Happiness and Education  
A Research on Values Based Education

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“Economic theory does not stand alone,  
but is one of a family of special cases on a cognate level”  
(Parsons & Smelser, 1965)

Abstract

Economics as any other of the social sciences is a discipline that studies only one aspect of a life of a person in society (Rojas, 2006). Therefore in order to understand how a specific aspect in life does affect any other, it’s needed to take into count studies from different areas of a person’s life. This investigation aims to use economy science as a tool in order to study and understand the relationship between two complex and multidimensional themes values education and well-being. Considering values education as an alternative to the school deterioration process; the optimum conditions for creating values personal experiences on children attending basic education; and the differences on child rearing in a country like Mexico; the research aims to test the hypothesis that values education has a positive impact on children’s well-being and that it might be differentiated according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up. For this it was done an empirical analysis based on the experiences of Jugar y Vivir los Valores (JVLV) a values education program for pre-school and primary school.

1. Introduction

Economics as any other of the social sciences is a discipline that studies only one aspect of a life of a person in society (Rojas, 2006). Therefore in order to understand how a specific aspect in life does affect any other, it’s needed to take into count studies from different areas of a person’s life. This investigation aims to use economy science as a tool in order to study and understand the relationship between two complex and multidimensional themes values education and well-being. The lack of information concerning the relation between these themes became both a limitation and an inspiration to draw the following proposal. Such inspiration was sustained by the idea of using economics tools in order to have a clearer picture of what is actually happening around values education and well-being.
Regarding values education; whilst some attention has been given to teaching methods, much of the literature on values has tended to focus on issues of definition and classification, and the extent to which anyone can, or ought to impose their own moral precepts on others. By contrast, values acquisition has rarely been studied and little attention has been paid to the outcomes of dedicated values education programs (Curriculum Corp 2003, Fyffe 2006).

For this process of studying and understanding such human phenomena it’s also recognized the importance of other social sciences. Core literature regarding, pedagogy, child development, values, values education, culture differences and well-being is based on Jean Piaget, Bernard Lonergan, Luis Villoro, Antonio Paoli, Armando Rugarcía, Ma. Teresa Yurén, Geert Hofstede, Ruut Veenhoven, Robert Cummins and Ed Diener. Such authors represent a vast content of knowledge which is worth of a more extend analysis however it goes beyond the limits of this investigation.

Basic education aims to produce children who are happy with themselves and with others; to create an approach to knowledge that children can use and develop throughout their lives as they learn to know, to do, to be and to live together with others (UNESCO 2002, Delors 1996). In the basic education phase is where life long lasting attitudes towards learning are developed, this education phase is indispensable as it enables students to choose what they want and participate in the construction of the collective future. On the other hand, the school as educative institution is facing a stage of decay due to the disparity between what it should provide, according to its capacities and aims, and what it is actually providing (Yurén 1995). Values education is presented as an alternative to the deterioration process in the school and core in the basic education phase.

The election of values varies; it can be done just in the culture framework. A culture fixes certain superior values which are common to every member of it; these values are the core of culture through which the performance of community members is determined. One of the five dimensions selected by Geert Hofstede to analyze culture differences is the Ego/Social dimension. Hofstede (1980, 1991, 2001) suggests that in ego countries, ego traits (material success and progress, sympathy for the strong; ambitious, assertive, competitive, courageous, aggressive, decisive and tough) are encouraged in males but discouraged in females which are brought up under a complete different values scheme; social oriented
(caring for others, gentleness, preservation, sympathy for the weak, equality, solidarity and being tender) (Diaz-Guerrero 1996). Since Mexico is characterized as an ‘ego’ country, the research will focus on this idea; also, according to Hofstede, the gender gap in values is larger in ego countries than in social countries further social values are related with positive effects on ones well-being (Diener 1997, 1999; Kasser and Ryan 1993, 1996; Veenhoven 2002).

Therefore considering values education as an alternative to the school deterioration process; the optimum conditions presented on children attending basic education for creating values personal experiences; and the differences on child rearing in a country like Mexico; this research aims to test the hypothesis that values education has a positive impact on children’s well-being and that it might be differentiated according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up.

In order to fulfill it’s proposes it was done an empirical analysis based on the experiences of Jugar y Vivir los Valores (JVLV) a values education program for pre-school and primary school which is an educative communication model focused on values inculcation in the educative community. It was conceived as an alternative peace process in the context of Chiapas problematic; its application is mainly in the state of Chiapas, though in Mexico City there are schools working with it. The main objective of the program is: “To generate from ones own cultural and social situation a harmonious and daily working system focused on universal values assimilation in elementary schools and other places”.

First of all it will be tested the effectiveness of the program on the issue of values inculcation. Then it’s expected to find that values based education has a positive impact on children well-being, and according to Mexican culture in which boys and girls are brought up under different values schemes, it’s predictable to see a gap between the values inculcation effect on boys and girls’ well-being.

Chapter two aims to guide the reader into a ‘story’ which will start from the basic question of how do children know and learn and will conclude on the positive impact that values education has on children’s well-being. It is suggested that the impact size can vary according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up. Chapter three explains the empirical method trough which hypotheses presented at the end of the literature review will be tested. Section 3.1 is devoted to explain the antecedents, philosophy and
pedagogy of the program Jugar y Vivir los Valores. Section 3.2 will further explain the sustained hypothesis and the subjective well-being approach. At the end, on section 3.3 the process of how data was obtained is explained.

Chapter four describes the interest variables for the empirical analysis in order to test the hypothesis mentioned above: 1) JVLV does have a positive impact on children’s values apprehension, 2) this values reinforcement has a positive impact on children’s well-being and 3) the positive impact varies according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up. Chapter five explains the methodology which was used followed by chapter six in which results are presented. Finally chapter seven presents conclusions and final considerations.

2. Literature Review
This sections aims to guide the reader into a ‘story’ which will start from the basic question of how do children know and learn and will conclude without other possibility on the positive impact that values education has on children’s well-being. It suggested that the impact size can vary according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up.

The starting point question will be answered on section 2.1 according to the ideas developed by Piaget on this subject. From this process of knowing and learning in childhood, on section 2.2 is mentioned the importance of the school as an educative institution and the role of basic education as the foundation of children’s development and life long lasting attitudes towards learning. It’s also highlighted the deterioration process that the school is generating due to the disparity between what it is providing and what it should provide.

In order to present alternatives to this deterioration process on section 2.3 the theme of values is addressed (Villoro 2006, Paoli 2002a, Lonergan 2006). The theme is approached by the cultural differences of what is considered valuable (2.3.1) (Hofstede 1980, Villoro 2006). This differences lead to the concept of ego and social values which is explained as well as the positive impact that the latter have on ones well-being (2.3.2) (Diener 1997, 1999; Kasser y Ryan 1993, 1996; Hofstede 1980, 1991, 2001; Venhooven 2002). Since the country of particular interest of this research is Mexico, from section 2.3.2 a subsection is derived explaining the value’s culture specifications on this country (Díaz-Guerrero 1996).
Finally the process of values inculcation and transmission is explained (2.3.3) (Villoro 2006, Rugarcía 2001) leading to the importance of social values education which enables students to stop being an influence object and to become a person (Yurén 1995) able to harmonize her ends with her duties, a skillful person in the art of life. Based on reflections stated in section 2.3.2, the values education process is said to have a positive impact on children’s well-being.

2.1 How do children know and learn

Piaget is one of the most important theorists on pedagogic studies, “as Colon, he aimed to discover new territories; he did discover a new continent that has to be further used by many future generations” (Maier, 1991 p.95).

Piaget’s basic idea is that, development is a sum of adaptations (Lonergan, 2006 p.260). An adaptation is the result of the relationship between ‘assimilation’ and ‘accommodation’. The former is addressed when the activity involved on the adaptation process comes from an operational preexisted scheme; the later is addressed when the preexisted scheme is modified because the objects, circumstances or ends differ from the previous scheme.

He conceives intelligence as a behavior that is reflected in ones adaptation, equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation. Piaget explains the process of intelligence in action through the relation between structure, constant functionalities, environment and contents (Lefrancois, 1980 p.216).

The interaction between the child and the environment through assimilation and accommodation (constant functionalities) is shaped by the structure which refers to the schemes, innate conducts and neurological connotations, that the child posses. The evidence that this so called structure exists and that the function process does happen is seen on child’s behavior (contents).

