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Material Resources and Children's Subjective Well-Being in Eight Countries*

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Introduction

- This study is part of the Children's Worlds survey first wave data collection (<http://www.isciweb.org/>)
- Relationships between economic factors and subjective well-being are still inconclusive (Knies, 2012; Main, 2013; Rees et al., 2010)
- Recent research with children found relationships between material resources and subjective well-being:
 - Research conducted in England found that children who are materially deprived have lower subjective well-being (Main 2013; Main and Bradshaw 2012).
 - Spanish children with access to a computer, to the Internet, to a cell phone, and that had school clothes in good condition had subjective well-being significantly higher than children who lacked access to the above material resources (Casas and Bello, 2012).

Introduction

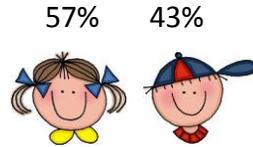
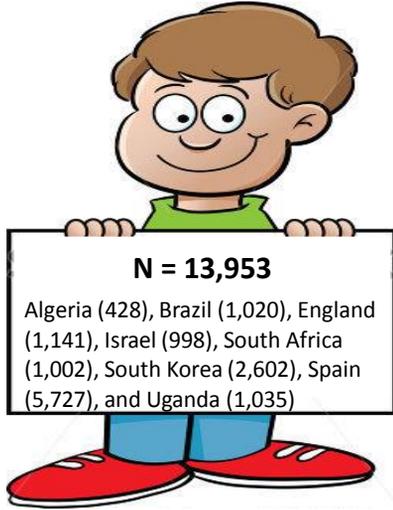
- International comparisons regarding this relationship with child samples are scarce.
- A comparison of 29 European countries revealed a negative association between the level of deprivation and the level of life satisfaction of young people (Bradshaw et al. 2011).
- Referring to a more general overall well-being measure, a positive association was found between child well-being and the country's gross domestic product per capita (GDP) (Bradshaw & Richardson 2009).

Objectives

- To examine the relationship between children's perception of their available material resources and their subjective well-being, in a cross-national perspective from eight countries: Algeria, Brazil, England, Israel, South Africa, South Korea, Spain and Uganda.
- To verify the relationship between some specific material aspects and the well-being of Brazilian children

Method

- **Participants**



Ages 10–14
 ($M = 12.05$; $SD = 0.59$)

Method

- **Instruments**

Well-being

- Student Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS, Huebner 1991)
- $\alpha = .82$

		Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following sentences					
		Strongly dis-agree	Dis-agree	Neither disagree nor agree	agree	Very much agree	Don't know
→	▪ My life is going well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
→	▪ My life is just right	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	▪ I would like to change many things in my life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	▪ I wish I had a different kind of life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
→	▪ I have a good life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
→	▪ I have what I want in life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	▪ My life is better than most kids	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Method

- Instruments

Material Resources (<http://www.isciweb.org>)

Which of the following things do or don't you have?	No	Yes
▪ Clothes in good condition to go to school in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Access to computer at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Access to Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Mobile phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- A variable was created by summing the four items – ranging from 0 (no access to material resources) to 4 (full access to material resources)

Method

- Instruments

Material Resources - Brazilian Data (<http://www.isciweb.org>)

How often do you get pocket money?

▪ I don't get pocket money	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ I get pocket money, but not regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ I get pocket money every week (approximately, how much do you get every week: €)	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ I get pocket money every month (approximately, how much do you get every month: €)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

How often do you worry about how much money your family has?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Method

- **Procedures**

- The data collection occurred in countries' respective schools, in the grade where most of the children were aged 12.
- The questionnaire was administered in the classrooms of the participating schools and supervised by the researchers or by trained persons.
- Different sampling methodologies: some samples are representative of the whole country (e.g., England, South Korea and Spain), while others are not representative or represent only a specific area within a country.

Method

- **Strategy of Analysis**

- Descriptive statistical analysis.
- Structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the relationship between perceived access to material resources and child subjective well-being.
- ANOVAs with Brazilian sample.

