



Children participating in after-school programs in Chile: Subjective well-being, satisfaction with free time use and satisfaction with the program

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the subjective well-being and satisfaction with the use of free time of 1,033 Chilean children (49.1% girls) aged 9 to 14 years of whom 568 attend a public after-school Program and 465 do not. The satisfaction levels of participants in the Program are also assessed. All of the children are living in contexts of high social vulnerability, and they attend municipal schools. Well-being scales previously validated in Chile and free-time use items internationally used were applied here. The scales' fit and score equivalence between groups were evaluated with a confirmatory factor analysis and multi-group structural equations analysis. The overall results show that children in both groups presented high levels of subjective well-being. Although the majority of those attending the Program had higher scores, the differences did not reach statistical significance. With the more specific analysis, the children attending the Program showed significantly higher scores in some subjective well-being aspects. They also felt happier and more satisfied with their use of free time compared to the group not attending the Program. The results also indicated high satisfaction with the Program, a significant correlation between Program participation, and a greater diversity of activities pursued outside of the classroom. The impact of socio-demographic variables such as age and gender were analyzed using multiple regression. The effect of public initiatives on children's well-being is discussed in light of the scant research currently available in the field. Two other points are discussed as well. Specifically, the results of this research may add to the knowledge around child subjective well-being. The use of subjective well-being indicators when evaluating public policies in support of childhood is also addressed.

1. Introduction

Well-being promotion during childhood and adolescence, which includes the fostering of human rights, has been proposed as one of the biggest challenges for the social sciences in this century (Alfaro et al., 2015). Interest in the study of subjective well-being has been growing in recent decades. This concept refers to the positive or negative assessments that people make about their own lives.

Subjective well-being is viewed as a measurement of the subjective quality of life of individuals and societies (Diener, 2012). Consensus has been achieved around the three basic characteristics of subjective well-being: 1) It is based on the experiences of each individual and their

perceptions and evaluations of said experiences; 2) It includes positive measurements, not simply the absence of negative aspects; and 3) It includes a general evaluation of life, usually called satisfaction with life (Diener, 1994, 2012). Its study is concerned with how people positively perceive and evaluate their own lives through both cognitive determinations and affective reactions.

The conceptual framework proposed by Diener (1984), known as the tripartite well-being model, includes one cognitive and two affective components. The cognitive component is comprised of assessments made by individuals about their lives as a whole (overall life satisfaction) as well as specific aspects or domains that are believed to contribute to that overall assessment. The two affective components are

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made up of positive affective experiences on one hand and negative affective experiences on the other. This tripartite model reflects the multiple facets that make up subjective well-being, as this is not a simple unitary entity. Therefore, subjective well-being can be considered as a construct composed of three dimensions and has been updated using structural equation models that provide empirical evidence of their good fit (Arthaud-Day et al., 2005; Metler & Busseri, 2017).

Numerous investigations have made it possible for the subjective information provided by individuals to now be structured scientifically. People's opinions, perceptions and assessments have become useful data for decision-making concerning social policies (Campbell et al., 1976; Veenhoven, 2002). However, it has only been a bit more than two decades since the challenge was accepted of incorporating information provided by children from their own perspectives into this new set of scientific knowledge, as they are seen today as key informants about matters affecting them (Casas, 2018).

1.1. Studying the subjective well-being of children and adolescents

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, widely endorsed by member states of the United Nations in its defense of the right to social participation, has made a contribution toward the understanding that children are human beings whose perspectives must be considered when generating knowledge and designing public policies. These advances have changed the conception of children from objects of protection to consider them as subjects under law, and therefore active social agents with their own opinions (Casas, 2018).

The results of recent research have made evident the difference between adults' and children's perceptions. Various authors propose that the data provided directly by children are more effective for predicting and explaining child subjective well-being than an approach based on information provided by their parents ((Main and Bradshaw, 2012)).

In parallel, this field of research in recent years has witnessed a growing interest in the study of the subjective well-being and consideration of children's viewpoints in Chile (Alfaro-Inzunza et al., 2019; Alfaro Inzunza et al., 2013; Bilbao et al., 2021; Cabieses et al., 2020; Oyanedel et al., 2015; Oyanedel et al., 2014; Oyarzún et al., 2019). Results are currently available from investigations that used a range of validated psychometric instruments that facilitate the study of children's subjective well-being using evidence already collected from the child and adolescent population of various ages.

Child subjective well-being has been evaluated using overall satisfaction measurements together with satisfaction by domains, just as had been done previously with adult subjective well-being. Similarly, the subjective well-being of children refers to how they evaluate their own lives both in general terms as well as specific life areas such as family, friends or free time (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014). The study of multiple domains has helped obtain a more specific understanding of the subjective well-being of the younger population. Special attention has been given to individual, family, school and community variables along with their effects on the progression of subjective well-being during childhood and adolescence (Bedin & Sarriera, 2014; González-Carrasco et al., 2019; Lee & Yoo, 2015; Newland et al., 2019). Research in the family domain has shown that this is a key predictor of children's subjective well-being (Rees et al., 2020). Seligson and collaborators (2003) have shown that the areas of greatest impact on overall life satisfaction for children and adolescents are family, friends, school, their surroundings and satisfaction with the self. Another important aspect of well-being that has been identified and studied is the use of time. Children's well-being seems connected to satisfaction and the ways in which they spend their time.

1.2. Subjective well-being and the use of free time

The use of free time and its connection to well-being has been a topic of interest and debate. Evidence has been gathered concerning the association between participating in free-time activities and adults'

subjective well-being (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2011). However, less is known about the way these activities affect children's subjective well-being (Rees, 2018). Only recently have lines of research in this area been opened up to report on the associations between the use of free time and subjective well-being during childhood and adolescence (Bruck & Ben-Arieh, 2020; Sarriera et al., 2014, Shin & You, 2013; Rees, 2018; Tonon et al., 2019).

The use of free time has been defined in various ways. One notion is the concept of unoccupied time, which includes any activity that does not involve paid work in the case of adults or attending school in the case of children. Another approach is to emphasize activities that include the feature of being a positive, pleasurable and intrinsically motivating experience (Haworth & Veal, 2004; Larson & Verma, 1999; Tonon et al., 2019). At the same time, the rise of new kinds of recreation and interests have been observed, such as computer games, participation in online social networks and activities via cellular phones (Rees, 2018).

One investigation done with adolescents in different European countries showed differences in the level of participation in sports and outdoor activities (Santaliestra-Pasias et al., 2014) as well as changes in free-time use trends over the years, such as increased computer use and decreasing levels of physical activity (Zuzanek, 2005). These results concur with a comparative study among 16 countries done with the Children's Worlds international survey. It explored the use of free time in different countries as well as the association between children's use of free time and their subjective well-being (Rees, 2018). It was found that there are different free-time usage patterns in the various countries. There are also differences when comparing the results by gender, age and material deprivation in the majority of the sample in the studied nations. A subsequent study found similar results. It suggests that children's profiles in terms of the use of free time outside of school relate more to their economic situation rather than their country of residence (Sauerwein & Rees, 2020).

On the association between the use of free time and subjective well-being, a study by Rees (2018) revealed a clear connection between the frequency of sports activities and high levels of positive affect and life satisfaction. Such results are similar to what has been reported by other research (Eime et al., 2013; Luna et al., 2020). A positive association was also observed between the frequency of reading for pleasure and high levels of subjective well-being. The conclusion here is that children who frequently engage in sports and/or who read for their own interest tend to be happier and more satisfied with their lives (Rees, 2018). Other authors have suggested that the time use factor can give us information about their opportunities for acquiring and applying skills that are essential for children's well-being (Bruck & Ben-Arieh, 2020).