The structure is what changes along children’s development, hence it becomes important to understand the cognitive structure in each childhood stage, Piaget states four childhood development stages; sensorimotor period (years 0–2), preoperational period (years 2–7), concrete operational period (years 7–11) and formal operational period (years 11 and up).
Since primary school children are the target group, we will focus on the concrete operational stage which is characterized by the appropriate use of logic. Important processes during this stage are: Reversibility, “the permanent possibility to go backwards to the starting point of any performed operation” (Piaget, 1958 p.272); operational thinking, mental capacity to arrange and relate any experience with the whole; being able to arrange experiences and having conscious of the relation with the whole creates an idea of certainty; one is able to choose if only if one appraises each possibility and perceives the relation between them (Maier, 1991 p.147).

According to Piaget, during this stage the child also changes from an inductive to a deductive thinking, thus becomes able to find explanations that relate objects with facts. The connections with the physical environment become more productive since there is an elimination of egocentrism; the child is able to view things from another's perspective.

The child also develop an interest in rules that rule her activities, this interest consist on examine and inquire the significance, willing to establish verifiable relations in order to create a sense of belonging.

2.2 The school and its educative functions
Within societies, diverse institutions implement educative functions; the family, the school, churches, political parties, unions, mass media, the State (Yurén, 1995 p.248).

In particular, schools perform three essential social functions for the educative process: 1) up-down knowledge transmission which provides young generations knowledge and values so they can incorporate them into daily life, 2) the most effective way of accessing from the basic to the superior sphere of knowledge regarding epistemic and wisdom communities, 3) provides the method to introduce values in an indirect way throughout the educative community (p. 250).

In the basic education phase is where life long lasting attitudes towards learning are developed, this education phase is indispensable as it enables students to choose what they want and participate in the construction of the collective future and continue to learn (Delors, 1996).

According to UNESCO,
Basic education provides the foundation for all future education and learning. Its goal, as concerns those in the pre-school and primary school-age population, is to produce children who are happy with themselves and with others, an approach to seeking knowledge that they can use and develop throughout their lives. Basic education is aimed at all the essential goals of education: learning to know, to do, to be (ie. to assume one's duties and responsibilities) and to live together with others (2002).

This is what schools can provide and what basic education should aim; instead, schools show typical characteristics of today's modern world deterioration. First, a students' breakup between scholar education and daily life, a duality between roles played in the school and roles played on their daily life; 'Ten in life, zero at school'. Second, schools reproduce mechanisms of competition, selection, evaluation and promotion that ultimately reinforce inequalities (Yuren, 1995 pp. 248-249).

There is a disparity between what schools are providing and what they should provide. Its educative function has to turn to its aims, to reinvent itself so it can be able to help children in the process of “learning to know, to do, to be and to live together with others” (UNESCO, 2002). As Laura states, “the fabric of society could well be improved by doing far less to ensure initiation into the so-called domains of knowledge and far more by way of instructing children in the art of living with themselves and with each other” (in Pascoe, 2002).

2.3 Values

This section aims to explain the concept of value through the reflection on the ideas generated by, Bernard Lonergan, Luis Villoro and Antonio Paoli. The reflection starts with Lonergans idea of the Invariant Structure of the Human Good.

“What is true about the human good at any place or time?” (Lonergan, 1993 p.33), Lonergan distinguishes three main aspects: the particular good, the good order and value.

The particular good regards the satisfaction of a specific appetite such as a new house, meeting someone or a special event. The good order is a setup which consists on a regular recurrence of particular goods i.e., if X is a good thing and occur it will recur when

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1 “not just educate our children and youth ‘to know’ and ‘to do’ we must also educate them ‘to be’ and ‘to live together’” (Delors, 1996).
2 Title of a book which shows the results of a Brazilian research in terms of the gap between what children learn in life and what they learn at school.
3 This ‘Art of Living’ concept is clearly stated by Venhooven as “an inner quality relevant for dealing with outer conditions” (2003).
there is a good of order. The latter occurs because men operate coordinately; a set of conditions of these operations are: habits in the subject, institution and material equipment. So one element of the good of order are coordinated human operations, another is personal status “which results from the relations constituted by the operation” (Lonergan, 1993 p.34).

The third element in the invariant structure of the human good is value; which is expressed in the act of questioning about the concrete functions of the human good. “Is the order good?” Lonergan states that values appear aesthetically, ethically or religiously. Aesthetically as the realization of the intelligible in the sensible; ethically, as doing things and standing upon what is considered right and good; and religiously, as the realization of the internal order.

In general, among the epistemic community of philosophy there seems to be a consensus on relating the value to the human good perception (Rugarcía, 2001 p.53), as it expresses something which is worthy to work by (p.53).

Paoli explains the relationship between the value and the human good on saying that value is an orientation set by ones consciousness towards the good. He shows that this orientation is given due that the value is a positive quality of the self which can be appreciated on specific entities or situations (2002a p.138).

Concrete things and situations are interpreted from abstract valuations⁴ of them. Abstract valuations are used in specific circumstances by specific intentions through which value is given and received. It is just in the process of applying these valuations to specific circumstances that they can be accepted or disowned (p.139)

2.3.1 Culture differences

Values can be ordered number wise. Each action induces to establish preferences, to renounce certain ends in order to reach some others which are considered more valuable. This is why one establishes a values hierarchy through which superior values are selected, the performance of these superior values guides our conduct. The election of such values varies; it can be done just in the culture framework (Villoro, 2006 p.47).

⁴ Like hope, patience, accuracy, justice (Paoli, 2002 p.139)
Culture derives from one’s social environment, it is learned; “is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1980 p.260).

A culture fixes certain superior values which are common to every member of it and correspond to diverse manifestations of an ideal of perfection⁵ (Villoro, 2006 p.47); these values are the core of culture through which the performance of community members is determined.

2.3.2 Ego/Social Values
In the research developed by Hofstede to analyze cultural differences, one of the five dimensions he established after empirical analysis is labeled Masculine/Feminine, name that has caused several controversies, reason why Hofstede has suggested the use of alternative labels like Assertive/Nurturant or Ego/Social (1998 p.13), the later will be used in order to refer to this culture dimension.

Hofstede argues that there is a universal trend of men stressing ego goals and women stressing social goals (1998, p.79). The Ego/Social dimension concerns first of all the emotional roles at home; Hofstede (1980, 1991, 2001) suggests that in ego countries, ego traits (material success and progress, sympathy for the strong; ambitious, assertive, competitive, courageous, aggressive, decisive and tough) are encouraged in males but discouraged in females, whereas social traits (caring for others, gentleness, preservation, sympathy for the weak, equality, solidarity and being tender) in males are discouraged and ego ones encouraged. By contrast, in social societies, ego traits are neither encouraged nor discouraged in either of the sexes, whereas social traits are encouraged in both males and females. Therefore the gender gap in values is larger in ego countries than in social countries.

Cross-cultural studies show this gap is wider in early ages (Hofstede, 1998 p.87). Gender role programming starts immediately after birth, in the differential ways in which adults treat girl and boy babies (Meyer in Hofstede, 1998 p.80), and in the different gender roles in the family which “strongly affect the values concerning appropriate behavior for boys and for girls” (Hofstede, 1998 p.83)

⁵ Harmony, justice, freedom, happiness are some supreme values among different cultures (Villoro, 2006 p.47)
i) Ego/Social Values and Well-being

In the last three decades, the scientific study about happiness has begun to awake the minds of researchers from different areas of knowledge (psychology, sociology, economics and anthropology, to mention some). In this process, the word happiness has acquired different synonyms: Well-Being, Subjective Well-Being or Life Satisfaction. These are used indistinctly along the text to refer to happiness. One important relation that has been established is the one between Subjective Well-being and Values.

Subjective Well-Being cannot be thought of as a simple form of hedonism that follows only from bodily pleasures. Instead, Subjective Well-Being … involves the search for meaningfulness in one's life. Thus, Subjective Well-Being becomes a broader measure of quality of life because it reflects deeper values beyond physical pleasure and ephemeral emotions. (Diener, 1997)

Diener et al also stated on his value-as-a-moderator model that people gain sense of satisfaction out of activities congruent with their values (1999) and reaffirms it saying that “values are related to positive SWB in that people who are involved in goal activities that they believe are important are more likely to experience feelings of well-being” (Diener, 1997).

