

## Life Satisfaction in childhood: Latin American Immigrant Children in Chile\*

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The goal of the current study was to evaluate life satisfaction in a sample of 300 immigrant children aged between 8 and 13 years old. Satisfaction in different domains and overall life, was evaluated using the General Domain Satisfaction Index and the Overall Life Satisfaction index, respectively. These instruments were also applied to a sample of 300 non-immigrant children of similar age. Statistically significant differences were found only in the 12–13 years group, where the mean scores for immigrants were lower than those for natives, on the domains of family and home, material goods, interpersonal relationships, health, and use of time. Additionally, immigrants had higher mean scores on the domains of area of residence, school, and personal satisfaction. These results allow us to reflect on the influence of society in all domains throughout their lives. Thus, these findings contribute toward the creation of policies that integrate migrants.

**Keywords:** Immigration, child migration, subjective well-being, life satisfaction, Latin-America

### Highlights:

- We did not find significant differences in overall satisfaction with life in the group between 8 and 11 years of age.
- Significant differences were found only in the 12–13 years of age group, where the mean scores for immigrants were lower than those for non-immigrants.
- We found significant differences in the satisfaction regarding certain domains of life; satisfaction with family and home showed differences in all the age ranges.

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In 2010, only in Latin America and the Caribbean, around 6 million people migrated, and one in every five of these immigrants was a child or an adolescent (Feuk et al., 2010). Currently, a population close to 258 million international migrants is estimated, of which 36.1 million are children (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2018).

The perception of constant growth and economic stability have led Chile to be considered as a destination where it is possible to find work opportunities and economic well-being (OIM Chile, 2011; Urzúa & Cabieses, 2018). Immigrants perceive that they can improve their quality of life by increasing their social status, find better work opportunities, access healthcare, improve family finances, send money to their home country, and be able to access adequate housing (Botón & González, 2010; Espinoza et al., 2011; González et al., 2010; OIM Chile & Solimano, 2012; Vásquez De Kartzow, 2009).

The 2017 Census showed that 50.7% of total immigrants living in Chile came from Latin American countries, mainly Peru (25.3%), Colombia (14.2%), and Venezuela (11.2%) (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas del Gobierno de Chile [INE], 2017). Migration has multiple effects in the places of origin of the immigrant and the migration destination (Betz & Simpson, 2013). At the psychological level, the individual has to reevaluate his/her cognitive framework based on a new cultural reality (Fernández et al., 2014; Perreira & Ornellas, 2011; Pinillos, 2012), requiring that he/she makes the maximum use of all the capacities in order to adapt adequately to the new environment (Rojas et al., 2011). If this adjustment does not take place appropriately, it can affect people's health and create high levels of stress, which can be a risk factor in the development of psychopathologies (Ferrer et al., 2014; Patiño & Kirchner, 2011), affecting their health, quality of life and subjective well-being, thus affecting and diminishing psychological and experiential functioning (Bobowik et al., 2010; Brody et al., 2006, 2014, 2015; Hope et al., 2015; Kogan et al., 2015; Marks et al., 2020; Sellers et al., 2006; Simons et al., 2002; Tobler et al., 2013; Urzúa et al., 2017; Urzúa et al., 2019; Urzúa et al., 2017; Urzúa et al., 2018; Urzúa et al., 2016; Urzúa et al., 2015; Urzúa et al., 2015; Vera-Villaruel et al., 2012).

Subjective well-being (SWB) can be defined as the positive or negative evaluation of one's life as a whole, or of specific domains of one's life (Oyanedel et al., 2015). SWB has two dimensions: affective, which is linked to the emotional aspects and the balance between positive and negative aspects; and cognitive, which is referred to as "life satisfaction" (Diener, 2006; Ferrer et al., 2014). The present study focuses on the latter dimension.

Low life satisfaction has an impact on several areas, such as their social relationships (Forrest et al., 2013; Nishida et al., 2016), social skills (In et al., 2019), self-efficacy (Cherry & Lumley, 2019), school performance (Forrest et al., 2013), and strengths (Cherry et al., 2019). Also, positive affections, predict

life satisfaction in adult life (Coffey et al., 2014). Studies also show that as age increases, life satisfaction tends to decrease (Haranin et al., 2007).

