

Children's Well-Being: Indicators and Research 24

Tobia Fattore
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Children's Concepts of Well-being

Challenges in International Comparative
Qualitative Research

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Children's Well-Being: Indicators and Research

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Chapter 11

Continuities and Discontinuities of Experiences of Well-Being at School in Chilean Adolescents of Different Socioeconomic Statuses



Jaime Alfaro, Lorena Ramírez-Casas del Valle, Carolina Aspillaga, and Patricia Easton

11.1 Introduction

Over the last decades there has been a growing interest and progress in studies of subjective well-being in childhood and adolescence (Savahl et al. 2015), according to the guidelines of different international bodies (OECD 2013; UNICEF 1990) which emphasize that for the development of policies and programs directed towards the child and adolescent population, it is necessary to expand the well-being and life satisfaction knowledge levels of the subjects of these policies. It is encouraged that nations consider children and adolescents as rights holders, protected by the International United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (UNICEF 1990). Declared as part of this Convention are, amongst others, the rights of children to be heard and taken into account, as well as to be able to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. This breaks away from concepts of the child having no voice

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and the adult being the only interpreter of his/her needs; and moves towards concepts that assign increasingly more importance to the voices of children and adolescents as a valid expression of their interests and opinions (Vergara et al. 2015). Due to this, it is important to generate new knowledge, taking into consideration children's own experiences and subjectivities (Fattore et al. 2007; Gómez and Alzate 2014) as a way to prioritize and promote their well-being (Ben-Arieh and Goerge 2001).

This has also gained momentum within the educational field where different orientations have been developing which aim at formulating educational policies that favor the promotion of the well-being of children at school. These shifts acknowledge that this is a dimension of great relevance which has not been sufficiently considered in regards to the impact on the living conditions of childhood and adolescence, as well as in regards to the educational success or failure (UNDP 2012). Considering this background, this chapter aims to contribute to the field by presenting results from our study of the experiences of well-being at school for Chilean adolescents of different socioeconomic status, delving into variation in continuity and discontinuity of their well-being at school, according to the characteristics of the relationships they experience on a daily basis in their school contexts.

11.2 School Reality in Chile

In Chile, there exists great socioeconomic inequality, which implies and generates conditions of great diversity in the child population. There are significant inequalities in economic and sociocultural terms, that are replicated in the educational system in structural and operational terms (OECD 2010) as well as in social relations and daily existence. In this regard, an important characteristic to point out is that there coexist three types of school establishments in the country: (a) Municipal Establishments (ME), which are of a public nature and are financed by a *voucher* system provided by the State; (b) Subsidized Private Establishments (SPE), which up to 2015 (derived from the Inclusion Law 20.845) had a mixed provision but which, since the enactment of this law, must gradually stop demanding co-payment from families and thus will only be financed with contributions from the State; and (c) Paid Private Establishments (PPE) which do not receive any type of contribution from the State (Ascorra et al. 2015).

This tripartite system has had multiple effects, amongst which is educational segregation. Educational segregation manifests in a marked concentration of students of low socioeconomic status (SES) in the ME, whilst students of medium SES usually attend the SPE, and students of high SES are concentrated in the PPE, thus producing "a homogenization of students' according to sociodemographic characteristics" (Ascorra et al. 2015, p. 66). This is an issue that generates inequalities in educational quality, and it maintains and reproduces important degrees of social segregation (Murillo and Martínez 2017).

At the same time, there also exists segregation within the schools, between the classrooms and between the groups of students within the same classroom (Treviño et al. 2016). This segregation is produced by grouping students according to their

learning abilities and their performance, with consequent implications on students' social-emotional development (Braddock and Slavin 1995; Mizala et al. 2007; Treviño et al. 2014). This differentiated distribution of students based on socioeconomic conditions, together with the practices of internal segregation, indicates that life at school is not the same for all children and that therefore it is relevant that the study of their well-being, and of the conditions associated with it, be addressed by considering these particularities.

11.3 Subjective Well-Being of Boys and Girls at School

Subjective well-being is defined primarily as a general concept that includes the cognitive and affective evaluations that people make with respect to their lives, the events that affect their lives and the circumstances in which they live (Diener 2006). The cognitive element refers to perceptions and evaluations of overall satisfaction and life satisfaction in specific areas, whilst the affective element refers to positive and negative affect (Petito and Cummins 2000).

At an international level, quantitative studies point to a significant relationship between satisfaction with school and overall satisfaction with life (Do Santos et al. 2013), an issue that makes this area very relevant in the lives of children. However, the study by Huebner and colleagues (2014) shows that children's satisfaction with their experiences at school has a statistically significant, yet modest, correlation in comparison with other areas such as family and friends. These results are consistent with the findings of another study of well-being in childhood in Chile, by Alfaro and colleagues (2016). On the other hand, a study by Navarro and colleagues (2015) with Spanish children found that the perception of the educational system is more related to a feeling of dissatisfaction, which is possibly related to stress and pressure.