Some authors classify free-time activities as organized ones like sports or hobbies and non-structured, relaxed leisure activities like watching television or doing nothing in particular. Results have concluded that the structured leisure activities usually organized or supervised by adults are associated with higher levels of well-being (Bartko & Eccles, 2003, Trainor et al., 2010). One study with adolescents in Catalonia, Spain and the State of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil showed that free-time activities make up a relevant domain of adolescent well-being. The results analysis revealed that structured free-time activities that speak to the intrinsic motivations of adolescents, that were entertaining, and included other people demonstrated positive effects on the subjective well-being of adolescents (Sarriera et al., 2014).

In short, there is evidence that connects the use of free time with children's subjective well-being even though the vast majority of this research has been done in high-income countries. There are still substantial knowledge gaps on this topic in countries with other backgrounds (Rees, 2018), such as Chile for example.

The Children's Worlds International project, which currently has more than 30 participating countries including Chile, has been a considerable catalyst in the study of children's subjective well-being. In addition to sharing general reports on children's subjective well-being in the various countries, it has provided a set of psychometric instruments

validated at the international level to evaluate cognitive and affective components as well as a range of life domains. This is consistent with the multifaceted vision of subjective well-being supported by available evidence (Casas & Rees, 2015; Casas 2017). The completed assessments have produced a body of knowledge that has assisted in studying and understanding children's lives, their subjective well-being, and their use of time (Bruck & Ben-Arieh, 2020).

1.3. Sociodemographic variables and their connection to subjective well-being

The results of available studies to date regarding the effect of sociodemographic variables on child subjective well-being have not been conclusive regarding the distinct variables studied (Dinisman & Ben-Arieh, 2016). One of the most examined variables has been children's age. A descending trend in subjective well-being has been detected that tracks with increasing age toward adolescence in the majority of studied countries (Casas & González-Carrasco, 2019; Goldbeck et al. 2007; Tiliouine et al., 2019; Tomyrn & Cummins, 2011). The literature indicates that this decline is due to changes that are part of adolescent development (in the physical, cognitive, endocrinological and socio-emotional levels) as well as the pressures that are increasingly placed on this age group by the school system, and their concerns about feeling they pertain to and are accepted by their peer group (Žukauskienė, 2014).

Gender is another studied variable. Some studies have found no meaningful differences (Castellá Sarriera et al., 2012; Huebner et al., 2006), whereas others show differences in subjective well-being between girls and boys (Kaye-Tzadok et al., 2017; Llosada-Gistau et al. 2019). One study by González-Carrasco and collaborators (González-Carrasco et al., 2017) done with 940 adolescents aged 10 to 15 years found that this difference was not detectable in terms of the overall life satisfaction of the studied group, but did observe satisfaction differences in domains (González-Carrasco et al., 2017). Another study with more than 5,000 adolescent participants in 16 countries that reported low levels of subjective well-being found that low scores for girls were more influenced by interpersonal relationships whereas for boys academic achievement had more impact (Kaye-Tzadok et al., 2017).

In light of the inconsistencies among results from various investigations, Chen et al. (2020) did a meta-analysis of empirical studies conducted between 1980 and 2017 to examine the gender differences in the overall life satisfaction of girls and boys. The results revealed that overall life satisfaction does not vary due to gender with a slightly higher scores for male teenagers. They furthermore concluded that there were some moderating characteristics that could explain the differences uncovered among the investigations. It was found that the geographic region of the study, the specific domains of well-being that were considered, the type of students, and age all constituted characteristics that moderated the gender differences reported in the studies (Chen et al., 2020).

A study done in Chile that included data from 1,520 students aged 8 to 14 showed that in general children's well-being scores tended to be high. This same study, however, also found that younger students had higher subjective well-being than the older students and that boys in general presented higher overall well-being than the girls (Guzmán et al., 2017). These results are concordant with what has been reported at the international level in other studies.

In terms of the child population, the study of the relationship between socioeconomic variables and subjective well-being is still in the early stages, so the results are not yet conclusive (Gross-Manos, 2017; Rees, 2021). It has been reported that children that are highly deprived economically have a more negative well-being level (Bedin & Sarriera, 2015; Gademann et al., 2016; Viñas et al., 2019). In a comparative study among children in Brazil, Chile and Spain, the results showed that those reporting elevated material conditions had levels of happiness and life satisfaction that are significantly higher than the children who

reported low material conditions. It has therefore been suggested that children's socioeconomic and material conditions have an effect on their subjective well-being and overall life satisfaction. Material conditions are important for children and affect their happiness and feeling of social exclusion when they lack the material resources that their peers can access (Rees, 2021). Furthermore, some authors have concluded in their studies that evaluating material deprivation would be a more relevant indicator of children's subjective well-being than measurements based on family income (Main & Bradshaw, 2012).

1.4. After-school programs and children's well-being

The conclusions drawn in a number of countries from experience with well-being promotion programs in the school setting as well as ones that take place after-school is that these may improve child development and function as preventive factors against various social problems (Casas, 2011; Casas et al., 2013; Durlak et al., 2010; Jenson et al., 2018; Sarriera et al., 2017; Shoshani & Steinmetz, 2014).

A range of studies demonstrate that children in families with average and high incomes routinely experience a wide variety of organized activities after-school, which are usually funded with fees paid by the families (Howie et al., 2010). In contrast, children growing up in low-income families historically have had limited access to after-school programs and extracurricular activities, although their parents state that their children would participate if there were programs available (Vandell et al., 2015). In order to address this inequity, several countries have created after-school programs that provide children with opportunities for diverse learning, a good way to spend time, and an opportunity for development. Interest in the after-school period has increased due to multiple factors such as the needs of working families whose schedules prevent them from being home after-school (Mahoney et al., 2007).

After-school programs play a key role for families and communities in various countries as it provides additional education in a safe environment. These programs have evolved from safe shelters for children without adult supervision to enrichment programs that foster well-being (Farrell et al., 2019).

After-school programs are defined as a set of planned activities that are periodically engaged in after the school day has finished and are maintained throughout the school year. These may also include weekend activities and, in some cases, programs during summer vacation. What sets these activities apart from other extracurricular activities is that they take place daily or at least once per week throughout the school year. The activities are more flexible than daily school activities and are structured according to a plan made for each program in consideration of the children's characteristics and local conditions (Lester et al., 2020). These programs vary in their structure, goals and activities, although in general they aim to boost academic capacities and community activities and to develop social and behavioral skills. They also mitigate the occurrence of behavior problems (Afterschool Alliance, 2018; Eccles & Templeton, 2002; Lester et al., 2020). The majority of these programs that get state funding are focused in low socioeconomic communities or are targeted to ethnic, racial or linguistic minority groups (González, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

The evidence suggests that after-school programs may have compensatory effects on development for children facing developmental risk. According to Riggs and Greenberg (2004), these are the ones who benefit most from after-school programs. It has also been suggested that these programs positively impact students' reading and mathematics education (Lauer et al., 2006) and reduce problematic behavior (Durlak et al., 2010). Despite extensive evidence that suggests there are positive effects produced by participating in after-school programs, the results vary widely among studies concerning the efficacy of each program (Lester et al., 2020; Vandell et al., 2020).

One focal point in recent years has been the quality of after-school programs in light of study results that have assessed and compared

after-school program outcomes. A large part of research to date has centered on evaluating whether a program can predict academic performance in young people or their social and behavioral well-being. The results generally confirm such effects when activities are of high quality (Malone, 2018). One meta-analytic study by Durlak et al. (2010) condensed the results of 75 studies on extracurricular programs. Their results suggest that programs denominated as SAFE (sequenced, active, focused, and explicit), meaning programs that are sequentially organized and active with a clear and explicit focus, predicted more positive self-perceptions, a desire for higher education and less problematic behavior with respect to youths that participated in programs that did not meet the SAFE criteria. Other studies have focused attention on children's attendance and active participation within a structured, positive environment as well as the satisfactory training of personnel in charge of activities, suggesting that they are key variables in the children's outcomes even if the evidence has not been conclusive (Farrell et al., 2019; Pierce et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2017; Vandell et al., 2020).

