et al., 2003). These instruments have been used with children and adolescents in several countries, including Latin American contexts. In various studies with these scales, it has been found that children and adolescents show high satisfaction with life in all scales, either by domains or in the global construct. This has been found in the United States (Huebner et al., 2000, 2005, 2006; Huebner, 1991b, 1991c), Australia (Tomyn & Cummins, 2011b, 2011c; Tomyn et al. 2013) Hong Kong (Chui & Wong, 2015; Kwan, 2008), Spain (Casas & Bello, 2012, Casas et al., 2012a, b), Brazil (Bedin & Sarriera, 2014a, 2014b), and Chile (Alfaro et al., 2014; Oyanedel et al., 2014), among others.

According to Diener et al. (2003), subjective well-being corresponds to what people think and feel about their own lives, as well as the cognitive and emotional results of this assessment. The cognitive assessment dimension refers to life satisfaction and the emotional dimension is based on personal feelings and personal moods (Diener, 1984, 2006; Petito & Cummins, 2000). Life satisfaction is the overall assessment that a person makes about their quality of life (Casas et al., 2004; Seligson et al., 2003), considering different dimensions such as family, friends, the school and the community (Huebner, 1994, 2004). Previous studies show that higher levels of life satisfaction are positively related to physical and mental health, positive interpersonal relationships, and educational and professional success in different cultural contexts (Park, 2004; Varela et al., 2017).

Life satisfaction is a very important aspect of adolescents´ lives, and has been related with healthy development (Alfaro et al., 2016a; Paxton et al., 2006; Varela et al., 2017). Thus, adolescents who report higher levels of life satisfaction have better levels of school functioning, less risky behaviors such as substance abuse, less violent behavior and sexual victimization, and lower externalization and internalization of behavioral problems (Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Proctor et al., 2009; Suldo & Huebner, 2006). Conversely, those who report low life satisfaction usually present psychological and social problems such as violent behavior, depressive symptoms, substance abuse, suicidal ideation or attempts, low self-esteem and difficulties in their relationships (Furr & Funder, 1998; Valois et al., 2009; Valois et al., 2004; Zullig et al., 2001).

Some authors have noted that it is necessary to develop more research on subjective well-being in children and adolescents in developing countries, including Latin America and Chile in particular (Lau et al., 2005; Siyez & Kaya, 2008; Tiliouine et al., 2006; Webb, 2009; Yiengprugsawan et al, 2010). In Chile, in the last decade, efforts have been made to study subjective well-being in childhood and adolescence, notably the First International Survey on Children's Subjective Well-Being (ISCWeB), which reports results from the biggest regions of the country (Oyanedel et al., 2014). This study measured subjective well-being in a sample of 2,572 students aged 9 to 14 years old using the SLSS (Student Life Satisfaction Scale) scale, the BMSLSS (Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale) scale, and the Index of Personal Well-being of School Children (PWI-SC: Personal Well-being Index-School Children) scales.

Subjective well-being during childhood and adolescence can be influenced by different contextual factors, especially the school, given the amount of time students spend in school and the importance of this institution for their lives (Alfaro et al., 2016a, 2016b; Danielsen et al., 2009; Eccles & Roeser, 2010). Moreover, previous studies highlight the importance of everyday school experiences as an important dimension for explaining subjective well-being (González et al., 2021; Huebner et al., 2014; Varela et al., 2017, 2019). A positive school experience can be linked with student achievement and participation (Athay et al., 2012) and also with teacher support and feeling safe at school (Suldo et al., 2006). Suldo et al. (2013) examined the relationship between life satisfaction and school climate using a sample of 461 students in southeastern United States. They found that variables associated with school climate, such as interpersonal relationships, student–teacher relationships, parental support, and order and discipline, have a significant impact on life satisfaction for girls and boys. Conversely, other risk factors from the school such as violent behavior have a negative impact on life satisfaction (Valois et al, 2001, 2006), mental health, and subjective well-being (Olweus & Breivik, 2014).