Regarding the relationship between the school and the students' well-being, the literature highlights that the participation of parents, the behavior of the student, the school context and atmosphere, and relationships with teachers and amongst peers, are all associated with well-being (Huebner et al. 2014; García et al. 2014). In the same way, the findings of studies suggest that adolescents who perceive more social support, from teachers and classmates, have a greater perception of school competence, which in turn is related to greater subjective well-being at school (Alcantara et al. 2016; Cuadros and Berger 2016; Tian et al. 2015).

In Chile, a study carried out with children aged 8, 10 and 12 years, showed differences in overall satisfaction with life and satisfaction at school, by school vulnerability (measured using the School Vulnerability Index—SVI),¹ gender and type of school dependency (Alfaro et al. 2016). Considering this, children with a

¹The School Vulnerability Index shows the condition of children at school, which results from the interaction of a multiplicity of risk and protective factors of a social, economic, psychological, cultural, environmental and/or biological nature (JUNAEB 2005).

medium SVI present greater overall satisfaction with life than those with low SVI; girls show greater satisfaction at school; and boys and girls from municipal establishments show a higher level of satisfaction at school in comparison to those from Subsidized Private and Paid Private Establishments (Alfaro et al. 2016). These findings provide a basis for the importance of beginning to understand the differences in the conditions associated with well-being between each of these school contexts.

11.4 Relevance of the Voices of Boys, Girls and Adolescents

Sociology of childhood emphasizes that children should be subjects and not only objects of study, with the right to participate on topics that concern them (Gaitán 2006; Gómez and Alzate 2014). Studying children and adolescents as rights holders implies analytically recognizing and acknowledging that childhood is “. . . a socially constructed reality, which as such presents historical and culturally determined variations through a set of mandates, guidelines and rules of behavior that match the way of being a child at a specific moment in time. . .” (Gaitán 2006, p. 10).

Within this framework, qualitative methodology has, in recent years, become relevant as a research approach in the field of childhood, in which a prominent and shared aspect has been the recognition of children as valid informants and active participants in the research process, acknowledging the importance of considering their knowledge, opinions, attitudes and perceptions regarding the issues that affect them. This methodological framework is also used to ask children for advice regarding the improvement of subjective measures of well-being (for example, see Casas et al. 2012). Doek (2014) states that participation itself in these instances contributes to the well-being of the child, considering that it stimulates and promotes the development of participation skills in individual and collective decision-making processes. At the same time, the recognition of the child’s right to be heard can reinforce their sense of self-esteem and empowerment.

This methodological framework has also led to research in the area to be increasingly focused on the study of perceptions, assessments, and/or the meaning of well-being, as well as on the understanding of the dynamics that affect it (Fattore et al. 2007, 2009). Along these lines, Casas and Bello (2012) point to the importance of qualitative research as it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of child and adolescent well-being. In line with this approach, this study recognizes the importance of qualitatively studying the subjective well-being of boys, girls and adolescents, considering their own cultural and socioeconomic conditions as well as their micro school contexts.

11.5 Experience as an Object of Study

According to Larrosa (2011), experience is that which “happens to me” and which is linked to the presence of events external to the subject but which at the same time happens to it; the subject itself being the place which observes and which is being observed. Thus, to understand experiences it is necessary to understand the meaning that the actors attribute to their lived events (Guzmán and Saucedo 2015); these being central to the process in which lived events become shaped into experiences (Sánchez and Renzi 2012).

Within the tradition of the sociology of experience of Dubet and Danilo (1998), interest in experience as an object of study is linked to the epistemological decision to incorporate the subjective dimension of actors and subjects, in order to go beyond the external analysis of the system’s functions (Sánchez and Renzi 2012). Dubet also highlights the importance of considering the social and contextual correlates from which experiences arise (Guzmán and Saucedo 2015).

In the field of education, through the study of school experiences, one can ask what it is that the school produces. Given that at present in school there are a multiplicity of relationships unfolding amongst individuals and within the institution, the study of school experiences allows us to account for how actors, in this case adolescents, construct their experiences and, at the same time, as part of these constructions, both the system and the actors themselves are reproduced (Sánchez and Renzi 2012).

The study of experiences, lived events and meanings related to school, allows us to understand children’s and adolescents’ subjective links with school, considering the former as subjects of experience and not only as receivers of the educational system (Guzmán and Saucedo 2015). Based on this background, this research investigates the continuities and discontinuities of adolescents’ satisfaction and dissatisfaction experiences at school, considering the particularities of the participants’ socioeconomic status.

11.6 Method

11.6.1 *Methodological Approach*

The present study is of a qualitative nature (Denman and Haro 2002), being descriptive-exploratory research. This work is aimed at describing the experiences of well-being (satisfaction and dissatisfaction) and associated relational dimensions, placing focus on the interpretations made by the subjects, in so far as they account for the relationships that they have established throughout their lives (Arcila et al. 2010). The use of a qualitative method in this study allows for approaching reality from the voices or perspectives of those who produce it, considering subjectivity as a valid instrument to understand life and human practices (Gurdián-Fernández 2007).