The results of research on SWB among migrant children are inconclusive. On one hand, it has been reported that immigrant children in Chile have lower levels of well-being than do non-immigrants (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2012), due to disadvantages stemming from being a minority group within the general population (Katz & Redmond, 2010), higher incidence behavioral problems and low self-esteem (Chen, 2014) and a high degree of internalization of mental health problems (Rogers et al., 2014). On the other hand, it has also been reported that health and life satisfaction among immigrants and non-immigrants do not differ significantly (Molcho et al., 2010) and that immigrants report higher levels of social adjustment than their non-immigrant counterparts (Dimitrova & Chasiotis, 2014). However, it is possible that some differences between immigrant and non-immigrant children can be attributed to socioeconomic factors than to the immigration status in itself (Molcho et al., 2010). The literature clearly shows a number of variables that influence the adaptation of migrant children and adolescents such as Family Capital (parental education, poverty, whether they are legal migrants or not); Student Resources (mental health, their facility in acquiring a second language) and the Type of School (good quality or not, school segregation, quality of the teacher's preparation) (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez Orozco, 2014).

Most of the research on SWB in migrant children focuses on their experiences following migration. These experiences include a large number of acculturation stress factors (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008), such as learning a new language, facing changes in family roles and responsibilities, removing from predictable context and social ties, legal status of family members, and dealing with racism or discrimination and other social threats to the migration process (Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017; Suárez-Orozco, 2018). Though these stress factors are common, their influence on children's health can vary enormously depending on the amount of time the child has lived in the destination country, their social context, the age of the child, or the child's stage of development at the time of migration. Nevertheless, these studies establish that there is a lack of information regarding the situation of migrant children in other parts of the world, such as Latin-America (Perreira & Ornellas, 2011) and also the evidence on this topic on immigrant and their health has focused on adults and families rather than children and adolescents (Landsford et al., 2007).

In Chile, there is only one study by Oyanedel, Alfaro, and Mella (2015) that has reported that Chilean children are 'very satisfied' with their lives as a whole, which confirms the results of international studies (Lee et al., 2009; Strózik et al., 2015).

Based on this, the present study aimed to describe and analyze the factors related to the cognitive component of well-being (life satisfaction) in immigrant

children. We hypothesized that there is a lower level of subjective well-being among immigrant children than among non-immigrant children, due to their current situation or migration factors described earlier.

## Method

This research is an observational, survey-based study with a cross-sectional design.

### Participants

Criteria for inclusion were that the participants be immigrants (regardless of country of origin) or non-immigrants, aged between 8 and 13 years, attending public schools, with consent provided by both parents and children. There were no exclusion criteria.

The survey involved 600 children of both genders, 300 non-immigrants and 300 immigrants (144 Colombians, 74 Bolivians, 65 Peruvians, 8 Ecuadorians, 3 Paraguayans, 2 Brazilians, and 1 each from Spain, Argentina, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic), with 100 children per age range in each of the non-immigrant and immigrant groups. Table 1 shows the distribution of participants by sex and age range.

**Table 1**  
*Distribution of non-Immigrant and Immigrant Participants by Gender and Age Range*

Age range	Non-immigrants				Immigrants			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
8–9 years	45	45	55	55	31	31	69	69
10–11 years	59	59	41	41	48	48	52	52
12–13 years	46	46	54	54	58	58	42	42

### Instruments

#### *General Domain Satisfaction Index (GDSI)*

Developed by Casas and Bello (2012) this scale is used to measure life satisfaction in different domains. It comprises 29 items that evaluate well-being in terms of satisfaction with: home and family (GDSI 1), material goods (GDSI 2), interpersonal relationships (GDSI 3), area of residence (GDSI 4), health (GDSI 5), the use of time (GDSI 6), school (GDSI 7), and personal satisfaction (GDSI 8) (Montserrat et al., 2015). There are different versions for the age ranges of 8–9 years, 10–11 years, and 12–13 years. An 11-point rating scale ranging from 0 (completely unsatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied) was used for children aged 10–13 years, and a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 (completely unsatisfied) to 5 (completely satisfied), represented by emoticons, was used with children aged 8–9 years. The global index was calculated by summing the mean score on each domain. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.88 for the 8–9 years group, and .87 for the 10–13 years group.

#### *Overall Life Satisfaction (OLS)*

This is a single item that evaluates general life satisfaction (Campbel et al., 1976). Children in the 8–9 years group were asked, "How happy do you feel with your life in general?" Responses were made on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*completely unsatisfied*)

to 5 (*completely satisfied*), represented by emoticons. Children in the 10–11 and 12–13 years groups were asked, “How satisfied are you with your life in general?”, using an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (*completely unsatisfied*) to 10 (*completely satisfied*) (Schütz et al., 2015).