As well, Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) specify that it is not enough to pursue ones values but the nature of those values; they maintain that the type of goals individuals pursue influences mean levels of well-being. Individuals who pursue intrinsic goals such as personal growth, good relationships and community contribution are more satisfied than individuals pursuing extrinsic goals like physical attractiveness, financial success and social recognition (1996). This confirmed other findings of the same authors (1993) that individuals who pursue extrinsic goals tend to exhibit more physical symptoms as well as low self-actualization, low vitality, and high depression and anxiety.

The so called social traits have been found to correlate positively with measures of positive affect (Veenhoven, 2002). As mentioned before Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) maintain that the type of goals individuals pursue influences mean levels of well-being. What they call intrinsic goals, the ones with positive effect on SWB, can be highly related with
what Veenhoven and Hofstede understand by social traits and what they understand by extrinsic goals with ego traits.

### ii) The Mexican case

According to Hofstede Mexico is characterized as a very strong ‘ego’ country, let’s put this affirmation into context according to a study developed by Rogelio Diaz-Guerrero (1996); The Mexican Psychology, in which he aims to sketch the nature and behavior of the Mexican people.\(^6\)

Mexican families are based in two basic prepositions: The Father undeniable supremacy and the mother absolute self-sacrifice. These prepositions come from values orientations which sustain the profound differences between men and women in which men are considered unquestionably biological and natural superior to women.

This cultural believes are reflected in the social roles played in the family and characterize children development even before they are born. ‘It must be a boy’; Mexican families have a strong preference towards having boys rather than girls.

Diaz-Guerrero description of Mexican childhood reaffirms Hofstede assumption that gender gap is bigger in ‘ego’ countries and in early ages. Boys are supposed to be a personification of manliness which is understood as fearlessness, aggressiveness, roughness; “no rajarse” (Diaz-Guerrero, 1996 p.37); whereas girls have to become an example of feminity; graceful, charming and tender. All kind of feminine dispositions in boys are disapproved by the community (brothers, uncles, cousins the father and even the mother).

#### 2.3.3 Inculcation and transmission

Recalling Villoro’s value definition, in this section it will be explained the process of values inculcation and transmission. There are two categories of value’s attribution, ‘subjective value’ and ‘objective value’. The former refers to an entity which is the end of a subject’s favorable attitude the latter is independent of any subject’s attitude it is valuable per se, it is valid for any subject under certain circumstances regardless a particular subject’s attitude. Villoro states that the latter can only be achieved through detachment of ones personal

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\(^6\) Such description refers to the standard Mexican families
exclusive interests\(^7\) (2006 p.42). From this two categories of values attribution, another two types are highlighted in order to justify value’s judgments; ‘derivate valuations’ are believes of what is valuable that are transmitted by education and culture, and ‘original valuations’ which are based on personal experiences that prove or reject the social code of valuation (Villoro, 2006 p.63). Therefore in order to justify any value’s objectivity set by the community context one has to turn to the ‘original valuations’ in which value’s personal knowledge comes together, for then external valuations are proved an approved/disproved by ones personal experiences.

In short one has to develop value’s personal experiences, for then use the critical and creative thinking in the process of discerning the so called objective values. These thinking abilities also require affective abilities like empathy, compassion, self-esteem, which are related to the value’s personal experiences (Rugarcia, 2001 p.57).

When one internalizes a specific value it generates attitudes congruent with it and other social and human or universal values (Rugarcía, 2001 p.56). Therefore personal values become a criterion that helps to weight social values in the decision making process. The same occurs with human or universal values like: love, friendship or beauty.

Here comes the importance of ones personal values perception, social example and education; these are not to substitute the personal experience but to build up the framework in which it can be performed. This target is reached if only if instead of imposing value’s guidelines these are transmitted in order to direct each ones own personal vision of what is valuable (p.67).

i) Values education

When talking about values education the text refers to the process of educating children on social values\(^8\), values which will enable them to create clearer intra and inter personal relationships with an expected positive impact on child’s well-being.

According to Aristotle, values become stronger as one applies them on a daily basis, “… it’s not enough the theoretical knowledge of virtue, one has to make effort and put it into practice” (2004, p.192). Furthermore, he sets as essential that “the agent reacts with

\(^7\) Villoro also declares that this detachment is very difficult to reach and is never fully achieved. (2006, p.61)

\(^8\) Tolerance, Solidarity, Comprehension, Generosity, Respect, Love, Responsibility, Friendship, Collaboration, etc
analogous disposition: first he has to be conscious of it; then he has to proceed under his election... finally he should act with immovable and firm spirit” (p.27).

This process of becoming values conscious adjusts the intellect; since moral and ethics find harmony faster and more accurately when one is conscious of the value expressed in every situation (Paoli, 2006b). As well, Villoro emphasizes that it’s not enough the process of values apprehension but to introduce them into the world through ones own actions (2006, p.52). Consequently it becomes core not just to know about values but to put them into practice i.e. to be educated in/for/about/by values.

Values Education refers to any explicit and/or implicit school-based activity to promote student understanding and knowledge of values, and to inculcate the skills and dispositions of students so they can enact particular values as individuals and as members of the wider community (Curriculum Corporation, 2003). In order to reach its target, the process of values based education has to be promoted in consonance to the process of human knowledge.

According to Lonergan, human knowledge supposes four intentional dimensions: 1) experience through senses i.e collecting external and internal data related with the interest; 2) understanding, in general this dimension refers to intellectual operations which formulate questions like what?, why?, how?, which?, when?; 3) verification of the discoveries from the latter dimension through facts based judgment in order to determine its rightness; and 4) deliberation which formulates value judgments in order to make decisions. This process will enable students, that what for Aristotle comes first: “to be conscious of it”.

From this strong baseline, the process of values education has to be built up as a proactive instead of a normative one.

In relation to the official education programs, when attention focuses in contents related to values, also social and psychological senses become clearer. Values-based education gives sense. The constant exercise of values inculcation makes academic contents meaningful as they are related to those values; hence those become more understandable (Paoli, 2006a). At the same time children acquire new resources to handle practical life as well as capacities to improve themselves, others and the environment.

This sort of education enables students to stop being an influence object and to become a person (Yurén, 1995 p.254) able to harmonize her ends with her duties, to find
coherence between her thoughts, words and deeds, to take her life in her hands; in short a skillful person in the art of life able to “act with immovable and firm spirit” (Aristotle, 2004, p.27).

As long as the pursued values are considered to be social values, these reactions derived form the process of values education will be expected to have a positive impact on children’s well-being. In countries classified as ‘ego’ countries like Mexico, in which ego values are encouraged in males and social values are encouraged in females; the process of values education will be expected to have a more positive impact on boys’ well-being than in girls. The former group will have a comparison set of ego values (in which they have been brought up with) versus the social ones (new scheme inculcated at primary school); this comparison will make them appreciate more the new tool that is being provided because of the positive impact it has on their well-being; whilst girls who have been brought up under the scheme of social values won’t find a lot of difference in their behavior, hence in their well-being, after being exposed to a values education program.

3. Empirical study

This research aims to test what theoretically has been sustained: values education has a positive impact on children’s well-being and it might be differentiated according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up.

In order to fulfill its propose for the empirical analysis it was selected Jugar y Vivir los Valores (JVLV) a values education program for pre-school and primary school. Hence first of all it will be tested the effectiveness of the program on the issue of values inculcation. If this happens to be positive, the second hypothesis will be to test if this values inculcation does have a positive impact on children’s well-being; it will also be explored if this impact shows differences between boys and girls following Hofstede criterion that boys and girls in a country like Mexico are brought up under different values schemes.

Section 3.1 is devoted to explain the antecedents, philosophy and pedagogy of the program. Section 3.2 will further explain the sustained hypothesis and the subjective well-being approach. At the end, on section 3.3 the process of how data was obtained is explained.
3.1 Jugar y Vivir los Valores

The Program Jugar y Vivir los Valores (JVLV) started as an educative communication model focused on values inculcation in the educative community\(^9\). It was born as an alternative peace process in the context of Chiapas problematic. Its application is mainly in the state of Chiapas, though in Mexico city there are schools working with it. The main objective of the program is: “To generate from ones own cultural and social situation a harmonious and daily working system focused on universal values assimilation in elementary schools and other places” (Paoli, 2002b, p.9). From this main objective other five specific objectives are drawn.