Table 11.1 Sample characterization

School no.	Type of establishment	SES	Geographic area	Group interviews	Female	Male
1	Municipal	Low	Coquimbo	2	6	6
2	Subsidized private	Low	Santiago	2	6	8
3	Subsidized private	Medium	Valparaíso	2	5	6
4	Subsidized private	Medium	Santiago	2	6	6
5	Private	High	Santiago	2	3	5
6	Municipal	Low	Temuco	2	6	5
Total				12	32	36

Source: Own elaboration

11.6.2 *Participants*

This study involved 68 adolescents between the ages of 11 and 14 years, belonging to 6 educational establishments located in different geographical locations in Chile. The sampling strategy was of an intentional type (Patton 1990). The sample criteria were:

- (a) Boys and girls studying in the sixth and eighth grades, whose ages ranged between 11 and 14;
- (b) Boys and girls belonging to the different types of school establishments indicated earlier, and who are also from different socioeconomic statuses, determined by use of the vulnerability criteria defined by SVI-SINAE (JUNAEB 2005); and
- (c) Equitable participation of male and female participants was sought.

The number of participants by sample characteristics is presented in Table 11.1.

A total of 12 two-hour group interviews were carried out with the participation of 5–8 children in each group. The groups were segmented by SES (according to the SVI of each school) and by locality, with 6 low SES group interviews, 4 medium SES interviews and 2 medium-high SES ones, with students in the sixth and eighth year of Primary Education from schools in Santiago and in region areas of Chile.

11.6.3 *Fieldwork Procedures*

An authorization to carry out the study was requested from all the directors of the school establishments, whilst at the same time active informed consent was requested from each of the parents and guardians of the participating children. Also, a presentation was made to these children about the objectives of the study, at which time they were invited to participate voluntarily by letting us know if they wanted to attend the group interviews. Only children who had the informed consent of the father, mother or guardian participated. The letter of consent and text of the

informed assent were previously approved by the Ethics Committee of the Universidad Central de Chile, the sponsoring institution of the study.

11.6.4 Fieldwork Tools

Fieldwork involved the group interview technique in which 5–8 students participated in each group. Group interviews allow for an environment that is less artificial than a one-to-one interview, resulting in the information collected having a high ecological validity (Willig 2008).

As a data production tool, a methodology was designed based on a guideline to investigate experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction at school, including group performances which were incorporated in order to facilitate the boys' and girls' expression. For the performances, the procedure used was to subdivide each group into pairs or trios and then ask them to act out to the rest of the participants situations they like and dislike about their experience at school (Ramírez-Casas del Valle and Alfaro-Inzunza 2018; Ramírez et al. 2018). After each performance, using a semi-structured interview, a subgroup conversation was encouraged around two questions: what situation did they act out and why did they feel good/bad in that situation? Based on their comments we encouraged conversation with the rest of the group, considering the following questions: (1) Have similar or very different things happened to you?; and (2) How did you feel when this happened? All the interviews were recorded using a digital dictaphone and were subsequently transcribed.

11.6.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of the information collected in the group interviews was carried out according to the thematic analysis method (Mieles-Barrera et al. 2012). Firstly, an initial revision of the texts produced and transcribed was carried out without a distinction made by SES, which allowed for the first analysis of emergent topics in relation to the experiences that the participants considered satisfactory and unsatisfactory concerning their school life. Afterwards, coding separated by SES were carried out, which allowed for the information to be organized into groups of the same meaning. In the third phase, searches were conducted for categories-themes that were similar and different between SES groups, which allowed us to generate information in regards to the research questions. After these initial analyses, re-coding was done in order to construct the dimensions, categories and subcategories differentiated by SES, which detailed in the results.

11.7 Results

The results have been organized in four dimensions which include: the participants: interpersonal links at school; the teaching-learning environment; physical space; and adolescents' agency. Categories and subcategories differentiated by socioeconomic status are described in Table 11.2.

11.7.1 Interpersonal Links at School

For participants of all socioeconomic statuses, the quality of interpersonal relationships is an important element associated with their experiences of school satisfaction

Table 11.2 Summary dimensions, categories and subcategories by socioeconomic status

Dimension	Categories	Subcategories		
		High SES	Medium SES	Low SES
Interpersonal links at school	Link with classmates	To meet and share	To meet and share	To meet and share
		Support and companionship	Support and companionship	Support and companionship
			Loyalty	Loyalty
			Absence of violence and mistreatment	Absence of violence and mistreatment
	Link with teachers	Emotional support and teacher commitment	To be understood by teachers	Teacher support and help
				To be respected and not mistreated by teachers
Teaching-learning environment	Teaching methods	Participatory classes	Respect for the learning pace	Fun and entertaining teaching
		Good working atmosphere in the classroom	No references	No references
				Absence of being told off and shouted at
Physical space	Recreation and sports equipment	No references	No references	Absence of disorder in class
				Recreation and sports equipment
	Good infrastructure conditions			Good infrastructure conditions
Adolescents' agency	Autonomy and freedom	Respected in their decisions	Absence of uniformity	Surveillance at school

Source: Own elaboration

or dissatisfaction. Both the link with classmates and with teachers are of specific relevance. However, the particular dimensions which differentiate these links show variations amongst adolescents belonging to the different socio-economic groups studied. The categories of links with classmates, links with teachers and subcategories differentiated by socioeconomic status, are described below.