Cross-national Results

Table 1. Frequencies (%) of material resources by country (N= 13,953)

Country	Whether has...			
	Clothes in good condition to go to school	Access to a computer at home	Access to the internet	Mobile phone
	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)
Uganda	18.6	96.7	97.2	98.2
Algeria	11.4	44.5	55.9	57.9
South Africa	3.8	38.2	46.3	24.5
Israel	10.3	11.5	11.8	33.9
Brazil	1.4	10.4	12.8	8.9
South Korea	1.4	3.2	2.8	6.5
Spain	0.4	5.6	10.3	15.7
England	0.5	1.7	1.0	6.7

Cross-national Results

Table 2. Means (SD) of SLSS items and scale

Country	SLSS4 items				Mean SLSS4
	My life is going well	My life is just right	I have a good life	I have what I want in life	
Uganda	2.65(1.25)	2.70(1.18)	2.33(1.33)	1.63(1.28)	2.32(0.92)
Algeria	3.25(1.07)	3.21(1.10)	3.28(1.17)	2.92(1.36)	3.17(0.98)
South Africa	3.24(0.95)	3.12(1.05)	3.21(1.09)	2.79(1.24)	3.12(0.88)
Israel	3.47(0.84)	3.42(0.88)	3.47(0.95)	3.38(0.89)	3.44(0.72)
Brazil	3.20(0.86)	2.72(1.09)	3.38(0.87)	2.84(1.03)	3.04(0.78)
South Korea	2.66(0.86)	2.50(0.94)	2.81(0.87)	2.59(0.93)	2.65(0.76)
Spain	3.57(0.71)	3.12(1.00)	3.60(0.72)	3.16(0.96)	3.36(0.69)
England	3.18(0.82)	3.00(0.93)	3.02(0.96)	1.83(1.33)	2.76(0.52)

SLSS items range from 0 to 4. Higher scores indicate higher life satisfaction

Cross-national Results

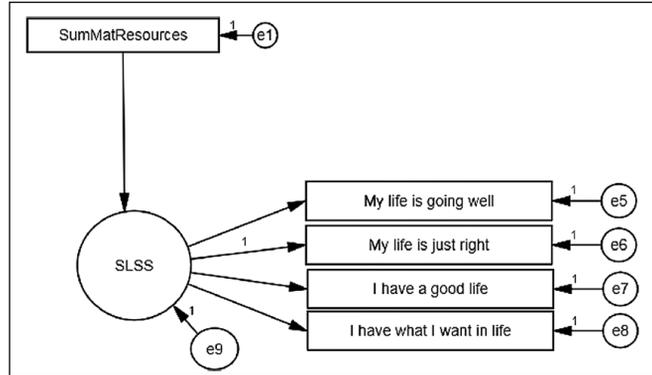


Fig 1. Structural model of the relationship between perception of material resources available and child subjective well-being

$\chi^2=518.85$ (df=40, $p<.001$), CFI=.979, NFI=.977, RMSEA =.029 (95% C.I.=.027–.032)

Cross-national Results

Table 3 Standardized parameter estimates for the final model

	Uganda	Algeria	South Africa	Israel	Brazil	South Korea	Spain	England
SLSS \leftarrow Mat. Resources	.165**	.357**	.196**	.122**	.159**	.052*	.112**	.102**
My life is going well \leftarrow SLSS	.781**	.812**	.777**	.866**	.857**	.874**	.824**	.866**
My life is just right \leftarrow SLSS	.835**	.753**	.807**	.753**	.765**	.871**	.755**	.906**
I have a good life \leftarrow SLSS	.563**	.875**	.797**	.695**	.780**	.721**	.814**	.620**
I have what I want \leftarrow SLSS	.288**	.676**	.648**	.685**	.624**	.666**	.627**	-.482**

** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$

Discussion

- Uganda > perceived access to material resources and > subjective well-being
- South Korea has access to material resources but their subjective well-being scores are the second lowest
- It could be related to the so-called “Asian bias” phenomenon
(Lau 2013; Mathews 2012; Tov and Diener 2007)
- South Korea has the weakest relationship between access to material resources and the SLSS (.052)
- Item-response styles could also explain cultural differences in well-being. It is possible Asian respondents selected responses generally located at the midpoint of the scale, rather than extremes (Lau 2013; Tov and Diener 2007)

Discussion

- Living in poverty and experiencing basic material resource deprivation affects the development and the subjective well-being of children
(Bedin and Sarriera 2014; Bradshaw 2002; Joen, Ha, and Choi 2013)
- However, when a “tolerable” or “adequate” level of perceived material resources is achieved, the data suggests material resources has less affect in children’s subjective well-being
- Other variables should be considered, such as the effect of culture and religion

Final Consideration

- The stronger relationship between these two constructs together with a very low average of subjective well-being that was found in Algeria, Uganda and South Africa, make explicit the importance that material resources have for children's subjective well-being, especially in cases of more extreme deprivation.



Brazilian Results

Table 4. How often do you get pocket money? (N = 1,020)

	I don't get pocket money ^a (14.2%)	I get pocket money but not regularly ^b (41%)	I get pocket money every week ^c (16.8%)	I get pocket money every month ^d (28%)	ANOVA F
SLSS 5	2.69 (0.79)	2.85 (0.79)	3.10 (0.71)	3.04 (0.65)	9.63**
OLS	8.40 (2.57)	8.79 (1.84)	9.13 (1.58)	9.10 (1.42)	6.01**

Note. SLSS ranges from 0 to 4. OLS ranges from 0 to 10.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. SLSS Bonferroni: $a = b < c = d$. OLS Bonferroni: $a < c = d$

USD	%
\$ 1 – 3	37.7
\$ 3.1 – 5	13.0
\$ 5.1 – 9	27.9
\$ 9.1 – 35	21.4

No significant differences

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* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. SLSS Bonferroni: a = b < c = d. OLS Bonferroni: a < c = d

USD	%
\$ 1 – 20	29.6
\$ 21 - 40	16.3
\$ 41 – 83	31.5
\$ 84 – 350	22.6

No significant differences

Table 4. How often do you get pocket money? (N = 1,020)

	I don't get pocket money ^a (14.2%)	I get pocket money but not regularly ^b (41%)	I get pocket money every week ^c (16.8%)	I get pocket money every month ^d (28%)	ANOVA F
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Note. SLSS ranges from 0 to 4. OLS ranges from 0 to 10.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. SLSS Bonferroni: a = b < c = d. OLS Bonferroni: a < c = d

Brazilian Results

Table 5. How often do you worry about how much money your family has ($N = 1,020$)

	Never (17.7%)	Sometimes (47.2%)	Often (19.3%)	Always (15.8%)
SLSS 5	3.06 (0.83)	2.89 (0.69)	2.86 (0.73)	2.94 (0.78)
OLS	9.07 (2.03)	8.82 (1.73)	8.82 (1.64)	8.82 (2.13)

Note. SLSS ranges from 0 to 4. OLS ranges from 0 to 10.

- No significant differences in ANOVA test



Discussion

- **Brazilian data:**
 - Children who receive pocket money (every week or month) present significant higher means of subjective well-being than children who don't get or get it but not regularly.
 - This difference is not influenced by the amount of pocket money received.
 - Children that never worry about how much money their family has, have better well-being, although the difference is not significant.
 - The results are similar to those of Casas and Bello (2012):
 - Spanish children with higher well-being were those who receive regular pocket money from their parents and never worry about money

- *Limitations:*

- The use of non-representative sampling methodology limits the generalization of findings.
- Our sample was restricted to children aged 10–14 years old.
- The use of limited data that were available in all countries also restricted other options of data analysis.

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THANK YOU!

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