

Children's life satisfaction

- Last two decades an increasing amount of publications on the evolution of adolescents' life satisfaction and satisfaction with life domains between 12 and 16 have appeared and data has immediately been used as well-being indicators in international reports.
- First publications, with 4, 5, 6 o 7-point scales, mainly from some states in the USA, reported not to find significant age differences during this period of life. However, evidence that answers to subjective well-being questions do not follow a normal distribution, brought many authors to use more sensitive scales, i.e.: 11-point scales.
- There is increasing evidence that satisfaction with life and with most life domains continuously decrease during adolescence in different countries.
- Does it happen in all countries?

Empirical evidence (I)											
Publicat	Publication Instrument Sample										
authors	year	name	author	N=	ages	country					
Petito & Cummins	2000	ComQol-S5 11-point	Cummins (1997)	279	12-17	Australia					
Ullman & Tatar	2001	SLSS 4-point	Huebner (1991)	254	12-18	Israel					
Bradford et al.	2002	QOLPAV 5-point	Raphael et al. (1996)	899	12-16	England					
Chang et al.	2003	MSLSS 6-point	Huebner (1994)	189	7-14	Hong-Kong					
Park	2005	MSLSS 6-point SLSS 6-point	Huebner (1994) Huebner (1991)	736	10-17	S. Korea					
Tomyn & Cummins	2011	PWI-SC 11-point	Cummins & Lau (2005)	351	12-10	Australia					
Uusitalo- Malmivaara	2014	Subjective Happiness Scale 7-point	Lyubomirsky & Lepper (1999)	339	12-15	Finland					

Publication Instrument Sample											
authors	year	name	author	N=	ages	country					
Goldbeck et al.	2007	FLZ 5-point	Henrich & Herschbach (2000)	1,274	11-16	Germany					
Casas et al.	2007	OLS 11-point + 19 satisfaction items	Campbell, Converse & Rogers (1976)	1,634 + 1,618	12-16	Spain					
Casas, Sarriera et al. Currie et al.	2012 2012	PWI, SWLS, BMSLSS, OLS, HOL. 11-point Cantril Ladder	Cummins, Diener, Huebner, & C.C. & Rogers Cantril (1965)	2,900+ 1,588+ 843 About 1500 x country	12-16 12-16 14-16 11-13- 15	Spain Brazil Chile 39 countries					
Casas, Tiliouine & Figuer	2013	PWI 11-point	Cummins, Eckersley, Pallant, et al. (2003)	1,156+ 2,304	13-20	Algeria Spain					









Research challenges

- Why satisfaction with life and with most life domains continuously decrease during adolescence in most countries?
- Are adults or our adults' societies responsible for this phenomena somehow?
- Has it always been like that?
- Can this tendency be changed?
- The trend is similar among boys than among girls?
- Does the trend starts at 12 years of age?

Country	Total	8 yo	10 yo	12 yo	Female	Male
Algeria (Western)	3676	1244	1149	1283	48%	52%
Colombia (Antioquia)	2816	902	939	975	51%	49%
Estonia	3119	1076	1014	1029	48%	52%
Ethiopia	2877	953	944	980	50%	50%
Germany	3009	1056	1101	852	52%	48%
Israel	2777	886	988	903	52%	48%
Nepal	2953	975	983	995	50%	50%
Norway	2864	930	960	974	53%	47%
Poland (Wielkopolska)	3157	1021	1119	1017	48%	52%
Romania	4115	1249	1359	1507	48%	52%
S. Africa (W Cape)	3188	996	1061	1131	52%	48%
South Korea	7467	2432	2438	2597	52%	48%
Spain (Catalonia)	3801	1032	1057	1712	48%	52%
Turkey (Istanbul)	3024	959	1047	1018	52%	48%
UK (England)	3298	990	989	1319	50%	50%
Total	53164	17259	17613	18292	50%	50%