In general, studies warn that a program of quality is essential for obtaining successful outcomes with children (Mahoney et al., 2007; Pierce et al., 2010). Gathering evidence on the efficacy of after-school programs has been challenging due to the wide variability in methodological and practical factors. Furthermore, many of the evaluation studies are affected by high dropout rates, sporadic attendance and/or the lack of a control group (Bender et al., 2011; Jenson et al., 2018). Lester et al. (2020) conducted a critical analysis of past studies in another systematic revision and meta-analysis. In it they proposed that the majority of revisions limit their samples to studies that were rigorously developed, which is not representative of the broader bibliography. The results of this review show that the inclusion of studies of lesser quality significantly affects the overall results.

For some authors, a high-quality program includes positive relationships and support between students and staff, positive relationships among students, high child participation rates in program activities, a range of activities that support an orientation toward mastery and the cognitive growth of children that have appropriate structural levels to the program (i.e., the programs are neither chaotic nor excessively controlled) (Vandell et al., 2020).

Although more research is needed, in all aspects of juvenile development including physical, there is evidence that the quality of after-school programs determines to what extent an activity has the potential to impact positive youth maturation and positive results in children's development or if well-being can be increased.

1.5. After-school programs and subjective well-being studies in Chile

In Chile, just like in other countries, abundant evidence shows there are high emotional, social, economic and political costs that arise when serious endangerment of children and adolescents rights gets addressed too late (Centro de Políticas Públicas UC, 2017; Naudeau et al., 2011). This means it is important to understand, analyze and strengthen the quality of preventive and supportive programs aimed at children and adolescents. Although in Chile, as in other countries, progress has been made on public policies in support of childhood and adolescence under the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, many challenges still remain concerning the transition from a guardianship policy toward a policy to protect children's rights. The institutional framework in the field of public action has been strengthened; however, programs are still primarily focused on intervention in the case of serious rights endangerment or reducing childhood risk factors in situations of poverty rather than expanding programs aimed at prevention, development and well-being (Contreras et al., 2015; Martín Munchmeyer et al., 2020).

After-school programs have emerged in Chile over the last decade both in the public and private sectors. The public sector created the 4 to 7 Program, an initiative that has grown since 2010 from 400 children participating to more than 12,000 in 2019 (Servicio Nacional de la

Mujer y Equidad de Género, 2020). This trend is comparable to what is going on in other countries (Kremer et al., 2015; Oberle et al., 2019; Vandell et al., 2015). Despite this increased coverage, the Program, just like other social programs in Chile, has no specific studies assessing its outcomes (Berger et al., 2020; Contreras et al., 2015).

The 4 to 7 Program is set up for the 6- to 13- year old children of women who are working or looking for work and that are at a poor socio-economic level. The aim of the program is to support the workforce participation of these women, primarily heads of households, by offering comprehensive care of their children after school. The program runs every weekday from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM, i.e., after the standard school day has finished, so the program fills three hours of the children's time daily. It has school-planned workshops, themed workshops, and comprehensive development workshops with a gender focus. The program is implemented by the municipalities with the local public education services and the same schools in the district where the Program takes place. Municipalities wishing to implement it apply to a public fund established by the National Service for Women and Gender Equality. Once the funds are allotted, staff are hired to carry it out. There are general technical and administrative guidelines for implementing the Program (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer y Equidad de Género, 2021).

The after-school Program activities are limited to groups of 30 children maximum per workshop so that a closer relationship can be maintained with the monitors. Each workshop is facilitated by a monitor who must fit a general profile described in the technical guidelines. They call for someone with experience working with children, a technician or professional in education, psychology, or social sciences and other administrative requirements are laid out. In addition to the monitors, there is a coordinator who safeguards overall Program development. As stated earlier, the hours of operation are Monday through Friday and has a structure that includes school work so that when the children get home they will have already completed their assignments. There are themed workshops such as sports, arts, and information technology, and another called comprehensive development with a gender focus that addresses topics like the rights of the child, stereotypes in gender relationships, violence prevention, and more. The children sign up for themed workshops in accordance with their preferences. The schoolwork support activities and the comprehensive development workshop are attended by all children. During the course of the Program they receive a snack that is provided and nutritionally verified by the National Board of School Aid and Scholarships (JUNAEB). These women voluntarily enroll their children in this service, which is free of charge. Once registered, the children and mothers make a commitment to attend for the duration of Program enrollment. The children can cease Program enrollment and registration at any time during the year, which is done by giving notification through an official procedure (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer y Equidad de Género, 2021).

Regarding Program assessments, the relevant indicators are focused on appraising its administration as well as how much the workplace participation of the women and caretakers has increased. It does not measure the quality of life nor the well-being of the children themselves (Martínez & Perticará, 2017). This lack of consideration of the children's opinions and assessments is a common characteristic of social programs in Chile. Many initiatives that directly affect children do not take their opinions into consideration. This problem has been criticized in numerous childhood reports because of the fact that a child's opinion is one of the aspects least considered in the social projects and programs aimed at childhood (Consejo Nacional de la Infancia, 2018; Comité de los Derechos del Niño, 2007). Since the views of children are not considered, these assessments fail to address the question of whether such public investment initiatives contribute to children's well-being from their own perspective.

Studies into subjective well-being during childhood and adolescence have produced an accumulation of knowledge regarding child development in recent decades. The research results show that subjective well-being in childhood is related to self-efficacy, optimism, improved

academic results, and better family and interpersonal relationships (Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Shoshani & Steinmetz, 2014; Suldo et al., 2014). The self-assessments that children make of various dimensions of their lives have also been incorporated into scientific research. Growing interest in studying this means more countries now have evidence-based knowledge that guides new fields of research in psychology and other disciplines. It also helps create new program design and assessment criteria with the aim of fostering quality of life and preventing rights' endangerment (Sarriera et al., 2017; Durlak et al., 2010; Suldo et al., 2014).

The purpose of this study is to do an exploratory evaluation of the subjective well-being of children and adolescents participating in after-school programs, their satisfaction with the Program, and with their use of free time. The specific goals set out for evaluation are:

- the subjective well-being of children participating or not participating in after-school programs while bearing in mind the cognitive and affective components of that well-being.
- satisfaction with the use of time in general and of free time in particular of the children who do or do not participate in the after-school Programs.
- the association between gender and age with subjective well-being of the children who do or do not participate in the after-school Programs.

Although the investigation conducted here is of a fundamentally exploratory nature, it is hypothesized that children participating in the after-school Programs will demonstrate high satisfaction with the Program and greater satisfaction than the non-participating group with their use of free time.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 1,033 children (507 girls and 526 boys), of which 568 participated in the Program and 465 did not¹. The group of non-participants will be used as a reference comparative group in the present study. Ages ranged from 9 to 14 years ($M = 11.02$, $SD = 1.18$) – 919 of the children (89%) live in urban areas and 114 in rural areas (11%). In terms of nationality, 841 of the children were Chilean (81.4%) and 192 foreigners (18.6%) (see Table 1).

All the children and adolescents in this study were in the socioeconomic range of poverty according to the Educational Vulnerability Index used in Chile (IVE-SINAE). The IVE-SINAE, which is calculated annually by a public body, the National Board for School Aid and Scholarship (JUNAEB), ranges between 0 and 100%. The higher percentages represent higher levels of vulnerability. The IVE-SINAE expresses the condition of risk of poverty of the students at every school (Junta De Auxilio Escolar y Becas, 2020). The children in the sample studied at schools with an average IVE in the upper quintile of social vulnerability, representing 88.12%.