1. To cultivate a harmonious capacity building process for educators, students and all members of the educative communities that work with this program
2. To generate reflections on diverse values and its application in a practical way
3. To deepen in the understanding, comprehension and solidarity between human beings
4. Learn to respect and estimate different cultures
5. Relate experiences and reflections on values with academic contents and the educative process in general

i) Antecedents

The scheme of the Program began to draw up in 1995 from the Interdisciplinary Research Program “Human Development in Chiapas” conducted by the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM) in collaboration with the international network Living Values. It was born as an alternative of peace building in the mentioned state. In 1998 a work on values education in tseltal\(^10\) was conducted in different municipalities in the state of Chiapas. During the school year 2001-2002, in collaboration with the Chiapas Education Minister and the Public Education Minister in the state, a pilot project was launched in ten kindergartens. This project expanded to 650 kindergartens during 2002-2003.

The Program was launched officially for the scholar period 2002-2004 through and agreement signed by four institutions: the Chiapas Education Minister, Servicios Educativos

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\(^9\) Educativa community is understood as the group of people who attend and work in a school, as well as the students’ families.

\(^10\) One of the indigenous languages used in the region
para Chiapas (SECH), UAM campus Xochimilco and Living Values Mexico A.C., an organization affiliated to the international network Living Values. With this agreement the program was launched also in primary schools as well as the commitment to design a master program called “Educative Communication and Values”, which started on February 2006. The objective of this graduate program is to instruct teachers on values education, in the assessment of this education and also to promote educative communication through diverse mass media.

During 2006-2007, JVLV was applied in 1500 kindergartens and 1000 primary schools in Chiapas. Six books, one for each grade, have been published as teacher’s guides. The author of these books is PhD. Antonio Paoli Bolio, university professor at the UAM-Xochimilco, Department of Education and Communication.

In these books the contents of the free text books, published by the Mexican Education Minister, are retaken; emphasizing the values that these stand out. Alternative activities and readings are set out to promote the values somatic experience. Music is used as a central resource to deepen in the somatic experience of the values. Each teacher’s guide is accompanied by a CD with allusive songs to key values and to the readings in the free text books. Through this material, the didactic practices in the classroom become richer; it foments musical learning, and facilitates the extensive diffusion of the contents of the method through systems of massive communication (Saren Prods).

ii) Philosophy

JVLV aims to focus attention on contents related to values, mainly ethic and moral values implicit and explicit in the official program. Ethics and moral are understood from the Hegelian perspective; the moral supposes an act of self determination that constitutes an act of will of the individual, ethics, on the other hand, refer to the duties in the context of the social life. There exists a continuous match between moral and ethics which tends to harmonize the ends with the duties (Paoli, 2006b). Hence moral configures itself in relation with the options and social frameworks in such a way that the aims are conquered according to the duties. According to Paoli as duties take into count others welfare human relationships become clearer. Thus, the personality structure and its rationality are based in the coherence

11 For more information see Appendix II
with which one applies its internal norms, its sense of its duties, to the social context (2006b, p.8).

The author states that ones actions based on the inculcation of values benefits the self and others. Values cannot be performed just form a personal perspective instead on terms of social welfare, ethics. These are the so called social values.

iii) Pedagogical approach
JVLV for primary schools aims to reinforce the official education program as it focus attention on contents regarding values. The teacher’s guides scheme is based on the Dynamic of Human Intentionality in Bernard Lonergans’ perspective; according to who, human knowledge supposes four intentional dimensions: experience through senses, questioning (What is this? How it is?), verification through facts based judgment (Is it as I understood it?), and deliberation which formulates value judgments (Is this good? Is it accurate? Is it worthwhile?) (Paoli, 2006a).

JVLV pursues a multiple intelligences development. Human knowledge is cumulative; one needs a set of judgments considered to be correct and coherent. This set should be based on understanding, verification and experience, in such a way that all this allows to integrate our knowledge (2006a). Hence the program does not only looks for certainty in knowledge, but experience, knowledge and verification. Therefore, from experiences and understandings of the individual and collective good; ones own rationality is redefined and holds fast through the inter-subjective meeting (2006a).

When attention focuses on contents related to values, social and psychological contents on the official education program become clearer since learning aims are justified by something valuable that makes sense (Paoli, 200b). When the being reason of any action is realized it will be properly understood hence academic levels are raised.

Values experiences (games, stories, songs, teamwork) provide a personal reference needed in order to understand those values. These attractive and rewarding experiences take to the next step of questioning those in order to understand them. Then one understands them properly and is able to recognize implicit values and apply them on a daily basis (Paoli, 2006 a).
This constant exercise of values inculcation induces a positive intellection since children acquire new resources to manage practical life as well as capacities to improve themselves, others and their environment.

A central source to deepen in the values’ somatic experience is music. Each teacher’s guide comes with a compact disc with specially designed songs which reinforce key values. Through this material, the didactic practices in the classroom become richer; as it foments the musical learning, and facilitates the extensive diffusion of the contents of the method through mass media (Saren Prods).

For JVLV it is crucial to work in balance within the educative community. For that the student’s family involvement in the values-based education process is core to the program in order to bring families closer to the educative community and transform their attitudes and relationships into more positive ones. The teacher’s guides incorporate, at least, a familiar homework per week.

3.2 Hypothesis
According to what has been outlined on the literature review, values education is presented as an alternative to the deterioration process in the school and core in the basic education phase. Nonetheless values acquisition has rarely been studied and little attention has been paid to the outcomes of dedicated values education programs.

Basic education and child development during this phase have optimum characteristics for the child to create values personal experiences which will enable her to generate attitudes congruent with it and other social and human or universal values. The election of values varies; it can be done just in the culture framework; a culture fixes certain superior values which are common to every member of it; these values are the core of culture through which the performance of community members is determined.

Since the research focuses on Mexico educational system, it was used Hofstede culture analysis and its Ego/Social dimension to explain the context in which Mexican children are brought up. It is also highlighted the positive correlation between social values with ones well-being.

In order to fulfill it’s proposes for the empirical analysis it was selected Jugar y Vivir los Valores (JVLV) a values education program for pre-school and primary school. First it
will be tested the effectiveness of the JVLV program on the issue of values inculcation. If the program has a positive impact on children’s values apprehension, a second hypothesis will be tested: if this values inculcation does have a positive impact on children’s well-being. This will lead to a third hypothesis: the positive impact varies according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up.

3.3 The survey
A children’s questionnaire was created and was applied in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas. Six public schools were selected in accordance with the JVLV coordinator at Tuxtla; three schools in which the program Jugar y Vivir los Valores is applied and three schools in which the program is not applied, the latter will be called traditional schools because they follow the traditional education method without any specific attention on the implicit values of the official education program. Children studying first, second and third grade show specific pedagogic characteristics reason why it was easier to create an instrument for children studying primary school upper grades (fourth, fifth and sixth). The survey was conducted at the beginning of the scholar year, at the time of the project design, teacher’s guide books of fourth and sixth grade hadn’t been published hence children that were exposed to JVLV during third and fifth grade were beginning their fourth and sixth grade, that’s why it was accorded to run the survey just with fourth and sixth grade students. 471 child questionnaires were obtained.

4. The Database
This section describes the interest variables for the empirical analysis in order to test the hypothesis mentioned above: 1) JVLV does have a positive impact on children’s values apprehension, 2) this values reinforcement has a positive impact on children’s well-being and 3) the positive impact varies according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up.

In order to obtain the desired variables for the hypothesis test it was created a self-respond questionnaire. Since questionnaires were addressed to children, it was very important to control its extension because of the length of children’s attention. It was also designed to be simple and clear with a friendly format.
4.1 Instrument
4.1.1 Variables

a) Age, Grade. As mentioned on section 2.1 Piaget underlines the importance of studying child’s development through understanding the importance of each childhood stage. The survey was run with fourth and sixth grade students. Life circumstances between both groups vary widely, one of the most important differences is that the latter are about to finish primary school while the former still have two more years to go. This perception of ones life circumstances and the emotional and psychological child development might affect children’s SWB. Age and Grade are used as indicators of the childhood stage and the effects of child life circumstances on child’s SWB.

b) Gender. As noticed on section 2.3.2 there are differences on gender related values and these are wider among young children, hence this becomes a core variable for the study.

c) Attendance to JVLV schools. In order to compare the effectiveness of JVLV and the values education impact on SWB this variable is indispensable in the process of empirical analysis in order to set a comparison between JVLV schools and Traditional schools\textsuperscript{12}.

d) Affective, Psychological Variable. As stated by Rugarcia (2.3.3), affective abilities are needed in order to enhance thinking abilities in the process of values transmission. As one of the affective abilities, self-esteem was used as an indicator of this variable. It is expected to observe whether there is a positive relation between values based education and students’ self-esteem (Lovat, 2004).