11.7.1.1 Links with Classmates

In regards to the links amongst classmates and their experiences of well-being, it is possible to observe both common elements amongst the participants of different socioeconomic status and experiences that are only highlighted in the stories of adolescents of middle and lower socioeconomic status.

To Meet and Share

Having the opportunity to meet and share with friends and classmates is a relevant element for all the participants of the study, in all socioeconomic contexts. The possibility provided by the school space, as a place to meet, perform activities and have fun with classmates, is valued positively. The following quotes illustrate this by showing that when consulted about positive aspects of their school life, the importance of meeting and having fun with classmates and friends emerges:

P: I like the part that you meet new people, you make new friends and new experiences and you have a good time. (Medium-high SES, 8th grade, Santiago)

I: What is the best part about school? In regards to school, what do you like most about school? P: To play with classmates. (Medium SES, 6th grade, Santiago)

I: What do you like about school or about coming to school?

P7: Being with my friends.

I1: Ok, what else?

P7: To see my other friends that I have in other courses. That's it. (Low SES, 6th grade, Temuco)

Support and Companionship

Another element shared by adolescents of all socioeconomic statuses for their experiences of well-being, is the support and companionship amongst their classmates and friends. For the participants it is important that there is support and companionship in daily school life, reflected in the following quote:

P2: There are also some people from higher courses who are nice and help you when for example you are new at school, to get oriented, there are some basketball people for example who have helped me to know where everything is. (Medium SES, 8th grade, Santiago)

At the same time, they consider important to receive support from their peers when facing problems, sadness and joy. These are some of the qualities which constitute “friendship”, which is understood as encounter, communication and companionship, as demonstrated in the following quotes:

P1: Well, for me a good friend is one who supports you when you are sad or when you are happy. That is, who supports you in everything and who [like] listens to you and helps you in the difficult moments of your life and who defends you, obviously, that is, if they are hitting you . . . Because before coming here, a classmate was fighting and we came running and kicked him [the attacker]. So, [like] he defends you, because that’s also good, to know that he who is next to you can defend you in any situation and can help you. (Medium-high SES, 8th grade, Santiago)

I1: Why are friends important?P4: . . . they help.

I1: They help, in what do they help?

P3: They help with tasks.

P5: Sometimes when a friend is being hit, sometimes the kids got his back . . . when they [the attackers] hit him.

P1: That we can share what we want and we can trust that person who we know is special for us, who has been with us in the good times and in bad times. (Low SES, 6th grade, Santiago)

Loyalty

In the stories of the participants of medium and low socioeconomic status, loyalty appears as a relevant element of friendship. A loyal friend is a person who can be trusted and who accompanies you in different circumstances. This is shown by the following quotes:

I: And what does a good friend do?

P2: Mmm . . . a good friend. . . doesn’t speak badly of you behind your back, he’s with you in the good times and in the bad times . . .P3: He’s loyal . . . (Medium SES, eighth grade, Valparaíso)

P6: Yeah, there are acquaintances who are [like] false but the other friends are the ones whom one can fully trust, they’ve always been with you. (Low SES, 8th grade, La Serena)

Absence of Violence and Mistreatment

Adolescents of middle and lower socioeconomic status also refer to the importance of not being mistreated, or having fights or aggression, elements that when present generate discomfort and dissatisfaction. The following quotes illustrate this:

P3: What makes me feel bad is that . . . they bother me . . .

I: What bothers you and why do they bother you?

P3: For being . . . chubby . . . (Medium SES, sixth grade, Santiago).

I: What are the things that are important to you?

P2: That they stop bothering . . .

P3: That they stop saying nicknames . . .

P4: That they don’t say swearwords . . . (Low SES, sixth grade, Santiago).

By way of synthesis it is possible to point out, in regards to the links amongst classmates, that the importance of meeting and sharing with peers in the school space, and the role of feeling supported and accompanied by them, transcends the different socioeconomic status levels. The same does not occur with the relevance of loyalty, which is mentioned only by participants of medium and low socioeconomic status. This is related to the role played by mistreatment and violence in their school experiences, which also marks a difference since in the case of the participants of medium-high socioeconomic status no reference is made to these types of situations, whilst in the case of adolescents of medium and low socioeconomic status the absence of mistreatment and violence does emerge as an important issue.