2.2. Instruments

The study included psychometric well-being scales and items on satisfaction with use of free time that are used internationally and that were validated in Chile by prior research (Alfaro et al., 2016; Bruck & Ben-Arieh, 2020). Out of the four scales used for evaluating subjective well-being, three relate to cognitive components and the fourth is

¹ To facilitate the reading of this document, it will be called Program or Program group to refer to the children and adolescents who attend the after-school Program, 4 to 7 and non-participating group to the group of children who did not participate in the after-school program.

Table 1
Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample.

	Non-participating group		Program group		Total	
	n	(%)	n	%	n	%
Gender						
Female	209	44.9	298	52.5	507	49.1
Male	256	55.1	270	47.5	526	50.9
Age						
9	30	6.5	57	10.0	87	8.4
10 years	64	13.8	213	37.5	277	26.8
11 years	194	41.7	142	25.0	336	32.5
12 years	121	26.0	94	16.6	215	20.8
13 years	40	8.6	55	9.7	95	9.2
14 years	16	3.4	7	1.2	23	2.2
Nationality						
Chilean	390	83.9	451	79.4	841	81.4
Immigrant	75	16.1	117	20.6	192	18.6
Area type						
Urban	419	90.1	500	88	919	89.0
Rural	46	9.9	68	12	114	11.0

affective in nature. Items are also included for evaluating satisfaction with the after-school Program and some of its characteristics for participating children.

1. Five-item version of the Children's Worlds Subjective Well-Being Scale (CW-SWBS). These items measure the cognitive dimension of subjective well-being without any context. Its original design was based on the Students' Life Satisfaction Scale - SLSS (Huebner, 1991) validated in Chile by Alfaro et al. (2015). In order to improve its internal consistency and intercultural comparability, the scale has undergone successive modifications through the various waves of data collection for the Children's Worlds project. A new and improved seven-item version was piloted in the third wave. One of the items was eliminated after the pilot program because of its weak intercultural comparability. The confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) and subsequent multigroup structural equations models with data from 35 countries led to the conclusion that the five-item scale (CW-SWBS5) is the most interculturably comparable version (Casas & González-Carrasco, 2021; Bruck & Ben-Arieh, 2020). This study used a five-item version based on a specific CFA of the responses collected from the Chilean sample using the seven-item version. Said CFA showed that the best fit was provided by a five-item version, with one of them being distinct from the suggestions of Casas and González-Carrasco (2021). The included items were: "My life is just as it should be", "The things in my life are excellent", "I like my life", "I enjoy my life", and "I'm happy with my life". The response scale format is an 11-point Likert type scale with values ranging from 0 = "Completely disagree" up to 10 = "Completely agree" (see Table 5).
2. The Children's Worlds Domain Based Subjective Well-being Scale (CW-DBSWBS) measures cognitive aspects of SWB through satisfaction with life domains. It was initially based on the Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) (Seligson et al., 2003). The version used corresponds to the one modified by Casas and Rees (2015), validated in Chile by Casas et al. (2015). The scale includes 5 items. The scale uses 11 points, from 0 to 10, in which 0 is "Not satisfied at all" and 10 is "Totally satisfied" (see Table 5).
3. The Overall Life Satisfaction Global Scale (OLS) is a single-item cognitive SWB scale. It evaluates global satisfaction with life following what was proposed by Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976). The OLS has presented adequate convergent validity with other measurements of satisfaction among Chilean, Brazilian, Spanish, and Rumanian students (Casas et al., 2015). The scale has 11 points, from 0 to 10, and indicates: *How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?*
4. The Children's Worlds Positive and Negative Affect Scale (CW-PNAS) is considered a measurement of the affective component of SWB and

is based on Barrett and Russell's Scale of Core Affect (Barrett & Russell, 1998). This version, as with the previous scales, forms part of the third wave of the Children's Worlds questionnaire. The heading states: *Tick the box that best describes how you have felt in the last two weeks*, and offers an 11-point range to respond. In the Spanish adapted version, 0 is "not at all" and 10 represents "all the time". It includes Positive Affect (PA): happy, calm, and full of energy, and Negative Affect (NA): sad, stressed, and bored (see Table 5).

5. List of items on time use, adopted from the Children's Worlds project², including two items on satisfaction with the use of time and 14 items on the frequency of different after-school activities. Satisfaction was measured with a 11-point scale, where 0 is "Not satisfied at all" and 10 "Completely satisfied". The items are: *"how do you use your time"* and *"the amount of free time you have to do what you want"*. The items about frequency of after-school activities include questions about diverse activities, detailed in Table 4. The responses are based on a range of frequency from "never" to "every day".
6. Four items on satisfaction with the program, measured with a scale of 11 points between 0 and 10, where 0 is "not at all satisfied", and 10 is "completely satisfied". The items are: *"How satisfied are you with the workshop in which you are participating"*, *"How satisfied are you with your workshop companions"*, *"How satisfied are you with the workshop monitor"*, and *"How satisfied are you with the overall program"*.

2.3. Procedure

2.3.1. Pilot testing

Before the questionnaire was administered, a pilot test was conducted with a group of children from the program with the aim of checking their understanding of the questions, the time required to complete the questionnaire, the clarity of the initial indications, with a brief dialogue afterward with the respondents to gather their first impressions and/or doubts. After the information was analyzed, the questionnaire was improved and its definitive format was designed.

2.3.2. Selection of the sample

The National Service for Women and Gender Equality (SERNAMEG) was contacted for assistance in selecting participants in the sample. SERNAMEG is a public service that has responsibility for the "Program 4 to 7". We contacted SERNAM to facilitate access to schools that participate in the program in the Metropolitan Region. The service formally authorized our study and facilitated it by inviting persons in charge of the program to participate. Of the 71 schools that participated in the program in 2019 in the Metropolitan Region, 60 agreed to help in our study (84.5% of the schools). The non-participating group was composed of children in the same age range and from the same schools, but that did not participate in the program.

Regarding the configuration of the groups, the Program group was made up of all of the children who attended the Program as of the date of survey application that were within the age range included in the study. The non-participating group was comprised of the children in the same classes who did not attend an after-school program and answered the survey. The researchers were unable to have any additional controls over each group's characteristics, so the equivalence and comparability of responses were then analyzed using multigroup analysis with structural equation models.

2.3.3. Data collection

Data was collected during the 2019 school year between May and December. Contact was made with every participating school and program coordinator to set dates to administer the instruments with groups of program participants and the non-participating group. Prior to this, informed consent forms were given to parents and legal guardians of

children that participated in the program and were in the age range identified for the study. An alternative activity was conducted for children whose parents did not authorize the application of the questionnaire while their companions were responding to the questionnaire. The scales were applied to children in groups and in the presence of a member of the research team.

2.3.4. Ethical aspects

The research was carried out in accordance with the ethical norms established by the Doctoral Program in Psychology, Health, and Quality of Life of the Universitat de Girona for research with persons, and the ethical research protocols that guide scientific research in Chile (CONICYT/FONDECYT, 2008). Authorization and official sponsorship were obtained for the study from the National Service for Women and Gender Equality, which is the public office responsible for the program at a national level. Directors and coordinators of the program at the school level were contacted and formally invited to participate, including to authorize the administration of the questionnaire with a signed form. Parents or legal guardians of participating children were asked to sign an informed consent form that was sent to them prior to the application of the questionnaire. The consent of the children was also sought through a document that explained that their participation was voluntary and that their anonymity and the confidentiality of the information they gave would be maintained and that the information would only be used for research purposes.