As mentioned by Sirgy; Huebner, Gilman and Laughlin (1997) conducted a study to demonstrate that self-esteem is a different construct from life satisfaction in children. The results of the study indicated that indeed the self-esteem measure did significantly discriminate from the life satisfaction measure in children (2001).

e) Well-being. The research follows a Subjective Well-being approach to ones well-being, it also inquires for both Life satisfaction and an Index of Satisfaction with certain life components\textsuperscript{13}.

\textsuperscript{12} This terminology will be used in order to refer to schools that do not work with JVLV and do not provide any reinforcement on the implicit values from the official education program.

\textsuperscript{13} It’s important to know about the theoretical differences between these in order to understand its outcome. For more information see Appendix 4.
f) **Mother/Father relationship.** As noted on section 2.3.3 the child relationship with her parents constitute a strong determinant on the child values. One of the PWI for school children components is personal relationships but without any specification of which relationships should be addressed hence it was determined specifically ask about children’s satisfaction with the relationship they have with their parents.

**g) Values apprehension.** This is one of the core variables. It is fundamental in order to test the effectiveness of JVLV and the impact of this values reinforcement on children’s SWB.

### 4.1.2 Variables construction

The reference of each variable can be seen on Appendix 1 which is the four pages Instrument. Along the variables construction explanation questions from such instrument will be addressed.

**- Attendance to JVLV schools,** is a dummy variable which takes the value of zero if the child attends a traditional school and one if the child attends a JVLV school.

**- Affective, Psychological Variable/ Self-esteem.** To obtain data related to this variable Garduño self-esteem instrument was used as a baseline model which consists on a set of nine questions. Information from the JVLV sixth grade teacher’s guide, which specially focuses on the self-esteem theme, was used in order to adjust Garduño instrument to the research aims. Nine adjectives which describe the child’s self-esteem were evaluated in positive terms of it; this was used in a scale from 1 to 4. 4 was used for the maximum expression of it, and 1 if the child thinks the adjective does not belong to its personality.

For example,

How sincere you consider yourself?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very sincere</th>
<th>Sincere</th>
<th>A little sincere</th>
<th>No so sincere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The construction of the affective and psychological variable is given by the sum of each of the nine questions punctuation.

---

14 The nine questions are the nine questions on the First Module of Appendix 1.
- **Well-being.** As explained before two subjective well-being approaches were used; Life Satisfaction and an Index of Satisfaction with certain life components, for the latter, the Personal Well-being Index (PWI) for school children developed by Cummis and Lau (2005) was used. The child is asked to evaluate his level of satisfaction within each of the questions in a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is very unhappy and 10 is very happy. Question one from the Second Module on the Appendix refers to the Life as a whole Satisfaction question. Questions 2-8 on the same module compound the PWI, its components are: standard of living, health, life achievement, personal relationships, personal safety, community-connectedness, and future security. The PWI is built with a weighted average of the punctuation of each of the seven mentioned questions.

- **Mother/Father relationship.** In order to know about the child satisfaction with the relationship with her mother and father it was used the format of satisfaction in terms of happiness applied by the PWI for school children. These two questions are referred on the Second Module of the Appendix questions 9 and 10.

- **Values apprehension.** Values Education literature is lacking in providing methodologies to asses programs which promote it; especially for primary school programs (Fyffe, 2006). Not existing instrument was found which could fulfill this research objective. With this lack of information and the “need to be a logical link between the assessment items contained in the test and the programs being evaluated” (Fyffe, 2006), an instrument was created to asses the level of children values apprehension. The instrument aims to show if children’s reaction to every day situations reflected the application of specific values or not. Six values, derived from the JVLV program, which could be evaluated in relation to everyday situations, were selected: Tolerance, Collaboration, Generosity, Honesty, Responsibility, and Respect. Each question could take the value of zero (if the answer does not reflect the virtue) or one (if it reflects it). For the first five virtues, hypothetic situations with two possible reactions were created. The child is asked to select an option in which she would react. For the sixth and last virtue, the child is asked to write five virtues (good things) of one of her mates. If she is able
to write three or more the value of the question will be one, and it will be zero otherwise. Adding the punctuation to each of the six questions, a Values Index is constructed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Discrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JVLV</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Happiness</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Well-being Index</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother/Father Relationship</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generosity</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values Index</td>
<td>Discrete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: FM (First Module), SM (Second Module), TM (Third Module), mexp (Mexican pesos)

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

This section aims to provide first sight relevant information of the main variables obtained.

a. Jugar y Vivir Los Valores Effect. Table 2 shows that children attending JVLV schools report a PWI 2.6 points above children not attending to it. For the latter group, the Values Index is slightly underneath the former group. This Index, as noted in section 4.1, has 6 indicators in which we also observe the JVLV effect. The Values in which JVLV has more impact are: Collaboration, Generosity and Respect. Honesty is the only value in which the contrary effect is observed, the latter group is above the former). Regarding children perception of their relationship with their father and mother, in both cases, children attending JVLV school report greater satisfaction with those relationships.
In Table 3 important results regarding values apprehension and gender are shown. Girls and boys attending JVLV schools report a relatively equal Life Satisfaction whereas for those not attending JVLV schools, girls LS is slightly above than boys’. Regarding the Values Index, the ratio girl/boy is 1.063 in the former group and 1.084 in the latter; it is shown that attending JVLV schools diminishes the girl/boy ratio in 2.1 points as both girls and boys report a higher Values Index. For the Values Index components (Tolerance, Collaboration, Generosity, Honesty, Responsibility, Respect), in all six, girls not attending JVLV schools show higher levels than boys from the same group (not attending JVLV schools). The case of Generosity is where the biggest gap is shown. In JVLV schools, girls show higher levels than boys in five of the components. The biggest gap is shown in Collaboration. For this group boys report higher levels of Honesty compared to girls.

For intra gender comparisons, girls attending JVLV schools show higher levels than girls not attending, in five of the Values Index components; Collaboration and Respect show the biggest differences. In the case of Honesty, the latter group is above the former. Boys attending JVLV schools also report higher levels in five of the Values Index components, in this case the biggest gaps are observed in Generosity and Respect. In the case of Tolerance, the former group is lightly below the latter.

Looking to the relations with their father and mother, the girl/boy ratio in JVLV schools is slightly higher than one in both relations (with the Father 1.04, with the mother 1.02). The same ratio for schools not working with JVLV is shown to be less than one for both cases (with the Father .94, with the mother .99).

Thus the effects of attending JVLV schools on the child satisfaction with the relationship with her father with her mother are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Val</th>
<th>Tol</th>
<th>Col</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Hon</th>
<th>Resp</th>
<th>Respe</th>
<th>Fr</th>
<th>Mr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jvlv</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tra</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Table 1 for abbreviations
Tra. Is for Traditional schools which doesn’t work with JVLV
a) *Girls.* They are more satisfied with both relationships. The JVLV effect on their satisfaction with the Father relationship is four times the effect on their satisfaction with the Mother relationship.

b) *Boys.* They are less satisfied with both relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Val</th>
<th>Tol</th>
<th>Col</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Hon</th>
<th>Resp</th>
<th>Respe</th>
<th>Fr</th>
<th>Mr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jvlv</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl</strong></td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boy</strong></td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>90.3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tra</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl</strong></td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boy</strong></td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Table 1 for abbreviations
*Tra.* Is for Traditional schools which doesn’t work with JVLV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>PWI</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Val</th>
<th>Tol</th>
<th>Col</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Hon</th>
<th>Resp</th>
<th>Respe</th>
<th>Fr</th>
<th>Mr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jvlv</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>92.5</td>
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<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tra</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>80.2</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Table 1 for abbreviations
*Tra.* Is for Traditional schools which doesn’t work with JVLV

c. *Jugar y Vivir los Valores-Grade Effect.* The survey was applied to Fourth and Sixth grade students. According to this criterion, in all schools, Fourth grade students report higher Life Satisfaction levels compared to Sixth grade students. For the Values Index, in all schools, the ratio 4th/6th grade is below one (JVLV .91, not JVLV .92). Regarding these Index components, for all schools, Fourth grade students report higher levels in Collaboration and Responsibility, but lower levels in Tolerance, Generosity, Honesty and Respect.