## **Procedure**

The study was approved by ethics committees of the Universidad Católica del Norte [Catholic University of the North] and the National Science and Technology Commission of the Government of Chile (CONICYT).

The participants were selected using non-probabilistic, purposive sampling, with similar quotas for immigrants and non-immigrants and three different age ranges (8–9 years, 10–11 years, and 12–13 years).

To access the enrollment lists of the schools with the greatest number of foreign students, requisite paperwork was completed through the Ministry of Education. In compliance with ethics protocols, permission to conduct the study was sought from the principals of the schools. The guardians of the participants were provided with an informed consent form; once signed, this form permitted the minors to participate in the survey. The surveys took place in the school, either in the respective classrooms or in another location where the children could fill out their corresponding questionnaires.

## **Statistical Analysis**

The data were entered in SPSS 20 (IBM, 2011). Descriptive statistical analyses were carried out for sociodemographic variables and the GDSI, and OLS scores. The Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to evaluate the differences in scale means between immigrants and non-immigrants, as well as to evaluate the effect of gender, and the interaction between gender and nationality. The measure of the effect size was calculated through the partial square eta. The Bonferroni correction was applied, which involved making decisions with a significance level of  $.05/3 = .017$ . That is, we will only consider as statistically significant differences when the *p* value is lower than .017. Finally, regressions were carried out to estimate the capacity of the different domains to predict general satisfaction (OLS score).

## **Results**

Results are presented by age range. The differences between non-immigrants and immigrants and between males and females were not statistically significant in the age ranges of 8–9 years and 10–11 years. The gender  $\times$  nationality interaction was not statistically significant in any of the age ranges.

### **8–9 years old**

Table 2 shows that, for this range, the mean score of the non-immigrants was higher than that for immigrants on the domains of satisfaction with home and family, material goods, interpersonal relationships, and area of residence. The immigrants' group had higher mean scores than non-immigrants on the domains of satisfaction with health, use of time, and school. It was found that immigrants had a higher general life satisfaction score.

**Table 2**  
*Descriptive Statistics of GDSI and OLS Scores of the 8–9 Years Group*

	Non-immigrants						Immigrants					
	M		F		T		M		F		T	
	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>
SF	4.61	0.67	4.64	0.44	4.63	0.55	4.56	0.57	4.61	0.55	4.59	0.55
SM	4.87	0.46	4.82	0.43	4.84	0.44	4.74	0.58	4.75	0.72	4.75	0.67
SR	4.53	0.56	4.43	0.77	4.48	0.68	4.27	0.74	4.39	0.74	4.36	0.74
SA	4.45	0.88	4.37	0.93	4.41	0.91	4.24	0.89	4.27	1.01	4.26	0.97
SH	4.42	0.76	4.52	0.80	4.48	0.78	4.42	0.75	4.57	0.78	4.53	0.77
ST	4.70	0.63	4.60	1.01	4.65	0.86	4.71	0.64	4.80	0.53	4.77	0.57
SS	4.47	0.68	4.38	0.67	4.42	0.67	4.45	0.56	4.54	0.74	4.51	0.69
OLS	9.3	1.85	8.96	1.92	9.13	1.89	9.45	1.65	9.26	2.10	9.32	1.97

*Note.* M = Male; F = Female; SD = Standard Deviation; SF = Satisfaction with family and home; SM = Satisfaction with material goods; SR = Satisfaction with interpersonal relationships; SA = Satisfaction with area of residence; SH = Satisfaction with health; ST = Satisfaction with the use of time; SS = Satisfaction with school; OLS = Overall Life Satisfaction.

Table 3 shows the regression coefficients of the different domains of satisfaction overlaid on the general life satisfaction score. Only dimensions that were significant to the model were included in the table. It was found that the domains for satisfaction with family and home ( $p = .013$ ) and school ( $p = .031$ ) explained 15.6% of the variance in the general life satisfaction score in the total sample. When segmented by nationality, satisfaction with family and home ( $p = .004$ ) explained 21.8% of the variance in the general life satisfaction score for non-immigrants, while the satisfaction with the use of time ( $p = .040$ ) explained 10.8% of the variance in the general life satisfaction score for immigrants.

