

Safety, listening, and presence: relationships between family and subjective well-being from the perspective of children in online and face-to-face focus groups

Lisiê Pitaluga Vieira¹, Jorge Castellá Sarriera², Livia Maria Bedin³

Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil

lisienvieira@gmail.com¹

jorgesarriera@gmail.com²

liviabedin@gmail.com³

Theme: Comparative methodologies for understanding children's well-being

Subtheme: Subjective well-being

The family environment plays a fundamental role in children's cognitive, social and affective development. Children who report greater satisfaction with intrafamily relationships tend to have higher levels of subjective well-being. In this sense, the family is characterized as one of the main contexts that seem to have a greater relationship with life satisfaction throughout childhood. In order to give voice to children and respect their points of view, the present study seeks to understand children's perceptions of satisfaction with family relationships and their relationship with subjective well-being, in an attempt to discriminate what seems to affect their levels of well-being more strongly. Two focus groups were carried out, one online (composed of four boys and two girls) and another face-to-face (with six girls and one boy), totalling 13 children aged between nine and 10 years old, coming from public schools in Porto Alegre/RS, Brazil. The online group was carried out through Google Meet. The face-to-face group took place at the participants' school. Both groups lasted about 1h30min. A semi-structured script was used, which also contained a section intended to explore aspects of the Covid-19 pandemic in family relationships and in the subjective well-being of children, given the time frame of the present study. The audio and video recordings resulting from data collection were transcribed and analysed based on the assumptions of the Thematic Analysis. Field diaries constructed by the assistant researchers were also included in the analysis. The preliminary analysis of the data highlights the importance of the children's opinions being heard by their families, whether in common decisions or about their hobbies and interests. The quality time shared with the family also stands out in the children's reports. The development of joint activities seems to give children the feeling that they are important to the family. The definition of family was constantly associated with security and affection, and children also described the emotional impacts of attention deprivation. Regarding the period of the pandemic, the children especially highlighted their concern about the contamination of family members who work outside the home and about the impacts of cell phone use on their relationship. As for the different formats of focus groups - online and face-to-face -, it was observed that children tend to make more contributions on the subject developed in

the face-to-face model. While in the online focus group, it was possible to observe that the conduction needs to be more directive and constantly active, to stimulate them to talk and stick to the explored theme. Understanding and exploring the children's perspective on the family's influence on subjective well-being can be a useful strategy to expand the literature on childhood and the real needs and preferences of children. Promoting a space for listening to the family aims not only to guarantee children's rights but also to encourage the promotion of a family environment that is more responsive to children's demands, so that healthy child development is protected.