Sixth grade students attending JVLV schools, show higher levels in Collaboration, Generosity, Respect and Responsibility than the same grade students in schools without JVLV. On the other hand, Fourth grade students attending JVLV schools report higher levels in Tolerance, Generosity and Respect compared to the same grade students in schools without JVLV.

Again, relevant information on Honesty is observed since both sixth and fourth grade students attending JVLV schools report lower levels of it than the comparison group.
i) Life Satisfaction vs. PWI

Two SWB indicators were used. In order to choose the best indicator for the hypothesis tests the following analysis is developed. The correlation between Life Satisfaction and PWI was found significant but not too strong (31.5%). Due to the abstractness of the latter, children might be addressing different issues to each indicator (LS and PWI).

All domains except “feeling part of the community” correlate significantly with Life Satisfaction\(^{15}\) (Table 5); this might be due to the high abstractness and complexity of this domain, as Cummins and Lau refer and give special attention to it in the PWI-School Manual (2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PWI components</th>
<th>Life Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard of living</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>0.18**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Achievement</td>
<td>0.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal relationship</td>
<td>0.14**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal safety</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling part of the community</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future security</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

However as Rojas declares “it is necessary to go beyond correlations to state the importance of any domain of life in the generation of life satisfaction” (2006). For this, the semi-logarithm technique\(^{16}\) proposed by Rojas was used,

\(^{15}\) Far under the Lau et al. findings between 0.30 and 0.70. Lau et al. also showed that all seven life satisfaction domains are significantly correlated with Overall Happiness in a study run with adult population.

\(^{16}\) “The semi-logarithm specification implies diminishing returns to any domain satisfaction, an increasing marginal rate of substitution between satisfaction in any two domains, and concavity of life satisfaction in domains of life (life satisfaction tends to be greater in situations of balanced, rather than polarized, domain satisfaction)” (Rojas, 2006).
\[ e^{LS} = e^{\alpha_0} \times SL^{\alpha_1} \times Hea^{\alpha_2} \times LA^{\alpha_3} \times PR^{\alpha_4} \times PS^{\alpha_5} \times Com^{\alpha_6} \times FS^{\alpha_7} \times e^{\mu} \]

Where

- **LS**: Life Satisfaction
- **SL**: Standard of Living
- **Hea**: Health
- **LA**: Life Achievement
- **PR**: Personal Relationship
- **PS**: Personal Safety
- **Com**: Feeling part of the community
- **FS**: Future security
- **\mu**: error term
- **\alpha_j**: parameters to be estimated, \( j = 0, 2, \ldots, 7 \)

17 All variables are in a 0 to 100 scale
On Table 6 it is observed that overall happiness is positively related with standard of living, health, personal safety and future security, negatively related with personal relationship and is not related with life achievement and feeling part of the community. None of the domains is fundamental for a child’s overall happiness. The domain which seems to be more important for children’s LS is personal safety. An increase of 100 percent in personal safety leads to a rise of 21% in LS. Personal relationship appears to be negatively correlated with children’s LS. This means that and increase of 100 percent in personal relationship will decrease LS in 13%. However as stated above, none of the domains have an essential impact on children’s LS, hence children’s answers for satisfaction certain components life and satisfaction with life as a whole are showing different children’s analysis process, addressing
different areas of their SWB. This is consistent with the low correlation between PWI and LS showed above.

This predicts that information from both indicators, will lead to different outcomes in the further analysis which involves the relation between children’s SWB, Values and their participation or not to JVLV.

5. Methodology
Control variables mentioned in section four will be used in this section for the hypothesis tests. At the end of section four it was also noticed the differences on both SWB indicators structure (Life Satisfaction and PWI); these differences will lead to different outcomes on the hypothesis tests when using each indicator, therefore it was decided to do such tests with both indicators separately. Section 5.1 will do the hypothesis test using PWI (5.1.1) and Life Satisfaction (5.1.2) as SWB indicator.

5.1 Do values matter for children’s well-being?
5.1.1 The case of satisfaction with specific components
Along this section the Personal Well-being Index is used as a SWB indicator in order to test 1) if JVLV does have a positive impact on children’s values apprehension, 2) if this values reinforcement has a positive impact on children’s well-being and finally 3) if the positive impact varies according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up. Since JVLV is the values reinforcement program, the child attendance to JVLV schools or traditional schools will be core to determine whether it affects or not children’s values level controlling by gender and self-esteem; important variables for the process of values apprehension.\(^{18}\) It will also be tested whether child subjective well-being is affected by the child’s values level. It’s important to control by the childhood development stage in which the child is at (by scholar grade or age) and by the level of satisfaction with the relationship they have with their father and mother.

*Hypothesis 1:* JVLV does have a positive impact on children’s values apprehension.

\(^{18}\) mentioned on sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3
\[ Val = \alpha_0 + \alpha_{jvlv} + \alpha_{fem} + \alpha_{se} + \mu \] (1)

Ho: \( \alpha_1 = 0 \), Hi: \( \alpha_1 > 0 \)

Where:

- **Val**: refers to the values index in a 0 to 6 scale
- **jvlv**: dichotomous variable for the schools which work with JVLV program
- **fem**: dichotomous variable for gender
- **se**: refers to the self-esteem index in a 9 to 36 scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7</th>
<th>JVLV effect on Children’s Values OLS Regression Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Mod 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JVLV</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>0.01**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.40**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.70**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at 5%
** significant at 1%

Table 7 shows that including the child age on the model, does not have significant effects, hence Model 2 was used in order to test hypothesis 1.
**Hypothesis 2:** Values reinforcement has a positive impact on children’s well-being

Ho: $\beta_3 = 0$,  Hi: $\beta_3 > 0$

**Hypothesis 3:** The impact varies according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up.

Ho: $\beta_4 = 0$,  Hi: $\beta_4 \neq 0$

\[
PWI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 fr + \beta_2 mr + \beta_3 val + \beta_4 femval + \beta_5 gr + \mu
\]  \hspace{1cm} (2)

Where:

- **PWI:** refers to Personal Well-being Index in a 0 to 100 scale
- **fr:** refers to the children-father quality relationship (reported by children) in a 0 to 100 scale
- **mr:** refers to the children-mother quality relationship (reported by children) in a 0 to 100 scale
- **val:** refers to the values index in a 0 to 6 scale
- **femval:** is the interaction variable between female and values
- **gr:** dichotomous variable for the grade in which the child is studying. 1=6th, 0=4th
On Table 8, Model 1 presents an OLS regression through which all the explanatory variables are exogenous variables. Taking into count equation 1, in equation (2) values is no longer an exogenous variable because is correlated with the unobservable error $\mu$, therefore as stated in Wooldridge 2005, OLS estimation results in inconsistent estimators of all the $\beta_j$.

Since hypothesis one is tested by the significance of $\alpha_1$, on Table 8 is also presented the alternative method of considering a system of simultaneous equation by three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PWI</th>
<th>Mod 1</th>
<th>Mod 2</th>
<th>Mod 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father R.</td>
<td>0.09**</td>
<td>0.09**</td>
<td>0.09**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother R.</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>1.97**</td>
<td>5.44**</td>
<td>5.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fem – Val</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.51*</td>
<td>-0.49*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JVLV</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01**</td>
<td>0.01**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>42.9**</td>
<td>3.21**</td>
<td>3.82**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Mod 2 and 3 use the method of Three-stage estimation for systems of simultaneous equations regression (3SLS)
* significant at 5%, ** significant at 1%
stage estimation (3SLS). Including age as control variable in equation (1) doesn’t represent any important changes on either equation; therefore Model 3 was selected for hypothesis one, two and three tests.