11.7.1.2 Links with Teachers

In regards to the links that adolescents develop with teachers, even though in all of the cases the importance of being able to count on teachers is highlighted, this takes on different nuances depending on socioeconomic status.

Emotional Support and Teacher Commitment

The participants of medium-high socioeconomic status, when referring to their satisfactory experiences in the relationship with their teachers, allude to being cared for, supported and attended to in relation to their affective needs. They value that the teachers genuinely care about what happens to them and that they have a link that is not limited to the function of teaching. This can also be manifested in the availability, capacity and commitment of the teachers to accompany students and help them when they need it; for example, in situations of sadness or in relation to homework. The above is illustrated by the following quote:

Well, I feel that if you put yourself in a certain situation, they [the teachers] help you (. . .). For example, if I am crying and a teacher sees me, (s)he will help me. (Medium-high SES, 8th grade, Santiago)

To Be Understood by the Teachers

For young people of medium socioeconomic status, the positive aspects of experiences with teachers relate to having teachers who know them and understand them, and who are committed to their students, both in general terms and in regards to their learning. This can be noted in the following quotes:

P4: (. . .) There are differences and differences, it is not the same having a head teacher who gives her all to the course and having one who really . . . P3: Who also understands us . . .
 I: Ah, okay, what makes a good teacher?
 P2: To be able to understand your students . . .
 I: Anything else? What else do you consider a good teacher?

P: She taught me to read . . . [she should also] worry about the grades that her students get, although it is not entirely her responsibility, because one also has to take responsibility, but we also need a dedicated teacher. (Medium SES, 8th grade, Valparaíso)

I1: Why is teacher Carla good?

P2: Because she knows us.

P: She understands us.

I1: She understands you . . .

P2: Yes (Medium SES, sixth grade, Santiago).

Teacher Support and Help

In the case of adolescents of low socioeconomic status, it is positively valued that teachers show a closeness and willingness to help and support them not only in the school setting.

I: And in what things does she [the teacher] help you?

P7: When we need something, advice, in all things . . .

I: Has anyone else had any experience like that?

P5: I have, with her . . .

I: Tell us, let's see.

P5: When I had problems with an ex friend, I asked her for advice so I wouldn't have problems and she told me that I just don't have to pay attention to what they tell me. And I have always felt supported by her, because she supports the children a lot when they have problems and especially me . . . (Low SES, 8th grade, Temuco)

Being Respected and not Mistreated by Teachers

Likewise, this socioeconomic group emphasizes that in the relationship with teachers and their satisfaction with it, the importance of teachers respecting them and treating them well.

It seems that in this group it is more common for teachers to shout at the students or simply to not worry about their learning, which is why these children highlight the value that not feeling mistreated by their teachers has for them. They explain this in the following quotes:

P7: [Referring to the teacher] It's like one doesn't do anything, but she starts on her own "to search for us" [she tries to provoke the students]. Like for example, one day she tried to [like] insult us, she told us that we were the worst course, and she brought a branch [to the classroom] for good vibes, do you remember P? And she told us that it's to give us good vibes and so that we never again become the worst course. She did it [like] to make fun of us. (Low SES, 6th grade, La Serena)

As can be seen, although there are nuances amongst the different socioeconomic statuses in regards to what is valued as satisfactory in relationships with teachers, the importance that they give to teacher support, both to support within the academic context and especially outside of it, appears as transversal. It should be noted that to be respected and not mistreated by teachers also emerges as important for participants of low socioeconomic status.

11.7.2 *The Teaching-Learning Environment*

Well-being experiences of adolescents of different socioeconomic statuses are also related to the atmosphere generated in the classroom, which facilitates their teaching and learning processes. A finding consistent for all of the adolescents is that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are associated with the methodologies used by the teachers, and with the place which they as students occupy within this process; as well as with the classroom atmosphere, especially in regards to relationships that are established amongst classmates, and between teachers and students. Additionally, a respectful atmosphere inside the classroom was also raised by participants as important. Reflecting on these findings, we identify two categories: teaching methods, and a good working atmosphere in the classroom, with differences according to socioeconomic status.

11.7.2.1 Teaching Methods

Adolescents of different socioeconomic status value, as relevant for their satisfaction or dissatisfaction at school, the teaching methods teachers use to guide their learning. In general terms, experiences vary according to the presence of teaching strategies which promote their participation in classes and allow them to be visible and active in their own learning process. There are also experiences in which satisfaction is associated with the existence of entertaining didactics that allow them to have fun and get out of the exclusive space of the classroom. Each of the subcategories is described by different socioeconomic status below.

Participatory Classes

Young people of medium-high socioeconomic status value teaching methods that encourage students' participation in classes, giving them the opportunity to express their opinions, considering that otherwise they feel unrecognized. For instance:

I: What do you like to do in class?

P2: I like to be made to participate a lot in classes, like go to the blackboard. . .

P1: That we can express our opinions.