2.4. Data analysis

Questionnaires in which 25% or more of all the items had no response were excluded. Subsequently, an analysis was made scale by scale, and cases were also excluded when 25% of the responses in one or more scales were missing. As a result, 66 out of 1099 cases were excluded, so that the final sample was composed of 1033 children. Remaining missing values were imputed by regression with SPSS 21 software. The fit and statistical validation of the scales were verified through a confirmatory factorial analysis (CFA) with the maximum likelihood method. Multigroup models were then analyzed with the non-participating and program groups to determine if the parameters of the psychometric instruments were invariant for both groups, and consequently, if the results were comparable. Amos 21 software was used for this analysis. The chi-squared, Bentler Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Steiger-Lind Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) were used as indices to verify the fit of the models. Values above 0.95 in the CFA and below 0.05 in the RMSEA and SRMR were considered excellent fit (Arbuckle, 2010; Byrne, 2010).

To compare the two groups, we used the multigroup CFA, considering three levels of invariance: (a) configural invariance (model without restrictions), (b) metric invariance (load restriction), (c) scalar invariance (load restriction and constants). Metric invariance permits comparisons of correlations and regressions, while scale invariance permits comparisons of means. All the models were tested with these three steps. Invariance was considered acceptable when a CFI change of less than 0.01 was observed after any additional constrain (Chen 2007; Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

After verifying the factorial structure of the scales, descriptive statistics and correlation between scales were calculated. The global indices of the scales were transformed into a 0 to 100 range to facilitate visual comparison. Finally, a multiple regression model was applied to evaluate the effects of demographic variables and the activities in the use of free time to measure SWB.

² Project website: "<http://www.isciweb.org>"

3. Results

3.1. Fit of the psychometric scales

The version of the CW-SWBS5 used here presented an optimal fit for the Chilean sample of the present study ($\chi^2 = 13.311$; $CFI = 0.997$; $RMSEA = 0.047$; $SRMR = 0.009$). The multigroup analysis showed metric and scalar invariance between the two groups, suggesting that the correlations, factorial loadings, and mean scores of the two groups can be meaningfully compared. The reliability of the scale with the sample in this study was high ($\alpha = 0.91$).

The CW-DBSWBS scale presents an optimal fit for the sample using five items (satisfaction with “friends”, “your neighborhood”, “your family life” “your student life” and “your physical appearance”) ($\chi^2 = 13.549$; $CFI = 0.988$; $RMSEA = 0.041$; $SRMR = 0.021$). The multigroup analysis showed metric and scalar invariance, suggesting the correlations, factorial loadings, and mean scores of the two groups can be meaningfully compared. The reliability of the scale for this sample was $\alpha = 0.67$.

The CW-PNAS affective scale presented an optimal adjustment considering six items (“have you felt happy”, “have you felt calm”, “have you felt full of energy”, “have you felt sad”, “have you felt stressed”, and “have you felt bored”) ($\chi^2 = 22.009$; $CFI = 0.983$; $RMSEA = 0.046$; $SRMR = 0.027$). The multigroup analysis showed metric but not scalar invariance, suggesting that the correlations and factorial loadings between the two groups can be compared, but not the mean scores, possibly because of different response styles by members of the non-participating and program groups. The analysis with semi-partial constraints showed comparability problems where mainly due to two items: feeling stressed and feeling full of energy. Leaving the intercepts of either of these two items unconstrained results in the model displayed metric invariance ($\chi^2 = 45.420$; $CFI = 0.971$; $RMSEA = 0.035$; $SRMR = 0.037$). The reliability for the positive and negative effects is moderate ($\alpha = 0.54$ y $\alpha = 0.63$, respectively).

3.2. Descriptive statistics and correlations

The scores of the pooled sample were moderately high in well-being, satisfaction with life, and use of free time, with skewness and kurtosis values within the acceptable range³ (Kline, 2015). The mean scores of the CW-SWBS5, DBSWBS, and PA scales were high, over 80 points out of 100, while the mean for negative effects was low (see Table 2).

Correlations were calculated to analyze the associations among the scales of SWB. The correlations among the positive measurements ranged between $r = 0.447$ and $r = 0.648$ ($p < .001$), all of them being

Table 2
Descriptive statistics and correlations between scales of SWB (n = 1033).

	1	2	3	4	5
1. OLS	–				
2. CW-SWBS5	0.648***	–			
3. CW-DBSWBS	0.609***	0.564***	–		
4. Positive Affect - CW-PNAS	0.447***	0.612***	0.491***	–	
5. Negative Affect - CW-PNAS	-0.246***	-0.330***	-0.279***	-0.336***	–
M	87.73	86.30	84.30	81.46	38.68
SD	21.18	20.13	16.33	18.92	27.80

Note. *** $p < .001$.

³ The skewness and kurtosis ranges are considered problematic for the distribution when their values are greater than 3 in the case of asymmetry and greater than 10 in the case of kurtosis (Kline, 2015).

statistically significant, that is, the higher the score on one of the well-being scales, the higher the score on the other scales, including the PA scale. The NA scale correlated negatively with the other scales, all of the correlations being statistically significant, with values that ranged between $r = -0.336$ and $r = -0.246$ ($p < .001$), that is, the higher the score for the SWB scales, the lower the score on the NA scale (see Table 2). The correlation between the two items of satisfaction with time use was statistically significant for the pooled sample ($r = 0.381$, $p < .001$).

The mean of satisfaction with the program and its correlation with the other items were calculated. The children had high scores for satisfaction with the program in general, with the monitors, their workshop companions, and the workshops. All the items correlated significantly with each other (see Table 3).

Table 4 shows the results of questions relating to after-school activities. The most common activities, that is, activities that were engaged in five or more days a week, were “Relax, talk to or have fun with the family” (69.6%), Watch TV (58.8%), and “Use social media networks” (58.7%). The least common activities were “Other work” (9.5%) “Work with family” (15.1%) and “Go to church or other religious activities” (16.0%).

3.3. Comparison of the scales and items of SWB between the program and the non-participating groups

Scales and items were compared between the program and non-participating groups with the *t*-test for independent variables (Table 5). According to the OLS scale, the children that participate in the program showed a degree of satisfaction with life, although the difference was not significant. There were no significant differences among the other scales scores, although there were significant differences among items.

Significant differences were observed for two items of the CW-SWBS5, “I like my life” (program group: $M = 8.95$, $SD = 2.16$; non-participating group: $M = 8.62$, $SD = 2.49$) and “I’m happy with my life” (program group: $M = 9.04$, $SD = 2.11$; non-participating group: $M = 8.73$, $SD = 2.36$). Children in the program group displayed significantly higher scores than those of the non-participating group for two items of the CW-PNAS, “Have you felt happy” (program group: $M = 8.65$, $SD = 2.15$; non-participating group: $M = 8.37$, $SD = 2.26$) and “Have you felt calm” (program group: $M = 7.77$, $SD = 2.91$; non-participating group: $M = 7.36$, $SD = 3.02$).

A comparison between the children in the two groups regarding satisfaction with the amount of free time they have did not reveal any significant difference. However, when asked about their satisfaction with how they use their time, the children in the group that attend the program show significantly higher scores (program group: $M = 8.60$, $SD = 2.24$; non-participating group: $M = 8.23$, $SD = 2.35$).

Table 3
Descriptive statistics and correlations between items of satisfaction with the program (n = 568).

	1	2	3	4
1. How satisfied are you with the workshop in which you are participating	–			
2. How satisfied are you with the companions in the workshop	0.489***	–		
3. How satisfied are you with the workshop monitor	0.586***	0.428***	–	
4. How satisfied are you with the Program 4 to 7 in general	0.523***	0.550***	0.435***	–
M	8.86	8.13	8.90	9.20
SD	2.41	2.77	2.46	1.96

Note. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4
Frequency of after-school activities for the total sample (n = 1033).