5.1.2 The case of satisfaction with life as a whole
In this section Life Satisfaction is used as a proxy for Subjective Well-being SWB, it was also used the selected regression Model 3 stated on section 5.1.1
The equation system is as follows:

\[ Val = \alpha_0 + \alpha_{jvlv} + \alpha_{fem} + \alpha_{se} + \mu \]  \hspace{1cm} (3)

\[ LS = \beta_0 + \beta_{fr} + \beta_{mr} + \beta_{val} + \beta_{fem} + \beta_{gr} + \mu \]  \hspace{1cm} (4)

The terminology is the same as the one noted for equations (1) and (2), in this case LS refers to Life as a whole Satisfaction in a 0 to 100 scale.
### Table 9
**LS, Values, JVLV Regression Analysis:**
Three-stage estimation for systems of simultaneous equations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>Val</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>3.01*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father R.</td>
<td>0.14**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother R.</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fem – Val</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>-7.2**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JVLV</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01**</td>
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<td>0.37**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>50.8**</td>
<td>3.8**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at 5%
** significant at 1%

### 6. Results

This section analyzes information presented on section 5 to see whether JVLV does have a positive impact on children’s values apprehension or not, if this values reinforcement has a positive impact on children’s well-being and if such impact shows differences according to the values scheme in which the child has been brought up. The analysis is made first with PWI as SWB indicator (6.1.1) and then with Life as a whole Satisfaction as SWB indicator (6.1.2). Section 6.1.3 presents an analysis of results from sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2; a comparison between satisfaction with life as a whole and satisfaction with specific components.
6.1 Do values matter for children’s well-being?

6.1.1 The case of satisfaction with specific components

This section shows the results of the equation system with PWI as indicator of SWB. On Table 8 (selected Model 3) it is shown that Jugar y Vivir los Valores does have a positive impact on children’s Values index in both girls and boys\(^{19}\). In general (for both jvlv and traditional school) girls have a higher values base line than boys.

In relation to the Father-Child and Mother-Child relationship\(^{20}\), both have a positive impact on child SWB. The school Grade doesn’t have a significant impact on child SWB.

Regarding the values impact on children subjective-well-being SWB; there is a differentiated impact for boys and girls, values have a more positive impact on boys well-being than on girls’.

Thus Mexican society (ego values oriented) which provides girls a values base line focused on social traits enabling them to get the positive benefits on SWB of this social values oriented education. This is consistent with results on the values (as dependent variable) (Table 8) regression in which the fact of being a girl increases child values index in more or less the same proportion as the fact of attending JVLV schools. Instead, for boys, traditional education (at home, schools, etc) encourages in them ego traits; when boys are encouraged to develop social values by an integral education system (in the school community and at home), their comparison set point enables them to appreciate more than girls this new aspect in their lives and reflecting this on a more positive impact on their SWB.

6.1.2 The case of satisfaction with life as a whole

This section shows the results of the equation system with Life Satisfaction as indicator of SWB. On Table 9 it is shown that Jugar y Vivir los Valores does have a positive impact on children’s Values index. In general (for both JVLV and traditional schools) girls have a higher values base line than boys.

Regarding the LS equation, values do have a positive impact on children’s SWB, the same for boys and girls. There is no differentiated impact by the values scheme in which the child has been brought up.

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\(^{19}\) The interaction variable female-jvlv parameter was not statistically significant

\(^{20}\) It might be interesting to test if there are gender (boy-girl) differences on this.
Grade has significant and negative effect on children’s well-being. Children attending 6th grade are shown to be 7.2 percentile points less happy than 4th grade students. In this, it’s important to note that the variability of children’s responses is bigger in 6th grade students (0-100) than for those in 4th grade (50-100). Children in 4th grade might show higher results to the LS question due to the high abstract and complexity level of the question or because they are happier with their lives as a whole. *Father-Child* and *Mother-Child* relationship; both have a positive impact on child SWB.

### 6.1.3 Satisfaction with life as a whole vs. satisfaction with specific components

As it has been shown at the end of section 4 and further by the results presented in sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2; the two SWB indicators (the Personal Well-being Index and Life Satisfaction), are giving different information regarding children’s Subjective Well-being.

The first parameter which leads to this conclusion is the low correlation (31.5%) between both indicators. Additionally, satisfaction with each of the PWI components is not fundamental to determine children’s satisfaction with life as a whole. Further, the results from sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 show a disparity of *Grade* and *Values* (differentiated by *Gender*) impact on PWI and on LS. Grade is significant for LS but not for PWI; values show a differentiated effect by Gender over PWI but not over LS. No further studies between differences of both indicators on children were found. What seems to be more important in addressing these differences is the level of abstraction and complexity that the Life as a whole Satisfaction question implies in comparison with to the satisfaction with PWI components which implies reflection on a specific area of children’s life.

### 7. Conclusions

#### 7.1 Findings

Through empirical analysis it was found that values education does have a positive impact on children’s well-being. This impact is more positive for boys than for girls when using the Personal Well-being Index as indicator of children’s well-being. Such difference wasn’t found when using the one question of Satisfaction Life as a Whole as children’s well-being

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21 Further analysis on this is recommended
22 Further analysis on this area can be studied from different areas of knowledge like psychology or education.
No further studies between differences of both indicators on children were found. What seems to be more important in addressing these differences is the level of abstraction and complexity that the Life as a whole Satisfaction question implies in comparison with to the satisfaction with PWI components which implies reflection on a specific area of children’s life.

7.2 Final Considerations

Values education is presented as an alternative to the deterioration process in the school and core in the basic education phase. Nonetheless values acquisition has rarely been studied and little attention has been paid to the outcomes of dedicated values education programs.

Basic education and child development during this phase have optimum characteristics for the child to create values personal experiences which will enable her to generate attitudes congruent with it and other social and human or universal values. The election of values varies; it can be done just in the culture framework; a culture fixes certain superior values which are common to every member of it; these values are the core of culture through which the performance of community members is determined.

Since the research focuses on Mexico educational system, it was used Hofstede culture analysis and its Ego/Social dimension to explain the context in which Mexican children are brought up. It is also highlighted the positive correlation between social values with ones well-being.

In order to fulfill it’s proposes for the empirical analysis it was selected Jugar y Vivir los Valores (JVLV) a values education program for pre-school and primary school.

It was found that in an ‘ego’ country like Mexico, values education does have a positive impact on children’s well-being and that the values scheme in which the child is brought up do influences the effect of a values education when using the Personal Well-being Index as indicator of children’s well-being. If the values education program is social values oriented, the effect on children shows gender differences because girls have been educated under a social values scheme and boys under an ego values scheme hence the latter appreciate more than girls this new aspect in their lives and reveal this on a more positive impact on their SWB. This difference wasn’t found when using the one question of satisfaction with life as a whole as indicator of the same variable.
The research was originally planned to work with children and parents information. A parent’s questionnaire was made in order to see whether child values education has a positive impact on parents’ well-being or not and to see the effect of the quality of the father/mother-child relationship has on children’s values apprehension. Unfortunately too few information on parents questionnaires was obtained due to scarce resources (human and economic) for the survey application, and it couldn’t be used for the research aims.

Another limitation of the research is that it doesn’t collect happiness in the long run. It would be interesting to follow up these children to see the happiness long run effect of their attendance or not to JVLV schools.

It was perceived the need of an interdisciplinary team to work on the analysis of this theme. For example, the child questionnaire could be further improved by people from the field of education science especially the values module.

The program Jugar y Vivir los Valores keeps on growing, reaching more schools in Chiapas and outside Chiapas. A research like the one presented on this paper could be take up again from an interdisciplinary perspective in order to obtain more results which will help to understand better the effects and importance of values based education.

Bibliography


Appendix 1: Child Questionnaire.

SCHOOL: _______________________________ GRADE: ______
NAME: _______________________________ AGE: ____  Boy: __  Girl: __

FIRST MODULE
Put a mark in the option that with think that best describes you

1. How sincere you consider yourself?
   Very sincere  Sincere  A little sincere  No so sincere

2. How hard-working you consider yourself?
   Mucho  Mas o menos  Poco  Muy poco

3. ¿Qué tan respetuoso (a) te consideras?
   Muy respetuoso  Respetuoso  Poco respetuoso  No tan respetuoso

4. ¿Qué tan alegre crees que eres?
   Muy alegre  Alegre  Poco alegre  No tan alegre

5. ¿Qué tan responsable crees que eres con tus cosas?
   Muy responsable  Responsable  Poco responsable  No tan responsable

6. ¿Qué tan valiente crees que eres?
   Muy valiente  Valiente  Poco valiente  No tan valiente

7. ¿Qué tan bueno eres en los deportes?
   Muy bueno  Bueno  Poco bueno  No tan bueno

8. ¿Qué que tan compartido crees que eres?
   Muy compartido  Compartido  Poco compartido  No tan compartido

9. ¿Qué tan inteligente crees que eres?
   Muy inteligente  Inteligente  Poco inteligente  No tan inteligente
SECOND MODULE
In the next ten questions, answer with an “x” in the square which describes best how happy you feel.