In addition, several studies have shown that there is an association between school violence, both in the role of victim and perpetrator, and low levels of life satisfaction in adolescents (MacDonald et al., 2005; Proctor et al., 2009; Valois et al, 2001, 2006, 2012). The findings of Kerr et al. (2011) suggest that life satisfaction varies negatively with increasing negative experiences of victimization in school. In their study, in a sample of 1,252 secondary school adolescents, they found an association between school victimization from peers and life satisfaction. The findings of other studies highlight that school violence can have negative consequences on life satisfaction, mental health and even on academic performance of the students (Estévez et al., 2009; Olweus & Breivik, 2014; Valois et al, 2012). A recent study in Chile with adolescents shows that the negative effect on life satisfaction of being a victim of school violence can be explained in part through school satisfaction (Varela et al., 2017). In other cases, it can be moderated by a positive school climate (Varela et al., 2019).

Even though it is known that involvement with school violence, as either a perpetrator or a victim, can have negative consequences on the subjective well-being of adolescents (Estévez et al., 2009; Olweus & Breivik, 2014; Valois et al., 2012), there have been no simultaneous analyses to examine this relationship with Chilean adolescents considering other variables such as gender attitudes. It is essential to evaluate how this phenomenon is presented, including gender attitudes, since their role is not entirely clear. In some circumstances, they could negatively affect subjective well-being (Courtenay, 2000; Kaufman, 1994). In contrast, it can also be hypothesized that they could serve an adaptive function depending on the context, contributing to subjective well-being (e.g., Napier et al., 2010; Vantieghem et al., 2014; Young & Sweeting, 2004).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the degree of association between gender attitudes, school violence and subjective well-being in a sample of Chilean adolescents. Then, our hypotheses are the following: (1) Gender inequitable attitudes will be positively associated with subjective well-being. (2) By incorporating school violence, it will mediate the relationship between gender attitudes and subjective well-being through perpetration and victimization. (3) Finally, perpetration will correlate with victimization.

Method

Sample

The sample of the study was collected as part of The International Survey of Children's Well-Being (ISCWeB) international project in Chile. This project consists of an international investigation about the subjective well-being of children from different socio-cultural backgrounds (Alfaro et al., 2016b). The aim of this project is to collect solid and representative data on the opinions and perceptions of children regarding different dimensions of their lives such as: family, friends, school, use of free time, neighborhood, and perception of themselves, inquiring about their levels of satisfaction with respect to these dimensions (Alfaro et al., 2021; Oyanedel et al., 2014).

Some of the scales used by this international project are the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale: BMSLSS (Seligson et al., 2003); the Student Life Satisfaction Scale: SLSS (Huebner, 1991a); the Personal Well-being Index-School Children: PWI-SC (Cummins & Lau, 2005);

among others. For the present work, we will focus on the analysis of the Chilean adapted version of BMSLSS, and other scales that were added for the Chilean sample in particular: The Gender Equality Scale of Pulerwitz and Barker (2008) and the Victim-Perpetrator of School Violence Scale (Varela et al., 2010), both described in more detail below.

For this study we used a sample of 882 adolescents from the 7th grade in Chile, 48.5% female, with an average age of 12.4 years ($SD = 0.72$), from schools with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and from three Chilean cities (Santiago, Valparaíso and Concepción).

Data Collection

Data were collected using self-report questionnaires completed by the participants. Trained personnel collected the instruments on a regular day of classes. Participants had 45 min to complete the questionnaire. The data were collected from May–June 2017. Participation in the study was voluntary, including the adolescents' consent, the consent of their parents or guardians, and the school principals, ensuring the ethical protection of the participants and following the ethical guidance from the ethical committee of the Universidad del Desarrollo.