P3: The thing is that by only writing [what the teacher dictates], I am invisible. (Medium-high SES, 6th grade, Santiago)

In the same way, students also found it satisfactory if teachers, as part of their teaching strategies, remained attentive to the requirements and inquiries of their students, as pointed out by one student when talking about the teacher:

P2: I like that the teacher explains something more general and then one can ask questions about what one doesn't understand, and in that way we can solve the doubt in front of everyone, and clarify it also for others, for the ones who didn't dare or who forgot to ask. (Medium-high SES, 8th grade, Santiago)

Respect for Learning Paces

Young people of medium socioeconomic status associate their satisfaction with teaching experiences where teachers show respect for the different learning paces of the students. To account for this, adolescents of medium SES point to an experience of discomfort associated with low respect for the differences in the learning paces on the part of their teachers, who want to teach everyone in the same way without taking into account the individual characteristics of the students, as is expressed in the following quote:

P3: That teacher only sees defects in the students, (s)he does not see the good things that each one of them has, (s)he only criticizes . . . besides, (s)he does not understand, (s)he believes that we all go at the same pace, that we all learn in the same way. (Medium SES, 6th grade, Valparaíso)

Fun and Entertaining Teaching

For young people of low socioeconomic status, satisfaction is associated with the existence of fun teaching strategies, especially those classes in which the teacher allows them to move, talk, and even carry out activities outside of the school, such as is expressed in the following passages which illustrate what adolescents associate with fun teaching:

P4: 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, he even took us for a walk. (Low SES, 6th grade, Coquimbo)

P7: In English class, I remember that one time he made us look for a song in pairs, with a program we had to look for the lyrics of the song, and that was fun as well. (Low SES, 8th grade, Temuco)

In the same way, it was valued positively to use other spaces to learn, and to connect teaching with technology or music, as expressed by this participant:

P9: For example, the long recess comes and we all run around and then after we enter the room feeling hot, and the teacher makes us work. One day in music class he made us make a video that we had to do in a group, and he made us go out. (Low SES, 6th grade, Santiago)

Conversely, adolescents of low SES mention that their dissatisfaction is associated with directive types of classes in which the teacher only makes them write in their notebooks and does not answer their questions:

P2: There are some teachers who, just to be difficult, teach you in only one way, and if we ask questions they say no, I already explained once.

P6: And they only make you write. (Low SES, 8th grade, Coquimbo)

In the same manner, adolescents of different socioeconomic statuses consider relevant to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction at school the methodologies that the teachers use for promoting learning. However, differences by socioeconomic

statuses are also noted. Young people of medium-high socioeconomic status value the teaching experiences that allow and activate the participation in classes, through which they can express their opinions and be recognized and cared for in their needs. Young people of medium socioeconomic status associate their satisfaction with teaching experiences where the teachers respect the students' different learning paces. Also, experiences of discomfort are associated with low respect for differences in learning paces and abilities. In contrast, for young people of low socioeconomic status, satisfaction is associated with the existence of fun teaching strategies, showing that they value classes in which the teacher allows them to move, to speak, and to integrate activities outside of school, or to use technologies, noting as well that their dissatisfaction is associated with directive types of classes in which the teacher only makes them write in their notebooks.

11.7.2.2 Good Working Atmosphere in the Classroom

Another relational aspect that the participants associate with their experience of well-being at school concerns the environment and the working atmosphere inside the classroom. This dimension is only highlighted by participants of low socioeconomic status and is associated with the absence of being told off and shouted at; the possibility of having patient teachers and the absence of disorder in classes.

Absence of Being Told off and Shouted at

One important aspect highlighted by adolescents of low SES is their dissatisfaction associated with being told off and shouted at by teachers, as they indicate below:

P5: When we are up there, and sometimes when I am with P. or M. or J., the teacher tells us all off and, what's more, with the ruler everyone gets scared. (Low SES, 6th grade, Coquimbo)

P3: And I don't like it when they shout because they shout in all of the classes and it gets boring. (Low SES, 6th grade, Temuco)

Absence of Disorder in Classes

In the same way, a classroom environment in which classmates do not bother each other and where there is less disorder inside the classroom is also valued. This allows students to be able to pay attention, and emerges as relevant for adolescents of low SES status, as expressed in the following quote:

P5: When one is more calm in the classroom they begin to disturb or, I don't know, to bother. (Low SES, 8th grade, Santiago)

P3: What we don't like is that they [the classmates] are very disorganized when they play in the classroom, so I don't hear the teacher and I don't understand. (Low SES, 8th grade, Santiago)

11.7.3 *Physical Space*

Another dimension that adolescents consider as an experience of well-being is that the school has adequate spaces and equipment, both inside and outside of the classroom, and that these facilities be in good condition. This dimension is only highlighted as relevant by the participants of low socioeconomic status. We identified two categories in their discussions- recreation and sports equipment, and good infrastructure conditions, which are described below:

11.7.3.1 **Recreation and Sports Equipment**

For adolescents, it is important to be able to have equipment to facilitate doing sports, such as a soccer field or a swimming pool, as well as to have games that allow for recreation, as indicated in the following quote:

P1: That a court be made [to play soccer], and that they put a swimming pool.

