

OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION OF LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN NORTHERN CHILE

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Abstract: Aim: Evaluate overall life satisfaction in a sample of 300 immigrant children aged between 8 and 13 years old. Methods: Satisfaction in different domains, and with life as a whole, was evaluated using the Overall Life Satisfaction (OLS) index. This instrument was also applied to a sample of 300 non-immigrant children of similar age. Results: With regard to the general life satisfaction score, the boys' mean score was significantly higher than of girls ($F(1)=15.770$; $p=0.000$). There were no significant differences due to nationality or due to the sex \times nationality interaction. Conclusions: These findings contribute the first steps to obtain more information regarding well-being in Latin American children.

Keywords: Immigration, Child Migration, Life Satisfaction, Family, Latin-America.

I. OBJECTIVE:

The study aimed to describe and analyze the factors related to the cognitive component of well-being (overall 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.

II. METHOD:

This study was observational, analytical, and cross-sectional in nature.

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.

Instruments

Overall Life Satisfaction (OLS) (Schützet al. 2015).

Procedure

The study was approved by the 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 the different age ranges (8–9 years, 10–11 years, and 12–13 years).

In order 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 into SPSS20. Descriptive statistical analyses were carried out for sociodemographic variables and for 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 sex, and the interaction between sex and nationality.

III. RESULTS

The survey involved 600 children of both sexes, 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 the participants by sex and age range.

[INSERT TABLE 1]

Table 2 shows that, for the 8–9 years group, immigrants had a higher general life satisfaction score. The differences between non-immigrants and immigrants and between males and females, and the

sex × nationality interaction were not statistically significant.

For the 10–11 years group, was found that non-immigrants had a higher general life satisfaction score as compared to the immigrants. There were no significant differences between genders or due to the sex × nationality interaction.

For the 12–13 years group, was found that non-immigrants had a higher general life satisfaction score as compared to immigrants. There were no significant differences owing to the sex × nationality interaction.

With regard to the general life satisfaction score, the boys' mean score was significantly higher than of girls ($F_{(1)}=15.770$; $p=0.000$). There were no significant differences due to nationality or due to the sex × nationality interaction.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

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 *et al.* 2015).

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

Age range	Non-immigrants				Immigrants			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
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

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of OLS Scores by age range

years	Non-immigrants						Immigrants					
	M		F		T		M		F		T	
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
8-9	9.3	1.85	8.96	1.92	9.13	1.89	9.45	1.65	9.26	2.10	9.32	1.97
10-11	8.58	2.55	8.83	2.51	8.68	2.53	8.58	2.66	8.73	2.07	8.66	2.36
12-13	9.37	1.69	8.07	2.97	8.67	2.54	9.02	1.68	7.48	3.39	8.37	2.64

M: Male; F: Female; SD: Standard Deviation; OLS Overall Life Satisfaction.