**Table 3**  
*Regression Coefficients for the OLS Predictor Variables for the 8–9 Years Group*

	Model	UC		SC	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		$\beta$	<i>SE</i>			
	(Constant)	.189	1.579		.119	.905
Total	Satisfaction with family and home	.690	.274	.194	2.513	.013
	Satisfaction with school	.501	.231	.169	2.171	.031
Immigrants	Satisfaction with the use of time	.673	.323	.226	2.086	.040
Non-immigrants	Satisfaction with family and home	1.089	.370	.317	2.946	.004

*Note.* SE = Standard error.

## 10–11 years old

Table 4 shows that the mean scores of immigrants was lower than that for the non-immigrants on the domains of satisfaction with family and home, material goods, area of residence, and health; while immigrants had higher mean scores on the domains of satisfaction with interpersonal relationships, use of

time, school, and personal satisfaction. It was found that non-immigrants had a higher general life satisfaction score as compared to immigrants.

**Table 4**  
*Descriptive Statistics of the GDSI Scores for the 10–11 Years Group*

	Non-immigrants						Immigrants					
	M		F		T		M		F		T	
	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>
SF	9.01	1.30	9.08	1.32	9.04	1.30	8.55	1.74	8.55	1.99	8.55	1.87
SM	9.12	1.59	8.88	2.05	9.02	1.79	9.13	1.71	8.88	2.31	9.00	2.04
SR	7.84	2.12	7.52	1.93	7.71	2.04	7.88	2.09	7.76	2.15	7.82	2.11
SA	7.77	2.82	7.66	2.86	7.73	2.82	7.56	2.24	7.27	2.93	7.41	2.62
SH	8.76	1.80	9.05	1.57	8.88	1.71	8.58	1.68	8.46	2.09	8.52	1.89
ST	8.41	1.99	8.28	2.30	8.36	2.11	8.72	1.65	8.64	1.83	8.68	1.74
SS	8.35	1.53	8.35	1.64	8.35	1.57	8.21	1.40	8.82	1.61	8.53	1.53
SP	8.62	1.46	8.51	1.78	8.58	1.59	8.79	1.18	8.57	1.54	8.68	1.38
OLS	8.58	2.55	8.83	2.51	8.68	2.53	8.58	2.66	8.73	2.07	8.66	2.36

*Note.* M = Male; F = Female; SD = Standard Deviation; SF = Satisfaction with family and home; SM = Satisfaction with material goods; SR = Satisfaction with interpersonal relationships; SA = Satisfaction with area of residence; SH = Satisfaction with health; ST = Satisfaction with the use of time; SS = Satisfaction with school; SP = Personal satisfaction; OLS = Overall Life Satisfaction.

For this age range, satisfaction with material goods ( $p = .021$ ) and personal satisfaction ( $p = .000$ ) were significant for the model, explaining 36.6% of the variance in the general life satisfaction score. For non-immigrants, satisfaction with family and home ( $p = .037$ ), satisfaction with material goods ( $p = .035$ ), and personal satisfaction ( $p = .000$ ) explained 43.7% of the variance in the general life satisfaction score. For immigrants, personal satisfaction alone ( $p = .027$ ) explained 27.7% of the variance in the general satisfaction score (Table 5).

**Table 5**  
*Regression Coefficients for the OLS Predictor Variables for the 10–11 Years Group*

Model		UC		SC	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		$\beta$	SE	$\beta$		
(Constant)		-1.43	1.07		-1.33	.184
Total	Satisfaction with material goods	.20	.09	.16	2.33	.021
	Personal satisfaction	.76	.14	.46	5.43	.000
Immigrants	Personal satisfaction	.53	.24	.31	2.25	.027
Non-immigrants	Satisfaction with family and home	.39	.18	.20	2.11	.037
	Satisfaction with material goods	.28	.13	.19	2.15	.035
	Personal satisfaction	.85	.19	.53	4.34	.000

*Note.* SE = Standard error.

## 12–13 years old

Table 6 shows the mean scores on the different domains. It is evident that the mean scores of the immigrants were lower than those of non-immigrants on the domains of satisfaction with family and home, material goods, interpersonal

relationships, health, and use of time; while immigrants had higher mean scores with regard to satisfaction with the area of residence, school, and personal satisfaction. It was found that non-immigrants had a higher general life satisfaction score as compared to immigrants.