1. How happy are you with your life as a whole?

2. How happy are you about the things you have? Like the money you have and the things you own?

3. How happy are you with your health?

4. How happy are you with the things you want to be good at?

5. How happy are you about getting on with the people you know?
6. ¿Cómo te sientes seguro/a?

7. ¿Cómo te sientes haciendo cosas lejos de tu hogar?

8. ¿Cómo te sientes sobre lo que puede suceder en tu vida más tarde?

9. ¿Cómo te sientes sobre la relación que tienes con tu padre?
10. How happy feel you about the relationship you have with your mother?

MUY TRISTE
NI FELIZ
NI TRISTE
MUY FELIZ

TERCER MODULO
En esta sección pon una cruz en el cuadro que indique lo que seguramente tú harías en esa situación.

1. Imagina que tu hermano pequeño quiere que salgas a jugar con él, insiste mucho pero tú no quieres:
   a) Le dices que se vaya, que no puedes jugar ☐
   b) Juegas con él un ratito y después continuas haciendo tus cosas ☐

2. Cuando te piden colaborar en cosas de tu casa:
   a) No te gusta, es aburrido ☐
   b) Las haces con gusto para el bien de todos en tu casa ☐

3. Si tienes un juguete que nadie más posee.
   a) Les platicas a tus amigos de él, pero lo guardas en tu casa, nunca lo sacas para que no se desgaste ☐
   b) Lo compartes con tus amigos para que todos puedan divertirse con él ☐

4. Imagina que se pierde tu lápiz. Un compañero te enseña un lápiz nuevo mucho más bonito que el que perdiste y te pregunta si es tuyo. ¿Qué respondes?
   a) Sí, éste es el mío, gracias ☐
   b) No, la mía es diferente ☐

5. Generalmente, después de comerte un dulce,
a) Tiras la envoltura en la calle
b) Esperas a encontrar un bote de basura y tiras la envoltura

6. ¿Puedes escribir 5 cosas buenas (virtudes) de tu compañero de banca? (Si quieres puedes escribir menos)

_________________  __________________  __________________  __________________

__________________  ________________
Appendix 2: The case of satisfaction with specific components. Values effect on each well-being components

The PWI has seven components: standard of living, health, life achievement, personal relationships, personal safety, community-connectedness, and future security. Each component is a continuous variable in a scale from 0 to 100. It is proposed a PWI breakdown in order to see the impact of values apprehension on each PWI component. Each domain of the PWI was regressed following the same scheme of the PWI hence the equation’s system is as follows:

\[ Val = \alpha_0 + \alpha_2 jvlv + \alpha_3 fem + \alpha_4 se + \mu \]  \hfill (a)

\[ PWI_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 fr + \beta_2 mr + \beta_3 val + \beta_4 fem + \beta_5 gr + \mu \]  \hfill (b)

\[ i=1,2,3,4,5,6,7 \]

In order to see the effect that the values index has on each PWI component, Table 8 shows the results of the second equation tough it was run simultaneously with the first one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A</th>
<th>PWI components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regression Analysis:</strong> Three-stage estimation for systems of simultaneous equations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW1</td>
<td>PW2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>0.69**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father R.</td>
<td>0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother R.</td>
<td>0.01**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fem – Val</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Note: PW1 (standard of living), PW2 (health), PW3 (life achievement), PW4 (personal relationships), PW5 (pers. safety), PW6 (community-connectedness), PW7 (future security)
Table A shows that values are significant to four out of the seven PWI components (standard of living, personal safety, community-connectedness, and future security). Not being so for health, life achievement, personal relationships. From these results, one can infer that children do not consider significant the chosen values (Tolerance, Collaboration, Honesty, Generosity, Responsibility, and Respect) in the latter PWI domains.  

Appendix 3: JVLV influence on specific values

The Values Index has six components (Tolerance, Collaboration, Honesty, Generosity, Responsibility, and Respect) each is a dummy variable as explained in section 4. This appendix aims to explore the JVLV effect (does it exist? is it positive or negative?) on each of the values index components. Following a probit order regression, it is shown the effect that JVLV has on each of these components.

Regarding the JVLV impact on each of the Values components (tolerance, collaboration, generosity, honesty, responsibility and respect), in Table 10 it was found that JVLV is significant in two out of the six domains of the Values Index: Collaboration and Respect. In both cases the impact is positive. Children attending the JVLV schools have 6% more probability to practice the value of Collaboration and almost 17% to practice the value of Respect.

Appendix 4: Subjective Well-being Approach / Life Satisfaction and Well-being indexes

i) Subjective Well-being Approach

The Subjective Well-Being (SWB) approach follows a bottom-up approach and it is based on some particular ideas exposed by Rojas (2006). It is considered to be the well-being of a person by directly asking people about their well-being. SWB deals with the well-being of a person as she is, and not as someone else thinks she ought to be; it is the person the one who can better assess her well-being. The role of researchers is to

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23 A further analysis can be done to see the separate effect of each value in each PWI domain

24 In section 4.2 (Descriptive Statistics) it was shown that there might be a negative effect of JVLV in the case of Honesty, this effect was not found significant.
understand and study the nature of this assessment and its implications for this, an interdisciplinary approach, is preferred.

ii) Life Satisfaction and Well-being indexes

Taking into count that it is only in recent years that the idea of subjective well-being (SWB) or happiness has been measured and studied in a systematic way, it is important to note a basic difference between judgments of satisfaction with one's life-as-a-whole versus satisfaction with specific life domains. According to the SWB conception the way to measure it will be like.

Veenhoven conceives subjective well-being, “as the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life-as-a-whole favorably: how well he likes the life he leads.” (1991)

He also makes a distinction between cognitive and affective appraisals of life. He states that the latter is the prevailing instrument to evaluate ones happiness (2008). Since “one's affective state is not considered relevant information in evaluating many domains” (1991), Veenhoven underlines the importance to ask people directly about their “overall happiness” and declares that only happiness can be measured completely, because it is an overall judgment in itself, thus the question about appreciation of life-as-a-whole suffices. (2000)

According to Veenhoven there is a problem of summation in using judgments of specific life domains: 1) they are more likely to be based on inter- and intra-individual comparisons, thus it raises the intriguing possibility that the same event may influence evaluations of one's life-as-a-whole and evaluations of specific domains in opposite directions (1991). 2) Different life domains cannot be meaningfully added in a whole, firstly because satisfactions cannot be assessed exhaustively and secondly because satisfactions differ in significance (2000).

In 2002 Cummins and Nistico, came up with the Theory of Subjective Wellbeing Homeostasis which states that subjective wellbeing is actively controlled and maintained by a set of psychological devices that function under the control of personality. According to them, the operation of these devices is most evident at the level of general personal wellbeing; a non-specific and abstract level (Cummins et al, 2003). Given the
extraordinary generality of this question, the answer people give tend to be “remarkably stable” (2003).

According to Cummins, while the classic “life as a whole” question is useful as an estimate of the homeostatic set-point, due to its high level of abstraction it cannot provide information about the components of life that also contribute, positively or negatively, to this sense of wellbeing. In order to obtain such information, questions need to be directed at satisfaction with life domains. The approach attempts to understand a general appraisal of life as a whole on the basis of a multidimensional vector of specific appraisals in more concrete spheres of being (Rojas, 2006).

In response to Veenhoven’s claim that “satisfactions cannot be assessed exhaustively”; Cummins declares that “there is converging agreement within the literature on the identification of the minimal set of domains that form the first-level deconstruction of personal wellbeing” (2003). Theoretically, such a set should be sufficient to describe the entire “life as a whole” (Cummins, 1997). For Cummins, as domains are distanced from the homeostatic influence, by becoming more specific, they should show greater variability and sensitivity to the actual life conditions versus the abstract-personal measures that will evidence little sensitivity to changing circumstances. In this vein Cummins developed the Personal Well-being Index (PWI).