	Never/One or two days per week		Three or four days per week		Five or more days per week	
	N	%	N	%	n	%
Help out at home	182	17.6	353	34.2	498	48.2
Take care of siblings or others	421	40.8	176	17.0	436	42.2
Work with family	758	73.4	119	11.5	156	15.1
Other work	863	83.5	72	7.0	98	9.5
Review classes outside of school	624	60.4	209	20.2	200	19.4
Do homework and study	211	20.4	311	30.1	511	49.5
Watch TV	191	18.5	235	22.7	607	58.8
Practice sports or exercise	166	16.1	272	26.3	595	57.6
Relax, talk to or have fun with the family	125	12.1	189	18.3	719	69.6
Play or spend time outside	311	30.1	292	28.3	430	41.6
Use social networks	269	26.0	158	15.3	606	58.7
Play video games	265	25.7	206	19.9	562	54.4
Go to church or other religious activities	687	66.5	181	17.5	165	16.0
Do nothing or rest	439	42.5	250	24.2	344	33.3

3.4. Association between after-school activities and participation in the program

The chi-squared analysis of the most frequent after-school activities, that is, activities that are engaged in five or more times a week, revealed that there was a significant association between participation in the program and 7 out of 14 items (50%). The children in the program engage five days or more per week in relaxing, talking, and having fun with family (72.9% of the children), practicing sports (60.7%), doing homework and studying (56%), taking care of siblings or others (46%), participating in review classes outside of school (22.7%) and participating in religious activities (18.1%). The frequency of these activities was significantly associated with the fact of participating in the program, while belonging to the non-participating group was associated with a higher frequency in using social networks, with 64.9% of the children in the non-participating group reporting use of social networks five or more days a week. The frequency of helping with housework,

watching TV, playing, or resting was not significantly associated with either group (see Table 6).

3.5. Multiple linear regression analysis on subjective well-being of sociodemographic variables and free time use activities

A multiple linear regression was performed using the scales that presented significant differences in the comparison between the items for the two groups, that is, the CW-SWBS and the PA scale, in order to have more specific information on the relationship between the variables and their effects on subjective well-being for both children who participated in the program and for those who did not participate. This analysis makes it possible to evaluate the effect of sociodemographic variables and leisure-time activities on subjective well-being measures.

The analysis with the CW-SWBS5 scale as a dependent variable involved two models, one analyzed the sociodemographic variables and the other considered the after-school activities of the children. The results show that gender and age affected the SWB of children in the non-participating (gender: $\beta = 0.119, p < .05$; age: $\beta = -0.118, p < .05$) and program groups (gender: $\beta = 0.097, p < .05$; age: $\beta = -0.143, p < .01$). The nationality of the children (Chilean or not) affected well-being ($\beta = 0.090, p < .05$) in the case of the non-participating group, but not the children in the program group (Table 7).

With model 2, the activities of relaxing, talking and having fun with family affected the well-being of children in both groups (non-participating: $\beta = 0.407, p < .001$; program: $\beta = 0.312, p < .001$). Watching TV also affected the well-being of children in the program group. For children in the non-participating group, taking classes outside of school had a positive effect on the well-being. The activities that had a negative on the non-participating group were working with family or with others.

The dependent variable in the other multiple linear regression analysis was the scale of PA. The results show that the variable of age affected the PA scale with both groups (non-participating: $\beta = -0.120, p < .05$; program: $\beta = -0.145, p < .01$). The variable gender only had a significant effect with the non-participating group ($\beta = 0.134, p < .01$).

Among the frequent after-school activities were “relax talk and have fun with family” and “do homework and study”, which were predictive variables of PA among the children in both groups. In the case of the

Table 5
Descriptive statistics of the scales and items of SWB, global satisfaction with life and the use of free time between the program and non-participating groups (t-test).

	Non-participating group		Program group		t	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
OLS Satisfaction with your life as a whole	86.75	21.183	88.52	21.155	-1.336	0.182	0.008
CW-SWBS5	85.04	20.77	87.34	19.55	-1.822	0.069	0.011
My life is just as it should be	8.20	2.53	8.35	2.51	0.916	0.360	0.059
The things in my life are excellent	8.17	2.53	8.37	2.40	1.304	0.192	0.081
I like my life	8.62	2.49	8.95	2.16	2.252	0.025	0.141
I enjoy my life	8.79	2.20	8.96	2.21	1.246	0.213	0.077
I'm happy with my life	8.73	2.36	9.04	2.11	2.170	0.030	0.138
CW-DBSWBS	84.35	15.50	84.26	16.99	0.083	0.934	0.000
Satisfaction with friends	8.63	2.27	8.51	2.48	-0.778	0.437	0.050
Satisfaction with the neighborhood	7.80	2.80	7.53	3.20	-1.450	0.147	0.089
Satisfaction with the family	9.17	1.76	9.24	1.95	0.566	0.572	0.037
Satisfaction with student life	8.53	2.06	8.49	2.35	-0.259	0.796	0.018
How satisfied are you with your physical appearance	8.05	2.79	8.36	2.70	1.829	0.068	0.113
Positive Affect (CW-PNAS)	80.48	19.19	82.27	18.67	-1.515	0.130	0.095
happy	8.37	2.26	8.65	2.15	2.002	0.045	0.127
calm	7.36	3.02	7.77	2.91	2.239	0.025	0.138
full of energy	8.41	2.47	8.26	2.80			
Negative Affect (CW-PNAS)	39.23	27.68	38.21	27.91	0.581	0.561	0.037
sad	3.29	3.35	3.06	3.30	-1.121	0.263	0.069
stressed	3.74	3.76	4.04	3.86			
bored	4.74	3.75	4.37	3.93	-1.543	0.123	0.096
How satisfied are you with how you use your time	8.23	2.35	8.60	2.24	2.563	0.011	0.161
How satisfied are you with the amount of free time you have	7.85	2.71	7.66	3.03	-1.073	0.284	0.066

Note. The comparison of means for the items “Have you felt full of energy” and “Have you felt stressed” were not included because they were not comparable in the multigroup analysis (see Section 4.1.).

Table 6
Frequency and chi-squared for after-school activities. Five or more days per week, between the non-participating and program groups.

	Non-participating group (n = 465)		Program group (n = 568)		χ^2
	N	%	n	%	
Help out at home	217	46.7	281	49.5	0.806
Take care of siblings or others	175	37.6	261	46.0	7.249**
Work with family	60	12.9	96	16.9	3.188
Other work	36	7.7	62	10.9	2.999
Review classes outside of school	71	15.3	129	22.7	9.071**
Do homework and study	190	40.9	321	56.5	25.064***
Watch TV	278	59.8	329	57.9	0.366
Practice sports or exercise	250	53.8	345	60.7	5.095*
Relax, talk to or have fun with the family	305	65.6	414	72.9	6.433*
Play or spend time outside	190	40.9	240	42.3	0.204
Use social networks	302	64.9	304	53.5	13.763***
Play video games	262	56.3	300	52.8	1.282
Go to church or other religious activities	62	13.3	109	18.1	4.390*
Do nothing or rest	147	31.6	197	34.7	1.085

Note * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

program group, the predictive variables included play or spend time outside ($\beta = 0.096, p < .05$), practice sports ($\beta = 0.096, p < .05$) and watch TV ($\beta = 0.136, p < .01$). With the non-participating group, do review classes ($\beta = 0.110, p < .05$) was a predictor of PA (see Table 8).

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the subjective well-being of Chilean children and adolescents participating in after-school Programs, their satisfaction with the Program, and with their use of free time.

Table 7
Multiple linear regression coefficients of the demographic variables and frequency of variables of after-school activities on the CW-SWBS5 scale for the non-participating and program groups.