P3: That games be put here, because there are no games. Like those swings. (Low SES, 8th grade, Metropolitan Region)

11.7.3.2 **Good Infrastructure Conditions**

At the same time, they point out elements of an aesthetic and health-related nature within their school as unsatisfactory, highlighting the importance of having a school at a satisfactory level of upkeep, without mold and which is aesthetically pleasing. For example, some participants raised the colour of the school walls as an issue, as indicated in the following quote:

P6: Ah, the color, because the school doesn't look good, on the walls. It looks bad.

P8: And it's full of mold. P6: Yes, up on the ceiling, everything [has mold]. (Low SES, eighth grade, Temuco).

In the same way, relevant for their experience of well-being is that the school has the necessary conditions and maintenance to face the cold of winter and the heat of summer, as mentioned in the following passage when referring to the classrooms:

P6: They don't have good maintenance.

P9: In winter, it was cold and we were not allowed to use a stove.

P2: The plugs were bad.

P9: And there were no curtains, nothing. There are no curtains.

I: In other words, you feel cold in the winter?

P: Yes.

P2: And in the summer, we feel hot. (Low SES, sixth grade, Temuco).

Our findings demonstrate a diversity of issues raised by adolescents of different socioeconomic statuses regarding the experience of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the physical space of the school. Adolescents of medium-high and medium socioeconomic status do not mention the physical space, passing for them as

unnoticed or as not being significant for their experience of well-being or discomfort at school. For adolescents of low socioeconomic status, the experience of having adequate spaces and equipment, and that these spaces and equipment are in good condition, in terms of maintenance, operation and aesthetics, is of great relevance for their satisfaction.

11.7.4 Adolescents' Agency

Another relevant dimension of the adolescents' well-being experiences at school is related to the possibility of being active and autonomous agents, including the possibility of being able to express their opinions and ideas, to be respected in them, and in turn, to be able to be taken into consideration by adults in the decisions that affect their daily life at school. We describe this category of Autonomy and freedom, with its subcategories, by socioeconomic status below.

11.7.4.1 Autonomy and Freedom

Adolescents indicate that they feel satisfied if they have the possibility to make their own decisions and to feel respected in their right to have an opinion regarding different topics about their school life. Additionally, they would like to be able to express their likes and interests without the constant coercion of school norms and constant surveillance of their actions, both inside and outside of school. Differences are noted between socioeconomic statuses, ranging from the importance of feeling respected in their decisions, to not feeling constantly monitored.

11.7.4.2 Respected in Their Decisions

For adolescents of medium-high socioeconomic status, the experience of satisfaction at school is associated with feeling that they can have the right to decide themselves about issues in their lives and to be respected in these decisions, even if they are not shared and even if they are wrong, as long as it is not just the adults who, without explaining the reasons, make the decisions for them:

P2: That they support us in our decisions.

I: Who?

P2: Well, it depends. Because in certain decisions it could be a friend, in others it could be your dad or a teacher. (Medium-high SES, 8th grade, Santiago)

P3: Because I find that that's how one learns, making his own decisions, making mistakes, so, when you make your own decision.

P2: Yes, that's what I mean, that it's your decision, but that the others don't tell you, no, no, don't do it because I don't like it. (Medium-high SES, 8th grade, Santiago)

11.7.4.3 Absence of Uniformity

For young people from medium socioeconomic backgrounds, when referring to their experience of well-being in on this topic, they point instead to the discomfort generated for them by the fact that others try to standardize them to an extreme level, demonstrated by the fact that the school defines both the clothes and how their uniform should be worn, in addition to what they can or cannot do, even outside of school, as indicated in the following:

P3: At the exit, when we leave, for example, we are young and we scream, and we are also crazy when we leave school, and they restrict that from us, that is, they tell us off for making a disorder outside of school. (Medium SES, 8th grade, Valparaíso)

P4: In this school they are very strict, they tell us to fix our uniform, they tell us how to comb our hair, if it is loose they tell us to tie it. (Medium SES, 8th grade, Valparaíso)

P5: What I don't like is that they criticize our shoes a lot, if one comes with certain shoes they tell you off immediately and, I think, that the shoes don't make the student. (Medium SES, 8th grade, Metropolitan region).