The mean score of the non-immigrants was significantly higher than that of immigrants only in domains of satisfaction with family and home, ( $F(1) = 6.168$ ;  $p = .014$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .030$ ) and satisfaction with health ( $F(1) = 5.806$ ;  $p = .017$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .029$ ).

The boys' mean score was significantly higher than girls in domains of satisfaction with family and home ( $F(1) = 9.318$ ;  $p = .003$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .045$ ), satisfaction with material goods, ( $F(1) = 10.456$ ;  $p = .001$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .050$ ), satisfaction with interpersonal relationships ( $F(1) = 4.507$ ;  $p = .035$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .022$ ), satisfaction with area of residence ( $F(1) = 9.429$ ;  $p = .002$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .046$ ), satisfaction with health ( $F(1) = 8.379$ ;  $p = .004$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = 0.041$ ), satisfaction with the use of time ( $F(1) = 6.954$ ;  $p = .009$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .034$ ) and personal satisfaction ( $F(1) = 14.016$ ;  $p = .000$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .066$ ). Except for personal satisfaction where the effect size is medium, all the above effects are low.

On satisfaction with the school domain, there were no statistically significant differences between males and females, immigrants, and non-immigrants, or due to the sex  $\times$  nationality interaction.

With regard to the general life satisfaction score, the boys' mean score was significantly higher than of girls ( $F(1) = 15.816$ ;  $p = .000$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .074$ ), with a medium size effect.

**Table 6**  
*Descriptive Statistics of the GDSI Scores for the 12–13 Years Group*

	Non-immigrants						Immigrants					
	M		F		T		M		F		T	
	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>
SF	9.36	1.08	8.70	1.79	9.01	1.54	8.83	1.31	8.15	1.83	8.55	1.58
SM	8.87	1.61	8.15	2.41	8.48	2.11	8.91	1.58	7.67	2.80	8.39	2.25
SR	8.28	1.31	7.65	2.16	7.94	1.84	7.83	1.92	7.31	2.14	7.61	2.02
SA	7.46	1.96	6.04	2.69	6.70	2.48	7.05	2.53	6.33	2.46	6.75	2.52
SH	8.96	1.37	8.42	1.96	8.67	1.72	8.54	1.66	7.48	2.68	8.10	2.20
ST	8.61	1.51	7.63	2.53	8.08	2.17	8.31	1.84	7.70	2.44	8.06	2.12
SS	7.95	1.68	7.37	2.07	7.64	1.91	7.98	1.80	7.96	1.62	7.98	1.72
SP	8.64	1.58	7.51	2.24	8.03	2.03	8.46	1.57	7.64	1.86	8.12	1.74
OLS	9.37	1.69	8.07	2.97	8.67	2.54	9.02	1.68	7.48	3.39	8.37	2.64

*Note.* M = Male; F = Female; SD = Standard Deviation; SF = Satisfaction with family and home; SM = Satisfaction with material goods; SR = Satisfaction with interpersonal relationships; SA = Satisfaction with area of residence; SH = Satisfaction with health; ST = Satisfaction with the use of time; SS = Satisfaction with school; SP = Personal satisfaction; OLS = Overall Life Satisfaction.

In this range, the variables that fitted the model—material goods ( $p = .000$ ), use of time ( $p = .023$ ), and personal satisfaction ( $p = .000$ ) — explained 57.2% of the variance in the general life satisfaction score (Table 7). When grouped by



nationality, satisfaction with health ( $p = .009$ ), satisfaction with the use of time ( $p = .008$ ) and personal satisfaction ( $p = .007$ ) explained 52.9% of the variance for immigrants. For non-immigrants, 68.1% of the variance was explained by satisfaction with material goods ( $p = .002$ ) and personal satisfaction ( $p = .000$ ).

**Table 7**  
*Regression Coefficients for the OLS Predictor Variables for the 12–13 Years Group*

Model		UC		SC	$t$	$p$
		$\beta$	SE	$\beta$		
	(Constant)	-.98	.764		-1.28	.202
Total	Satisfaction with material goods	.28	.078	.23	3.57	.000
	Satisfaction with the use of time	.19	.082	.16	2.30	.023
	Personal satisfaction	.60	.116	.44	5.14	.000
Immigrants	Satisfaction with health	.31	.12	.26	2.65	.009
	Satisfaction with the use of time	.34	.13	.28	2.70	.008
	Personal satisfaction	.51	.18	.33	2.75	.007
Non Immigrants	Satisfaction with material goods	.31	.10	.26	3.19	.002
	Personal satisfaction	.69	.14	.55	5.01	.000

*Note.* SE = Standard error.