Dependent variable: CW-SWBS	Non-participating group						Program group					
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Constant	105.127***	11.289		77.517***	11.206		108.651***	7.956		74.554***	8.323	
<i>Demographic variables</i>												
Gender (girl = 1)	4.974*	1.941	0.119*	4.430*	1.852	0.106*	3.783*	1.624	0.097*	2.021	1.607	0.052
Age	-2.448*	0.959	-0.118*	-2.189*	0.890	-0.106*	-2.353**	0.684	-0.143**	-1.765*	0.679	-0.107*
Type of commune (urban = 1)	0.715	3.204	0.010	3.860	2.911	0.056	0.749	2.499	0.012	1.330	2.321	0.022
Nationality (Chilean = 1)	5.098*	2.588	0.090*	4.137	2.376	0.073	2.138	2.007	0.044	3.368	1.877	0.070
<i>Frequency of activities</i>												
Help out at home				-1.112	0.584	-0.085				0.224	0.499	0.019
Take care of siblings or others				0.058	0.447	0.006				0.232	0.370	0.026
Work with family				-1.193*	0.596	-0.093*				-0.207	0.473	-0.019
Other works				-1.535*	0.703	-0.101*				-0.009	0.551	-0.001
Review classes outside of school				1.624**	0.564	0.132**				-0.087	0.427	-0.008
Do homework and study				0.971	0.562	0.079				0.788	0.491	0.068
Watch TV				-0.027	0.546	-0.002				1.075*	0.460	0.098*
Practice sports or exercise				-0.297	0.570	-0.023				0.500	0.494	0.043
Relax, talk to or have fun with the family				5.323***	0.567	0.407***				3.972***	0.547	0.312***
Play or spend time outside				-0.084	0.518	-0.007				0.843	0.443	0.080
Use social networks				0.990	0.518	0.087				0.323	0.414	0.034
Play video games				-0.029	0.501	-0.003				-0.289	0.477	-0.028
Go to church or other religious activities				0.637	0.581	0.050				0.399	0.475	0.036
Not do anything or rest				0.210	0.464	0.019				-0.306	0.393	-0.031
R ²		0.032			0.252			0.032			0.204	
R ² adjusted		0.024			0.222			0.025			0.178	
N		465			465			568			568	

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The confirmatory factor analysis that was done in the first place showed an excellent fit for all of the scales used herein. The multigroup analysis of the scales analyzing the responses of children who participate in the Program and those who do not, showed that all of the statistics turned out to be nearly equivalent between both groups. The sole exception is the CW-PNAS whose averages can only be compared with certain caveats, presumably because of the different response styles of the two groups to two of the items, a topic that remains pending for future, more in-depth research.

The results of this study reveal that the children present high subjective well-being scores in support of evidence collected by earlier studies done in Chile (Alfaro et al., 2016; Casas et al., 2012; Casas et al., 2015). Regarding the first specific goal of this study, when comparing the subjective well-being of children who either do or do not participate in the after-school Program, the general results show that the overall subjective well-being of the children in this study present no significant differences between the two groups. However, there are characteristics that reflect some significant differences between groups. The children attending the Program had significantly higher scores in some subjective well-being aspects. They also felt happier and more satisfied with their use of free time compared to the non-participating group.

The children attending these Programs present higher happiness scores (affective component of well-being) and on two of the cognitive component items of subjective well-being. These results are especially important considering the high social vulnerability experienced by these children, and they suggest that this kind of social initiative can lead to more satisfactory subjective well-being. Furthermore, they are consistent with international evidence and a recent study done in Chile that showed that children's and adolescents' participation in extracurricular activities has a positive effect on well-being and the development of socioemotional skills (Berger et al., 2020). When considering the international evidence discussed in this study, it can be inferred that the subjective well-being of children who attend after-school programs present good child development, especially if they participate in high-

Table 8

Coefficients of the multiple linear regression of the demographic variables and the frequency of after-school activities on PA, according to the non-participating or program group.

Dependent variable: Positive affect (PA)	Non-participating group						Program group					
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Constant	102.719***	10.444		80.877***	10.511		105.407***	7.621		70.426***	8.023	
<i>Demographic variables</i>												
Gender (boy = 1)	5.174**	1.795	0.134**	5.435**	1.737	0.141**	2.557	1.555	0.068	0.655	1.549	0.018
Age	-2.299*	0.887	-0.120*	-2.030*	0.835	-0.106*	-2.272**	0.655	-0.145**	-1.476*	0.655	-0.094*
Type of commune (urban = 1)	-0.784	2.964	-0.012	1.843	2.730	0.029	-0.660	2.394	-0.011	-0.276	2.237	-0.005
Nationality (Chilean = 1)	1.998	2.394	0.038	0.498	2.229	0.010	1.025	1.923	0.022	2.073	1.809	0.045
<i>Frequency of activities</i>												
Help out at home				-0.746	0.548	-0.062				0.260	0.481	0.023
Take care of siblings or others				-0.179	0.419	-0.019				0.196	0.356	0.023
Work with family				-0.259	0.559	-0.022				0.010	0.456	0.001
Other works				-1.115	0.659	-0.080				0.026	0.531	0.002
Review classes outside of school				1.256*	0.529	0.110*				0.445	0.411	0.046
Do homework and study				1.599**	0.527	0.141**				1.181*	0.474	0.107*
Watch TV				-0.291	0.512	-0.024				1.421**	0.443	0.136**
Practice sports and exercise				0.217	0.534	0.019				1.072*	0.476	0.096*
Relax, talk to or have fun with the family				4.160***	0.532	0.344***				2.584***	0.527	0.212***
Play or spend time outside				0.610	0.486	0.057				0.966*	0.427	0.096*
Use social networks				0.546	0.485	0.052				-0.466	0.399	-0.051
Play video games				-0.734	0.470	-0.074				-0.172	0.459	-0.018
Go to church or other religious activities				-0.229	0.545	-0.019				-0.013	0.457	-0.001
Do nothing or rest				-0.661	0.435	-0.066				0.137	0.379	0.015
R ²		0.030			0.229			0.026			0.189	
Adjusted R ²		0.022			0.198			0.019			0.163	
N		465			465			568			568	

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

quality programs. This exploratory study serves to advance toward incorporating children's perspectives into social program evaluations. The findings show that those who have participated in after-school programs have better outcomes in some aspects of subjective well-being compared to children who do not participate.

Evaluating the Program's quality and connection to children's well-being was not part of this study's objectives. The challenge remains for future research to assess the quality criteria of the Program and how they impact children's well-being. The evidence suggests that quality criteria of the after-school programs such as positive relationships and mutual support between staff and children, positive relationships among the children, high child participation, a range of activities that provide assistance for school skills, and well-structured programs with good organization all affect children's positive development (Vandell et al., 2020). Evidence further suggests that these programs may have compensatory effects on the development of at-risk children as well as positive impacts on the mastery of some school skills (Lauer et al., 2006) and the reduction of problematic behavior (Durlak et al., 2010). This after-school Program already has the technical guidelines and structure in place that would enable the inclusion of children's participation in assessing their own well-being and the Program without a high investment cost. Therefore, this is an opportunity to help decrease the social gaps found in Chile today. A high degree of family income inequality has profound implications for children's lives, as asserted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Comité de los Derechos del Niño, 2007) in a report on the status of childhood in Chile and Chile's National Council for Childhood (Consejo Nacional de la Infancia, 2018). Thus, preventive initiatives, such as after-school programs, for socially vulnerable groups may help provide more opportunities for children's development and increased happiness.

Regarding the second study goal to evaluate satisfaction with the use of free time and the use of time for children who do or do not participate

in after-school Programs, it is interesting to find that children who participate in the Program are significantly more satisfied with their use of time than non-participants. Such an outcome opens up an interesting field of analysis in terms of the quality and kinds of activities that children engage in outside of the school day and how this connects to their subjective well-being. European countries and wealthier economies have undertaken thought-provoking comparative studies connecting the use of free time with well-being and overall life satisfaction (Rees, 2018; Santaliestra-Pasias et al., 2014; Zuzanek, 2005). This is not the case for developing countries in which there is little evidence gathered so far. One study showed that filling time with an after-school program leads to greater satisfaction with how children use their time. Evidence from earlier studies concurs with these findings in that a structured use of free time with activities that consider their interests and include interpersonal relationships would add to children's well-being (Sarriera et al., 2014).