Children's Worlds 2nd wave database











Sample of 4 consecutive years (Catalonia)												
		1st data	year colle	r of ction		4th year of data collection						
	5	6	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	2	TOTAL
	Prim	Prim	ESO	ESO	ESO	ESO	ESO	ESO	ESO	Bach	Bach	TOTAL
Cohort 1	89	0	0	0	0	6	83	0	0	0	0	89
Cohort 2	0	82	0	0	0	0	2	80	0	0	0	82
Cohort 3	0	0	113	0	0	0	0	10	103	0	0	113
Cohort 4	0	0	0	33	0	0	0	0	3	30	0	33
Cohort 5	0	0	0	0	41	0	0	0	1	5	35	41
Total	89	82	113	33	41	6	85	90	107	35	35	358







Longitudinal data: Overall 4-year sample

940 students mainly 10 to 15 year-olds distributed into five different cohorts according to the school year in which they were enrolled at the beginning of the study

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
1 st cohort	27	144	6	0	0	0	0	0	177
2 nd cohort	0	16	134	4	0	0	0	0	154
3 rd cohort	0	0	27	192	10	0	0	0	229
4 th cohort	0	0	0	21	137	16	0	0	174
5 th cohort	0	0	0	0	30	154	21	1	206
Total	27	160	167	217	177	170	21	1	940
	(2.9%)	(17%)	(17.8%)	(23.1%)	(18.8%)	(18.1%)	(2.2%)	(.1%)	
			_		Boy		Girl		Total
				1 st cohort	74		103		177
					(17.83%)		(19.62%)		
				2 nd cohort	88		66		154
					(21.20%)		(12,57%)		
				3 rd cohort	93		136	5	229
					(22.4	1%)	(25.90)%)	
				4 th cohort	69		105		174
					(16.6	3%)	(20%	6)	
				5 th cohort	91		115		206
					(21.9	3%)	(21.90)%)	
				Total	415		525		940
					(100)%)	(1009	%)	
			-						

Results: Not all children display an increase in SWB from 1st to 2nd year

OLS % of cases Boys Girls Total Increase 21 21.9 21.5 37.6 Remaining the same 38.8 38.3 Decrease 41.5 39.2 40.2 HOL % of cases Girls Total Boys 16.5 18.4 Increase 21.1 **Remaining the same** 42.1 41.6 41.8 36.8 41.9 39.7 Decrease









Discussion (I)

- At macro-level, a decreasing trend in subjective wellbeing is observed in the adolescence years in most countries in the world.
- This trend is not equally captured by all available SWB assessment instruments. The measurement of SWB in children and adolescents is sensitive to the scale used. The use of two or more scales is recommended in any research on SWB.
- Available data suggest the trend starts to be significant from 10 years of age on.
- The age at which the decrease stops seems to be dependent on the socio-cultural context. In countries such as Brazil data available suggest it ends at about 15, in Spain at about 17 or 18, while in countries like Algeria and Romania, it is still decreasing at 18. External factors (i.e.: transition to post-compulsory education in Catalonia) seem to have an influence in this trend.

Discussion (II)

- The trend is gender sensitive: the decreasing path-way is different among boys than among girls (González et al., 2016). In industrialized countries the decrease in boys is more influenced by school satisfaction and in girls by satisfaction with self-image. However, pathways may "compensate" overall scores in some way, because no significant gender differences are observed at macrolevel in many samples.
- At micro-level, the trend seems to be non-linear and nonhomogeneous. Data from longitudinal research show that important percentages of children do not display any decrease in a one-year period - their SWB remains stable or even increases on many occasions from year to year, although differences observed may depend on the instrument used.

Discussion (III)

- When using a satisfaction approach (the single-item OLS scale) in a Spanish longitudinal sample (5 cohorts aged 9 to 16), the highest percentage (41.5%) of responses corresponded to those adolescents whose scores had decreased in a one-year period, while 21% had scores that had increased (Gonzalez et al., 2016).
- In contrast, when we used a happiness approach (the single-item HOL scale) the highest percentage (42.1%) corresponded to those participants displaying scores that had remained the same, while 36.8% had decreased and 21.1% had increased.
- These results reinforce the idea that OLS and HOL do not measure exactly the same construct, a result that is in line with other studies (Casas, 2012).

Discussion (IV)

- Variables contributing to an increase in OLS or HOL are not necessarily the same as those contributing to their decrease. Theoretical models explaining SWB should take all of them into account.
- Greater data collection in more countries is still necessary to better understand this phenomenon, and in order to evaluate interventions for improving SWB in children and adolescents.