

# RIGHTS AND OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION OF 10- AND 12-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN IN THREE COUNTRIES

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## Abstract

**Thematic importance.** Previous research has shown that knowledge of the rights of the child and their perceptions about their own participation may contribute to children's subjective well-being (SWB), and that satisfaction with how adults listen to children and take what they say into account is highly related to children's SWB in many countries.

**Introduction and objectives.** The aims of this article are: (a) exploring the contribution to children's SWB of several items related to their perceptions of their own participation rights in different contexts of their lives; (b) analysing whether or not the ways in which children are listened to and taken into account by adults are mediating the connection to SWB in these children's participation perceptions; and (c) analysing whether the relationships between these variables differ depending on the country, age group and gender.

**Method.** This article includes the third wave of the Children's Worlds dataset with 7,570 10- and 12-year-old participants (51% girls) from Brazil, Chile and Spain. There are nine rights-related items and a SWB scale (CW-SWBS) used in this analysis.

**Results.** Results show that children's SWB is sensitive to age, gender and the different contexts where they live. Perceived contexts in each country are very important to evaluate satisfaction with how children perceive being listened to by adults in general, while having parents who listen and take children's opinions into account is very important for that satisfaction and also for SWB. This reinforces the importance of considering local participation rather than general participation, which is in line with the *Revised European Charter on the participation of young people in local and regional life* of 2003. The importance of the effects of feeling listened to and taken into account on SWB increase from late childhood to early adolescence, which contrasts with the decreasing-age trend in SWB observed during this same life period.

**Conclusions and implications.** The main results suggest that perceptions related to children's rights and the opportunities to participate in decisions affecting them in three different contexts (home, school and area where the child lives) significantly contribute to their SWB. Advancing the research into this matter can provide an opportunity to invest in psychosocial interventions that focus on improving children's well-being and empowering them through the knowledge of their rights and their role as agents of public policy changes.