When analyzing the type of activities that children in both studied groups do outside of the school day, the most frequent ones have to do with entertainment as a family, watching television and using social networks. A comparison between groups showed that children attending the Program occupy their time differently outside of the school day for several of the activities that were asked about. The children attending the Program stated they do more school work, study more, practice more sports, care for others more frequently, engage more in family activities and go to church more. The results found a significant association between Program participation and a greater diversity and frequency of activities with respect to the non-participating group, for which only a significantly more elevated use of social networks was noted. Additional studies are needed on the potential impact of the Program on other activities that the children could engage in during their free time. The results of this study do not permit more conclusive reflections with respect to this point, but do open up more questions that should be

studied.

The findings of this study point to the importance of having these programs for creating opportunities for use of time outside of the school day, especially because this population is very socially vulnerable. The results further demonstrated the children's high satisfaction with the Program, its monitors, workshops and their companions. This supports the proposed hypothesis that the children would demonstrate high satisfaction with the Program. These results may be of particular interest for those who design social programs and initiatives related to caring for and protecting rights during childhood. Moreover, verifying that the children are highly satisfied with the Program is the first step toward integrating Program quality assessment indicators and specific targets for children's well-being promotion, aspects that were not addressed in this study.

As stated above, the results show that children attending the Program use their time outside of the school day differently than the children in the non-participating group for several of the time use items that were asked about. When analyzing satisfaction with how they use their free time, the results support the hypothesis that the children who participate in the Program are more satisfied with their use of free time than the non-participating group. Therefore, this study adds to available evidence on satisfaction with the use of free time outside of the school day of children living in socially vulnerable situations. As said earlier, this is a very new field of research in Chile (Rees, 2018).

Regarding the third specific research goal, the multiple regression analysis showed that variables like age and gender do have effects on children's well-being, which corroborates the results of national and international studies (Kaye-Tzadok et al., 2017; Reyes et al., 2019). Regarding age for both the Program group and the non-participating group, the older the children, the more subjective well-being decreases. This is also in line with earlier research (Casas & González-Carrasco, 2019).

In terms of gender, the information analyzed in this article suggests that being a girl or boy has different effects on well-being. This effect varied in the analyzed regression models. One striking result for well-being has to do with the positive affect of girls and boys. For the group that did not participate in the Program (non-participating group), gender had an effect on positive affect; i.e., the boys had higher scores for positive affect than the girls. This significant difference, however, was not observed in the Program group, suggesting that the Program could have been influencing the positive affect of both gender in equal manner. These preliminary results point to the need to undertake further studies to analyze the effect of the gender variable on the subjective well-being of girls and boys who participate in these Programs. As elements to consider in the initial overall analysis, it is interesting that there are personal development workshops with a gender perspective as part of Program activities, which could be affecting the positive affect of the girls in some way. Future qualitative studies could examine more comprehensive elements that would bring more meaning to these interesting findings. A recent meta-synthesis study that revised qualitative research on the well-being of female adolescents proposes that contextual factors are influencing well-being. This suggests development interventions be aimed not only at individual factors, but also structural factors of inequality in gender relations (Bilbao-Nieva, 2021). This result of the study may be of particular relevance given that this Program is part of the initiatives put forward by the National Service for Women and Gender Equality, which seeks to lessen the gender gaps that exist in the country. Surprisingly, this gender indicator between girls and boys has not been evaluated in the Program as of today.

This study has primarily focused on the subjective well-being of children and adolescents living in poverty that participate in a social program after-school. This is one of many programs specifically designed for socially vulnerable contexts. The inclusion of the viewpoints of the very children who are part of this study on subjective well-being reflects the concern with addressing the diverse ways that poverty gets expressed, particularly for children, as they are more affected by it

than during other life stages (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia, 2018). Despite these efforts, adult-centric viewpoints persist when designing evaluations for these initiatives insofar as the protagonists' opinions - in this case the children - are omitted from standard program development and administration. Gathering children's opinions makes it possible to address the material and non-material aspects of poverty, to consider the relational aspects of social vulnerability, and to guide policies with a focus on children (Bessell et al., 2020). Incorporating children's subjective well-being indicators into public policies can contribute to the suitability and efficacy of initiatives geared toward childhood and adolescence. The results of this study show that children's opinions provide important information about the programs and services that they use. This study also sought their opinions about their life satisfaction, use of free time and well-being. All of this speaks to the potential for exploring associations among factors that can enrich the evidence-based development and assessment of social programs and policies.

4.1. Limitations and future guidance

Some of the noteworthy limitations of this study are the diversity of workshop modalities, the incomplete and overly general records, and the variations among activities done in the many Programs at the local level. These factors prevented a more detailed assessment or a more specific analysis of the activities types and their association with children's subjective well-being. Other collected evidence on this topic suggests that sequential extracurricular activities that are focused and structured have better outcomes for the socioemotional well-being and skills development of children (Durlak et al., 2010; Vandell et al., 2020). Analyzing Programs that take place outside of the school day represents a methodological challenge due to the fact that they do not have the same standardized structure as the school day itself. Extracurricular programs usually have more flexible action plans and modalities, even when they have shared objectives and technical guidelines, as is the case of this Program currently underway in Chile in association with the National Women's National Service for Women and Gender Equality.

Another limitation related to the study sample is the fact that the researchers have no control over the characteristics of the studied groups, so these conclusions are not generalizable to the Chilean population overall. Future pre-post studies with more specific control of variables would be advantageous for having more explanatory elements about the differences in results between the groups and reaching more precise conclusions. Having future quasi-experimental designs may be a pertinent option worth considering. Furthermore, with regard to the sample, children living in the Metropolitan Region were included, but none of the country's other regions, so these results cannot be generalized to children living elsewhere in Chile. While the Metropolitan Region contains 40.47 % of the country's population (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2018) and 28.79 % of the Program on offer nationally (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer y Equidad de Género, 2020), the analysis of these results must be limited to the territory included in the study. As future lines of research, it would be interesting to conduct more studies in the country's other regions. Moreover, some of the children included in the sample have a nationality that is not Chilean (18.6%) and some were living in a rural area (11%). While a specific analysis about the effect of these variables was not part of the study, children of other nationalities are attending the Program. The Program has also been implemented in localities that give access to children in rural areas, which opens up opportunities for a more specific analysis of these variables in future research.

This study shows interesting relationships between the use of free time and children's well-being. However, the available information is limited as it does not enable an understanding of the effects of the Program on the type of activities that the children of the studied groups engage in and any connections with well-being. This is why it is recommended that future studies use qualitative techniques that could be

especially helpful in gaining a deeper understanding of what the experience of participating in such a program means to them and how this contributes to children's well-being.

5. Conclusions

The objective of this study to evaluate children's subjective well-being, their satisfaction with the Program and their satisfaction with the use of free time has been achieved. This supports the hypothesis that the children were very satisfied with the after-school Program and more satisfied with how they use their free time compared to the non-participating group. The results of this study suggest that children's use of time outside of the classroom is a dimension that affects children's subjective well-being, meaning its consideration is germane to designing public policies. Rather than starting from scratch designing new programs with the attendant investment cost, perhaps this opportunity with existing social programs can be leveraged, adding quality criteria in keeping with available evidence, listening to children, and incorporating assessment criteria to guide initiatives in a relevant way in order to contribute to children's well-being. Evidence has shown that children's viewpoints constitute a source of relevant information for designing and assessing social policies.

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CRedit authorship contribution statement

Loreto Ditzel: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Project administration. **Ferran Casas:** Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization, Data curation, Supervision. **Javier Torres-Vallejos:** Methodology, Formal analysis, Software, Visualization. **Fernando Reyes:** Methodology. **Jaime Alfaro:** Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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