Measures

Gender Attitudes

We used an adaptation of the gender equality scale of Pulerwitz and Barker (2008) (Gender-Equitable Men -GEM-scale), which measures gender attitudes, selecting one scale from this larger measure. This scale is based on six items that measure the behavioral expectations associated with gender. The measure is based on a Likert scale reporting the level of agreement with statements about gender behavioral expectations, ranging from 1 "totally disagree" to 4 "totally agree". Examples of items are: "I do not like to see a man behave like a woman", "A man who has more girlfriends is more of a man", "To be a real man you have to be aggressive". The scale presents a good indicator of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.77$), where a higher value indicates more manliness as gender norms.

Victim of School Violence

To measure the perception of being a victim of school violence we used a scale developed in Chile by Varela et al. (2010). This scale consists of 10 items that measure the self-report of being a victim of different types of aggressions during the school year. The measure is based on a Likert scale that ranges from 1 "Never" to 7 "Every day". Examples of items are "How often have you been … Left aside", "Insulted", "Pushed", "Hit". The scale presents a very good indicator of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.85$), where a greater value indicates a greater frequency of being a victim of school violence.

Perpetrator of School Violence

To measure the perception of being a perpetrator of school violence, we used a scale developed in Chile by Varela et al. (2010). This scale was based on 10 items that measure the self-report of being a perpetrator of different types of aggressions during the school year. The measure is based on a Likert scale that ranges from 1 "Never" to 7 "Every day". Examples of items are "How often have you… Bothered", "Threatened", "Pushed", "Hit". The scale presents a very good indicator of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.86$), where a greater value indicates a greater report of being a perpetrator of school violence.

Subjective Well-Being

Finally, to capture subjective well-being, we used a scale adapted in Chile by Alfaro et al. (2015) which captures the multidimensional evaluation of life satisfaction (Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale: BMSLSS, $\alpha = 0.71$; originally developed by Seligson et al., 2003). This measure is based on six items that examine adolescent self-reports of subjective well-being considering different aspects of their lives such as family, friends, school, self and neighborhood. This is a Likert scale that assesses the level of satisfaction reported by participants, ranging from 0 "Completely unsatisfied" to 10 "Completely satisfied". A higher value on the scale indicates greater subjective well-being. Examples of items are: "How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with … Your family life; Your friends; Yourself?" The scale presents a good reliability indicator ($\alpha = 0.72$).

Demographic Variables

We used age and gender as control variables. Gender was dummy coded (1 = male; 2 = female) and age was entered as a numerical variable based on students' self-reported year of birth.

Data Analysis

We used structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses to test the conceptual models using Mplus 6.0. The model was assessed based on chi-square (χ^2), comparative fit index (CFI), and estimated root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) and its 90% confidence interval. As a reference, RMSEA values of 0.05or lower and CFI values > 0.90 typically reflect a reasonably good fit (Kline, 2011). Missing

data was handled using the full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimator in Mplus 6.0 (Byrne, 2012).

Results

Table 1 summarizes descriptive statistics of the study variables. The average levels of gender attitudes were slightly below the midpoint of the scale, representing moderate levels of inequitable gender attitudes. School violence, including both victim and perpetrator roles, had lower levels overall. As expected from the literature, subjective well-being had higher scores. Table 2 shows the correlations among study variables. Sex was related with all other variables, with females reporting more positive gender attitudes, lower levels of victimization and perpetration of violence, but also lower levels of subjective well-being. As expected, gender attitudes were positively negatively related to school violence as a victim and as a perpetrator, which were strongly correlated to each other, and also correlated with subjective well-being in the expected direction.

The structural equation model had an acceptable fit to the data (χ^2 (479) = 1431.004 (= 882, $p < 0.001$), CFI = 0.90, TLI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.05), and explained 8% of the variance in subjective well-being (R2 = 0.08). As can be observed in Fig. 1, more inequitable gender attitudes were

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	M	*SD*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*	*N*	*α*
Sex	1.42	.49	1	2	882	-
Gender Attitudes	1.93	.71	1	4	856	.77
Victim	1.83	.88	1	7	879	.85
Perpetrator	1.52	.70	1	7	871	.86
BMSLSS	8.49	1.45	0	10	880	.72