## Discussion

Based on the results, the initial hypothesis, that there would be a lower level of SWB among immigrant children compared to their non-immigrant counterparts, was partially rejected, since the level of SWB was found to depend largely on the age range under consideration. On one hand, we found differences in the general perception of life satisfaction, but these were not significant. On the other hand, we found significant differences in the satisfaction regarding certain domains of life; satisfaction with family and home showed differences in all the age ranges.

The domain of satisfaction with family and home has often been found to be important for children (Rees & Dinisman, 2015; Strózik et al., 2015; UNICEF, 2012), given that it is a variable with emotional and relational factors that has a strong effect. This is since family is the first socializing agent for children, and thus, plays an important role in their later development (Casas et al., 2008). Furthermore, their family system often facilitates appropriate psychological development and provides children with tools for personal well-being and confidence (Parra & Villadiego, 2008; Flores, 2005; Tejedor, 2012). Migration could therefore be considered a risk factor for the families and, most importantly, the children who experience it, due to issues such as familial disintegration, loss of references, and the formation of new family units (UNICEF, 2012). Parent-child and also parent-adolescent separation has long-term effects on their well-being, even if there is subsequent reunification. These children and adolescents can experience difficulty with emotional attachment to their parents, self-esteem, and physical and psychological health (Smith et

al., 2004; Gubernskaya & Debry, 2017; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2013). All these circumstances can influence children's later evaluation of their satisfaction with family. We must consider that children have little influence on the migration decision; however, it is necessary to know if they can form paths of subsequent migration of families (Hoang et al., 2015).

Satisfaction with health was another area that showed significant differences in the mean scores: immigrant children were less satisfied as compared to non-immigrant children. This difference may stem from a variety of factors, such as the delay in parents having the capacity to provide socioemotional attention to children (Perreira & Ornellas, 2011), the difficulties that arise in the healthcare system, the slowness of the process of legal paperwork and obtaining a visa (which delays access to health care), the lack of knowledge of procedures for making requests or asking questions regarding health care and discrimination (Férrandez et al., 2014; Llop et al., 2014; Mosquera, 2013; Rojas et al., 2011). These factors can prevent immigrants from having an objective view of the benefits of the health system. The results of this study are opposite to that found in immigrant children in Germany, where, perceived health was slightly higher in migrants compared to native-born German children, even though migrant children were characterized by a lower socio-economic status. The authors note that it is possible the existence of a change of pattern of migration in Europe with more migrants capable to migrate with healthy profiles (Villalonga-Olives, et al., 2014). More research is required in this area and in mental health outcomes in migrant children (Chan et al., 2009).

It was interesting to note the effects of gender across the sample. As children grow older, there are discrepancies between boys' and girls' perceptions of well-being, often inversely proportional to their age (Dinisman & Ben-Arieh, 2015). Satisfaction diminishes as the differences in gender become apparent (Strózik et al., 2015). Empirical evidence (Casas et al., 2013; Javaloy et al., 2007) suggests that males tend to report greater subjective well-being than do females, and that females tend to indicate greater negative affect and greater affective intensity than males do. This may explain why females experience positive and negative emotions simultaneously, with greater intensity. This may be related to different gender roles. Also another possible hypothesis of these differences has to do with the effect of socialization and culture that teaches a privileged position to male status (Sanhueza & Lessard, 2018). From another point of view and as pointed out by Suárez-Orozco & Suárez Orozco (2014) some immigrants children are asked to take on 'parentified' roles including translation and advocacy whose role usually falls to the daughters (Faulstich-Orellana, 2001).

These results indicated that at the global level, and in the different age groups, both immigrant and non-immigrant children have a high subjective well-being index, matching findings from other developing countries (Casas et al., 2008, 2012b, 2013, 2014; Dinisman & Ben-Arieh, 2015; Rees & Dinisman 2015; Strózik et al., 2015). However, some studies indicate that these high levels of

well-being could be influenced by the so-called Optimism Bias, which explains why, when asked any question related to satisfaction, people tend to report higher percentages of satisfaction, as compared to indices of dissatisfaction, which is independent of their actual sociodemographic situation; this bias increasing significantly in children and youth (Oyanedel et al., 2015; Pascual-Roig & Castro-Lamela, 2014; UNICEF, 2012). It is important to clarify that these high indices of satisfaction and well-being are not decisive; even though scores for level of satisfaction are above average for all domains, the scores are not the same across all domains.