11.7.4.4 Surveillance at School

Adolescents of low socioeconomic status report that their dissatisfaction on this issue is associated with the experience of feeling surveilled, associating the school with a prison. However, they also value this aspect to the extent that it makes them feel protected from the risky situations that exist around the school:

P4: And now they put surveillance cameras as well. (Low SES, 8th grade, Temuco)

P3: Because it seems as if [in school] we are locked up in a prison . . . [laughs] (Low SES, 6th grade, Temuco)

P5: Yes, here in this area many robberies can occur and also murders, especially in the summer. Even though it happens every day, not one day passes without it. It is also good [that there are cameras] because this way they have more control in the school and they can be more aware of what is happening in the environment, and also in the hours that we are not at school and the weekends, they can observe what is happening. (Low SES, 8th grade, Temuco)

These quotes indicate that a relevant dimension of the experience of adolescent well-being at school is related to relationships that allow freedom and autonomy. In the medium-high socioeconomic segment, the experience of autonomy is related to having relationships of the type which respect their decisions. In the medium socioeconomic segment adolescents report discomfort and dissatisfaction with school norms which make them uniform to an extreme level, losing the freedom to express what they feel as young people and not feeling accepted as individuals. For adolescents from the low socioeconomic segment, the experience that has the greatest relevance for their satisfaction is to not feel supervised to such an extent that they feel like prisoners in school. However, they also expect the school to allow them to feel safe and protected from risky situations that exist outside of the school.

11.8 Discussion

The purpose of this research was to understand the experiences of well-being of adolescents in Chile within the framework of the relationships that they experience within the school context, with a focus on variation according to different socioeconomic statuses, which allows us to identify continuities and discontinuities around experiences.

Our interest has been to advance the studies of adolescent well-being, in this case at school, to transcend perspectives that address the adolescent development stage as a single and homogeneous category (Sandin 2014), acknowledging that adolescents and the constructions of their experiences of well-being are contextually situated, thus it being relevant to consider their different socioeconomic conditions as well as the school context.

In general terms, the experience of well-being at school is associated with interpersonal links; with the teaching-learning processes; with the characteristics of the physical space; and with the opportunities of agency that are granted to adolescents.

What stands out is that for all participants, the experience of well-being and satisfaction at school is associated with the quality of interpersonal relationships. Thus, it is noted that the experience of satisfaction is related to having opportunities to meet and share with peers, and to have experiences of support and loyalty with friends, without showing great differences in the socioeconomic statuses studied. Considering what the participants have expressed, it seems that the meaning attributed to these relationships is shared by adolescents from different social and school contexts.

This is consistent with results that show that friendship is a relevant indicator of satisfaction with the school, fulfilling a moderating function and having a protective effect on the mental health of adolescents (Cuadros and Berger 2016). Conversely, children who are subject to harassment and teasing by their classmates, or who are excluded from groups of friends, experience significantly less frequent positive emotions at school, and have a lower overall satisfaction with life (Martin and Huebner 2007). This is why it is a relevant dimension to be considered in order to promote well-being within the school.

It is also evident that teaching methods are associated with their experiences of satisfaction in school; however, differences of emphasis are noted amongst adolescents of different socioeconomic statuses. Adolescents of medium-high SES emphasize the importance of feeling like active participants in their learning processes; adolescents of medium SES emphasize that their satisfaction is associated with respecting different learning paces; whilst the adolescents of low SES emphasize the importance of having fun and entertaining classes, referring to them as the best strategies for enabling better learning.

In this regard, Ramírez-Casas del Valle and Alfaro-Inzunza (2018) point out that for adolescents the role that they themselves play in the teaching and learning process is very relevant for their experiences of well-being, noting that adolescents

in Chile reject the figure of the explanatory teacher who only uses the expository method, which positions them as passive students and mere receptacles of content; an important element to consider in making decisions regarding methodologies and pedagogical practices within the school.

There are also substantial differences amongst adolescents of the highest and lowest SES, specifically in the satisfaction experiences associated with interpersonal links with teachers, the working atmosphere in the classroom, and the physical space of the school. In regards to relationships with the teachers, even though for all participants satisfaction experiences are associated with the possibility of feeling supported and understood by the teachers, it is noted that adolescents of low SES also associate their satisfaction with experiences of not feeling mistreated by teachers. This difference is also evident for the working atmosphere in the classroom, in which only adolescents of low SES indicate that their satisfaction is associated with the absence of being told off and shouted at by the teacher, as well as with the decrease of noise and disorder in the classroom, the participants stating that these factors hinder their learning. These adolescents are also the ones who discussed the importance that having sports equipment and good hygienic and infrastructure conditions has for their school satisfaction. We consider that this is relevant to take into account in order to promote both the well-being of all adolescents and to avoid school dropout, which as the data points out (Research Center MINEDUC 2013), affects mainly children and adolescents of lower socioeconomic statuses, with one of the main causes of school dropout being poor relationship with their teachers, especially physical and psychological mistreatment by teachers (Espinoza-Díaz et al. 2014).

It should be noted that the results are not generalizable to other populations or sociocultural contexts, considering that what we have sought to do is to investigate a socio-cultural reality in a particular educational context, such as the case of the school in Chile. However, we believe that the results contribute to studies that appropriately address the theme, considering that the well-being experience is constituted within the framework of social practices in which they are inserted (Wyn et al. 2015); therefore, this way of approaching the phenomenon can provide schools with relevant information for making pertinent decisions related to strengthening their students' well-being.

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