Sex was coded 1 = Male, 2 = Female

BMSLSS Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale

Table 2 Zero-Order Correlations

Variable	Sex	Gender Attitudes	Victim	Perpetrator	BMSLSS
Sex	-				
Gender Attitudes	-.32**	-			
Victim	-.10**	.13**	-		
Perpetrator	-.16**	.17**	.47**	-	
BMSLSS	-.07*	.08	-.18**	-.15**	-

Sex was coded 1 = Male, 2 = Female

BMSLSS Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

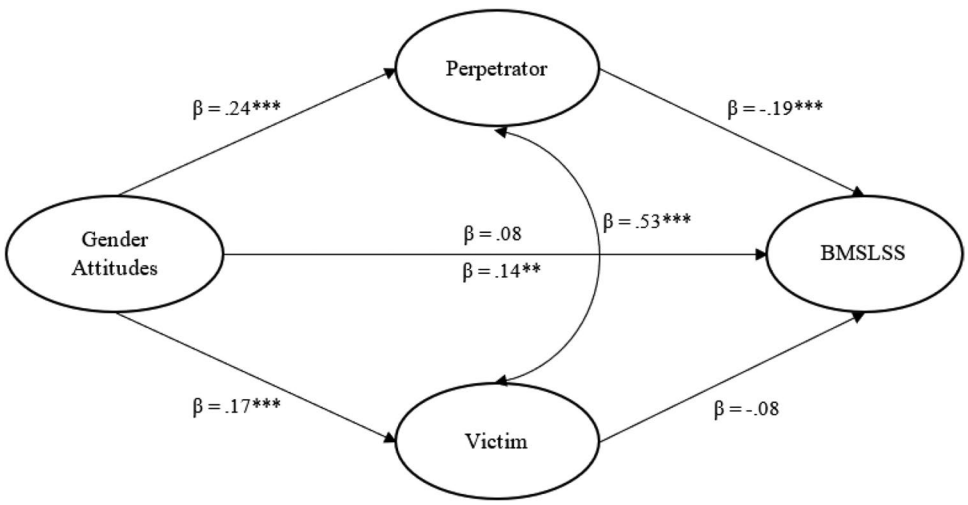

Fig. 1 Structural Equation Model: Gender Attitudes Predicting Subjective Well-being, Mediated by Perpetrator and Victim Roles. *Note.* The value above the arrow from gender attitudes to BMSLSS represents the total effect (c), while the value below the arrow represents the direct or unmediated effect (c'). The model also includes sex as a statistical control variable. ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

predictive of higher frequency of school violence, both as a victim (β = 0.17, p < 0.001) and victimizer (β = 0.24, p < 0.001). Self-reported frequency aggression predicted in turn lower levels of subjective well-being (β = -0.19, p < 0.001), but this was not the case for higher levels of victimization (β = -0.08, p = 0.118). Rather surprisingly, the direct effect of gender attitudes on subjective well-being was also statistically significant, indicating that—after controlling for school violence—inequitable gender attitudes predict higher levels of subjective well-being (β = 0.14, p = 0.001).

In order to clarify the relation between gender attitudes and subjective well-being, it is helpful to separate its total effect into the respective indirect and direct components. The result for this analysis is available in Table 3. The total effect of gender attitudes on subjective well-being is the same as their bivariate correlation, and it does not reach statistical significance (β = 0.08, p = 0.062). Our results here are an example of statistical suppression, where a non-significant path becomes significant once the mediators are included in the model (MacKinnon et al., 2000; Tzelgov & Henik, 1991). The indirect effect via school violence was statistically significant, and negative (β = -0.06, p < 0.001), indicating that inequitable gender attitudes are predictive of lower levels of subjective well-being because they are associated with an increase in school violence. When looking at the specific indirect effects, we see that this is because of increased frequency in the role of aggressor (β = -0.05, p = 0.001) rather than increased victimization (β = -0.01, p = 0.143). On the other hand, whenever inequitable gender norms are not associated with more school violence, they indeed predict higher levels of subjective well-being (direct effect: β = 0.14, p = 0.001).