About variables that can predict global life satisfaction for immigrants, different models explain the effect of the satisfaction domains on general life satisfaction score. OLS can be estimated using satisfaction with school for immigrant children in the 8–9 years group; personal satisfaction for the 10–11 years group; and satisfaction with health, personal satisfaction, and satisfaction with the use of time for the 12–13 years group. These predictor variables are important—especially the personal satisfaction domain, as it is the indicator that best estimates general well-being—when making changes to policies that address immigrant children (Casas et al., 2013, 2015; UNICEF, 2012). It is important to note that adolescents arriving in a new country must face the difficulties inherent in the process, but also the high expectations that the family usually has regarding their adaptation and performance at school (Smith et al., 2020).

There are few studies regarding the subjective well-being of Hispanic children, and this is particularly true for immigrant children. As a result, the data obtained in our study can only be compared to similar studies by Oyanedel et al. (2015) and UNICEF (2012). Therefore, we believe that it is important to continue this line of research, and to continue to support the efforts to understand the well-being of children that have been made since the 1970s, which, to date, are insufficient (Ben-Arieh, 2000). Therefore, it is necessary to eliminate the “adult-centric” view of childhood (UNICEF, 2012; Oyanedel et al., 2015) and pay attention to what children tell us regarding their perceptions and evaluations of their current life. This is the only way to analyze their situation and to take measures that can help and support them in improving or maintaining current levels of satisfaction and well-being. Furthermore, though it is important to know in which domains and in which situations children have low levels of satisfaction, it is also important to focus our attention on what makes children happy, and to promote the areas that produce the greatest satisfaction over those that do not. Using this type of study, different stakeholders can contribute to policies that directly benefit children, which respond to demands that are related to maintaining high levels of well-being and how children migrants can define strategies to take advantage from the opportunities that the country of reception may give them (Smith et al., 2014).

It is important to mention that there were some limitations while conducting this study, such as obtaining access to the population of immigrant children. Some parents did not provide their consent due to their undocumented

status, as they believed that they might be exposed and harmed in some way if their children were to participate. The lack of studies from Latin America and, most importantly, Chile on this topic was a limitation that prevented us from comparing our results with others from similar contexts. It is necessary to have different methodological skills within various sub-disciplines to a more in-depth study of the dynamics of immigration in children (Holloway, 2014). One limitation that should also be considered is that no factor invariance analysis has been performed for the instrument used, so differences or non-differences could be due to differential effects given by the instrument. The language used is an area that should also be explored, since even if the language is the same (Spanish), there could be different understandings of the questions depending on the country of origin.

As a conclusion, these results can contribute to actions that take well-being into account and incorporate elements that favorably affect development and facilitate the development of comprehensive social programs (Alfaro, Casas, & López, 2015).

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## Zadovoljstvo životom u detinjstvu: deca južnoameričkih imigranata u Čileu

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Cilj ovog istraživanja je bio da se proceni zadovoljstvo životom na uzorku od 300 dece imigranata uzrasta od osam do trinaest godina. Zadovoljstvo životom generalno i u specifičnim domenima je procenjeno Indeksom generalnog domena zadovoljstva životom (eng. General Domain Satisfaction Index) i Indeksom opšteg zadovoljstva životom (eng. Overall Life Satisfaction index). Ovi instrumenti su takođe zadati uzorku od 300 dece sličnog uzasta koja nisu imigranti. Statistički značajne razlike su pronađene jedino na uzrastu između 12 i 13 godina pri čemu su prosečni skorovi imigranata u domenu porodice i doma, materijalnih dobara, interpersonalnih odnosa, zdravlja i korišćenja vremena bili niži od skorova dece koja nisu imigranti. Takođe, imigranti su imali više prosečne skorove u domenima koji se odnose na mesto stanovanja, školu i lično zadovoljstvo. Ovi rezultati nam omogućavaju da diskutujemo moguće efekte društva na sve domene zadovoljstva životom imigrantske dece. Shodno tome, mogu doprineti kreiranju politike koja integriše imigrante.

*Ključne reči:* imigracije, dečija migracija, subjektivno blagostanje, zadovoljstvo životom, Latinska Amerika

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