Discussion

Most generally, our results provide confirmation for the association between gender attitudes, school violence, and adolescents' subjective well-being, highlighting that perpetration behaviors can explain the negative relationship between inequitable gender attitudes and subjective well-being. Although the association between gender inequitable attitudes and school violence is confirmed, we found that school violence is negative associated with subjective well-being only for the perpetrator. On the other hand, we also found a suppression effect for the relation between inequitable gender attitudes and adolescents' subjective well-being: as long as inequitable gender attitudes don't lead to violent behaviors it may have a positive influence on subjective well-being.

Along with corroborating the hypothesis of the relationship between inequitable gender attitudes and well-being, it is noteworthy that the study shows the distinctive effect on the perpetrator. Other studies with adolescents have shown inequitable gender attitudes are negatively associated with the exercise of violence (Jewkes et al., 2015) and positively associated with well-being (Napier et al., 2010; Vantieghem et al., 2014; Young & Sweeting, 2004). The above corroborates that gender attitudes are related to positive mental health. Being relevant to well-being, the distinctive effect on the perpetrator and the exercise of violence should highlight the need to develop preventive actions explicitly targeting this group. A more comprehensive interventional approach with perpetrators has not addressed these types of problems (Amin et al., 2018; Dworkin et al., 2015).

We can hypothesize that inequitable gender attitudes affect adolescent experience when associated with school violence, with a maladaptive manifestation of the developmental trajectory of children and adolescents (Huesmann & Kirwil, 2007; Vitaro et al., 2006). Conversely, inequitable gender attitudes and beliefs may also fulfill an adaptive function depending on the specific social context in which adolescents develop.

One way to understand these results is that according to System Justification Theory: most people support beliefs that justify the system, maintaining the status quo, given the existence of dispositional and situational factors that stimulate the propensity to reduce uncertainty and threat. This contributes to a greater motivation for maintaining conservative beliefs that justify the system and a decreased adherence to beliefs that challenge the system, and in this way the subjects maintain and shape a reality shared with others (Jost et al., 2008; Napier et al., 2010).

In this way, it is expected to find good levels of subjective well-being in adolescents when they show inequitable gender attitudes if the context in which they develop supports inequality, a phenomenon which can be explained by the adolescents' adherence to conservative beliefs in order to maintain the feeling of belonging to a shared and coherent reality, including the feeling of being integrated and accepted, thus avoiding being discriminated against. In addition, these results may be expected, especially when

Table 3 Subjective Well-being Predicted by Gender Attitudes: Standardized Total, Total Indirect, Specific Indirect, and Direct Effects of the Model

	β	*SE*	*p*
Total	.08	.04	.062
Total Indirect	-.06	.01	< .001
Specific Indirect			
via Victim	-.01	.01	.143
via Perpetrator	-.05	.01	.001
Direct (not mediated)	.14	.04	.001

the hallmarks of normalized masculinity—hypermasculine identification, athletics, fighting, distance from homosexuality, dominant relationships with girls, socioeconomic status, and disdain for academics—do not include alternative ways to build cultural capital when young men do not fit into a more rigid traditional social structure (Klein, 2006).

Although we must consider cultural and societal transformation in order to address gender inequity, firstly it is necessary to explore the values of each society and how people rationalize inequality. For instance, Napier and Jost (2008) found that the rationalization of inequality is linked to greater levels of subjective well-being. In another multinational longitudinal study, it was found that the relationships between life satisfaction and hostile/benevolent justifications of gender inequalities are moderated by the degree of gender inequality at the national level. In relatively egalitarian nations, those who endorse justifications for "complementarity" of genders have higher scores in life satisfaction compared to those that support "hostile" justifications of inequalities, while in countries with high gender inequality there are no differences in life satisfaction between those who support the hostile justifications of gender inequality and those who show complementary justifications. Finally, it was concluded that the justification of a socio-cultural system of gender inequality has palliative effects on the discomfort that could result from the discordance between societal values of gender equality and an inequitable system (Napier et al., 2010).

The results of this study allow us to highlight the importance of the school as an immediate context in which inequitable beliefs about gender and about violence affecting adolescent experiences are reproduced. According to the Theory of Masculinities and the deployment of gender cultures among peers, it is possible to argue that students "make gender" in everyday school life (Vantieghem et al., 2014). Although there is scarce literature linking gender attitudes and school context, let alone literature incorporating the experiences of violence and adolescent well-being, there is evidence that provides an approach to understand the importance of including gender attitudes in the school environment and in subjective well-being. A study developed by Vantieghem et al. (2014) found that the existing gap in academic self-efficacy, in addition to relating to the sex of the students is also related to their gender self-perception, where women who had a high self-perception score of femininity also had high scores in self-efficacy, and men with high scores in self-perception of masculinity had considerably higher scores in academic self-efficacy. On the other hand, men and women who perceived themselves as gender atypical presented lower results in academic self-efficacy, which would be explained by the lower subjective well-being that these students presented. Therefore, it is necessary to include in the educational context interventions aimed to reduce gender inequality among youth.

Given the relationship between gender attitudes, school violence and subjective well-being, it is necessary to highlight the importance of including, in adolescent issues, the subjective well-being evaluation, as well as considering its results in the design of interventions. The study and development of measures of life satisfaction allows for the evaluation of the effects of applied policies (Veenhoven, 2002), providing information to prevent, detect and intervene in various social problems (Seligson et al., 2005), and allowing to enrich the programs and services aimed at providing support and resources to those who need it (Tomyn & Cummins, 2011a). Having data on life satisfaction of different social groups or collectives is essential in order to empirically validate the conditions necessary for a good quality of life (Veenhoven, 1994). Within these groups, the study of subjective well-being in childhood and adolescence has directed its attention to new areas of subjective well-being, including satisfaction with services and with different areas of life based on the perceptions, evaluations and aspirations of the children and adolescents themselves (Casas, 2010).

Practical Implications

The present article provided evidence on the differentiated effects of gender attitudes on subjective well-being in adolescents: demonstrating that, as long as they did not contribute to increasing school violence, gender attitudes present a positive association with subjective well-being. By contrast, if gender attitudes are related to higher levels of perpetration of violence, the relationship with subjective well-being becomes negative. The results show a complex phenomenon influenced by variables of multiple levels: gender attitudes influenced by culture, social norms, family values and dynamics, violence at the school context level, among others. Thus, advancing in gender equity, without undermining the subjective well-being of adolescents, requires addressing the problem from an ecological perspective, intervening coherently from the forms of social organization, the belief system, attitudes and cultural representations around gender, considering structural factors such as local politics, social services and media, among others, as these affect the everyday environments where power relations develop, and even intervene in the immediate contexts in which children and adolescents develop, such as the family, the relationship with peers and the school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

It is fundamental to prevent school violence and its association with inequitable gender attitudes, considering that the course of maladaptive development of aggression involves individual and environmental factors, since the context, through socialization, succeeds in influencing childrens' and adolescents' predisposition to violence (Bandura,

1977; Huesmann & Kirwil, 2007). In the case of preadolescent men, there is evidence that prevention programs have an impact on modifying gender attitudes; however, the evidence is not robust in terms of its effect at the behavioral level, without reporting significant results in the reduction of the exercise of violence (Amin et al., 2018). In a review of 31 evaluated programs of attitude modification and gender norms, changes in attitudes are reported but behavioral changes were much lower (John et al., 2017). This may be due to the fact that, contrary to what the classical conceptual models suggest about the relationship between attitudes and behavior, the relationship between attitude and behavior is not always direct or linear, and it is possible that there are other types of relationships, for example, reciprocal or reverse (behavior determines attitude) (Ajzen, 2015). In addition, considering that the intention of behavior is influenced by subjective norms, which in turn are affected by beliefs about the level of social pressure to perform the behavior (Kroesen et al., 2017), it is possible that the change in attitudes does not lead directly to the change in behaviors, if these behaviors have an adaptive value in the social environment. This is why a multilevel approach is relevant to intervene, including strategies that aim to transform school contexts so that they value gender equality. One intervention with positive results is the Stepping Stones program, which is carried out with young people in schools (30 to 50 h) (Gibbs et al., 2017a, 2017b). This program explicitly addresses norms, attitudes, behaviors and relationships associated with constructions of gender.

Regarding subjective well-being, although there are studies that show that the implementation of interventions in childhood and adolescence can contribute to a healthy development, only a few studies correspond to interventions focused on increasing subjective well-being and ones that are validated empirically, being even more limited in the Latin American context (Sarriera et al, 2017). In addition, although sociodemographic studies have contributed to examining the progress of the regions and countries in matters of development and subjective well-being of its inhabitants, there is still a need to think about the collection and availability of better data regarding all areas that affect the life of adolescents, including new methodological perspectives in the study of childhood in order to have a better understanding of subjective well-being and of aspects that in terms of rights need to be strengthened (Ben-Arieh, 2008). Included within the relevant domains for evaluating subjective well-being in childhood and adolescence are indicators associated with interpersonal relationships and with the community (Sarriera et al., 2017), therefore, studying school subjective well-being, associated with interpersonal relationships that happen within it, is necessary, including its relationship with adaptive and maladaptive trajectories of development. According to Ben-Arieh (2008), the absence of problems or failures in behavioral terms does not indicate the correct growth and success in the development, since the positive results in children and adolescents are not static but derive from a set of environmental resources and factors, including school and friendships, and factors linked to evolutionary capacities where both levels are actively combined in the creation of subjective well-being.

Given the above, there is an evident need to evaluate and intervene in adolescent problems and experiences from a multilevel ecological perspective, including the association between gender attitudes, school violence and subjective well-being as derived from the results of this study. Specifically, there is a need for future studies to investigate the development of violent behavior in schools and their association with inequitable gender beliefs and attitudes, as well as to address the developmental trajectories that result in being a victim and/or perpetrator of school violence and its association with gender inequity, highlighting the role that the environment plays in both trajectories.

Despite these results, the study has some limitations worth noting. The analyses performed are based on cross-sectional data, which limits in part our conclusions regarding the causal associations between the variables. Future studies could examine this association over time. Another limitation is that the data come from an urban school population, which cannot necessarily be extrapolated to other contexts, either rural or less populated cities and towns. This could be part of future studies since it is possible to find cultural variables, such as *machismo*, more present in this context, and that are thus associated with more violent behavior. Another limitation of the study is that other social and cultural variables, such as socioeconomic status, parental educational level or ethnicity, have not been controlled. By not having this information it was not possible to add them to the analysis. Future studies could incorporate these variables. Finally, the gender attitudes scale used has not been used previously with the preadolescent population in Chile, which should be considered. However, the structural equations allow to correct the measurement error which allows to control this possible limitation, and the psychometric properties of the scale were good in this study. Future studies could continue to examine the behavior of this scale. Despite these limitations our study contributes to the literature by evidencing an association between gender beliefs and violent school behaviors, both for Chilean adolescent victims and perpetrators, and its relation with lower subjective well-being.

Authors' contributions All authors contributed to different parts of the study. Material preparation, data collection were performed by Jorge Varela and Jaime Alfaro. The design and analysis were done by Jorge Varela, Paulina Sánchez and Pablo De Tezanos-Pinto. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Francisco Aguayo and Constanza

González, and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read edited and approved the final manuscript.

Funding This research was supported by FONDECYT Regular N° 1180607, CONICYT, Chile.

Data Availability The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available due ethical restrictions but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declarations

Consent to Participate Participation in the study was voluntary, through the adolescents' consent, their parents or guardians, and the school principals, ensuring the ethical protection of the participants following the ethical guidance from the ethical committee of the Universidad del Desarrollo, Chile.

Conflict of Interest The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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