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Introduction

On September 21-22, 2015, 6th International Scientific Conference “Quality of Life 2015. Human and Ecosystems Well-being” was held in Wrocław.

The conference was a part of the cycle of the conferences on the topic of quality of life that have been organized by the Department of Statistics (Wrocław University of Economics) since 1999. The aim of the cycle is to participate in the still rising all over the world wave of scientific studies on quality of life: ethical background and definitions of quality of life, investigating (how to measure it), presenting the results of differences of quality of life over time and space, its interdependences with natural environment, mathematical methods useful for the methodology of measuring quality of life and finally – possible methods of improving it. The conferences are meant to integrate the Polish scientific community doing research on these topics as well as to make contacts with foreign scientists.

This year our honorary guest was Professor Filomena Maggino, past President of International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS), who presented a plenary lecture.

We hosted about 30 participants, among them scientists from Spain, Romania, Italy and Japan. We had 24 lectures on such a variety of topics as carbon footprint and mathematical properties of some estimators. The common background of all of them was to better comprehend, measure and possibly to improve the quality of humans' life.

The present volume contains the extended versions of some selected lectures presented during the conference. We wish to thank all of the participants of the conference for co-creating very inspiring character of this meeting, stimulating productive discussions and resulting in some potentially fruitful cooperation over new research problems. We wish also to thank the authors for their prolonged cooperation in preparing this volume, the reviewers for their hard work and for many valuable, although anonymous, suggestions that helped some of us to improve their works.

Finally, we wish to thank the members of the Editorial Office of Wrocław University of Economics for their hard work while preparing the edition of this volume, continuous kindness and helpfulness exceeding their duties of the job.

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**WHERE DO THE HAPPIEST CHILDREN LIVE?
THE SWB OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN EUROPE**

**GDZIE ŻYJĄ NAJSZCZĘŚLIWSZE DZIECI? JAKOŚĆ
ŻYCIA DZIECI W WIEKU SZKOLNYM W EUROPIE**

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Summary: The purpose of this article is the comparison of selected European countries in terms of quality of life of children aged 8, 10 and 12 years. The analysis includes the following countries: Estonia, Germany, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom. There was a survey on the quality of life of children in these countries, as a part of the International Survey of Children's Well-being Children's Worlds (ISCWeB). Psychometric scales were used to evaluate the quality of life: OLS (Overall Life Satisfaction), SLSS (Student Life Satisfaction Scale), BMSLSS (Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale). Their construction is based on various aspects of life which is very important in the proper assessment of child well-being. Such areas were taken into account to construct these scales: family, school, friends, environment and "myself".

Keywords: children, quality of life, Europe.

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest porównanie wybranych państw europejskich pod względem jakości życia dzieci w wieku 8, 10 i 12 lat. W analizie uwzględniono następujące państwa: Estonia, Hiszpania, Niemcy, Norwegia, Polska, Rumunia, Turcja, Wielka Brytania. W tych krajach przeprowadzono badanie jakości życia dzieci, będące częścią International Survey of Children's Well-being Children's Worlds (ISCWeB). Do oceny jakości życia wykorzystano skale psychometryczne: OLS (Overall Life Satisfaction), SLSS (Student Life Satisfaction Scale), BMSLSS (Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale). Ich konstrukcja opiera się na różnych aspektach życia, co ma bardzo duże znaczenie we właściwej ocenie dobrobytu dzieci. W niniejszym artykule uwzględniono skale psychometryczne, do konstrukcji których wzięto pod uwagę takie obszary jak: rodzina, szkoła, przyjaciele, otoczenie i „ja sam”.

Słowa kluczowe: dzieci, jakość życia, Europa.

1. Introduction

The satisfaction with life can be expressed both objectively and subjectively. The first case involves the set of measures which define the quality of life of the population. In turn, the feeling of quality of life is based on, among other things, gained experience, relationships with others, or comparison of one's own social or material situation with others and is expressed subjectively. The level or quality of life is affected by, among other things, economic situation, political situation in a given area, which is why we can talk about the spatial diversity of this phenomenon [Berbeka 2006; Gupta 2015; Sompolska-Rzechuła 2013; Zeliaś 2000]. Children, who have their own way of life satisfaction perception, are a specific group of population. In their case, the use of objective assessments is largely hindered, as they must rely on what they are provided with by adults. However, they may express subjective opinions on the quality of life. These opinions should be taken into account by educators, teachers and rulers, because childcare, care about their well-being is a kind of investment in the future [Olk 2010, p. 8]. Opinions of the youngest express the current view of their situation at school, home, relationships with family, friends and environment. Subjective assessment can be considered as a measure of prosperity during the survey [Bradshaw et al. 2013, p. 620]. Therefore, the child subjective well-being (SWB) should be understood as individual conviction of a young person on the progress of their most vital needs, recognized in terms of satisfaction, happiness, fears and concerns [Strózik et al. 2015a, p. 1]. According to this concept, there is no more direct and more reliable method for evaluating the quality of life of children, than asking directly those who are concerned. That is why children are those who can best express their individual reactions to the environment [Casas et al. 2013, p. 436]. There was a gap in a study of quality of life of children to be filled in in this type of analysis based on their subjective feelings. This mainly concerns international comparisons.

In accordance with Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children are entitled to “the right to express their own views freely in all matters affecting the child, being taken with due weight, appropriate to the age and maturity of the child” [Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989]. However, the data collected directly from children are often perceived as unreliable, therefore this type of study is very rare [Casas 2011, p. 564], even though children express their true opinion on given issues and should be given a chance to express their views, also on subjects concerning the quality of life [Fattore et al. 2009, p. 75].

The purpose of this paper is to compare selected European countries in terms of quality of life of children aged 8, 10 and 12 years old. The analysis includes the following countries: Estonia (EST), Germany (GER), Great Britain (GBR), Norway (NOR), Poland (POL), Romania (ROM), Spain (ESP) and Turkey (TUR). These are the countries in which the survey testing the quality of life of children was conducted as part of the project of the International Survey of Children's Well-being Children's

Worlds (ISCWeB). The following psychometric scales were employed to evaluate the quality of life: OLS (Overall Life Satisfaction), SLSS (Student Life Satisfaction Scale), BMSLSS (Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale). Their structure is based on various aspects of life. Taking into account different disciplines in the analysis of the quality of life of children is very important in the proper assessment of their well-being [Cummins, Lau 2005; Land et al. 2007; Rees, 2010]. This article includes psychometric scales, the structure of which covers such areas as: family, school, friends, environment and “myself” [Seligson et al. 2003].

2. Project

The main objective of ISCWeB project was to obtain information on children’s lives, particularly their relationships with family members and friends, daily activities in and outside school and forms of spending free time. Subjective assessment of their own well-being was the main element of the study. The key methodological assumption of the project was the use of the aforementioned right of children to be listened to [ISCWeB 2013]. It was also believed that the rights of children were of paramount importance to ensure a fair childhood, and thus a good prospect for future life. The organizers developed also a target of improving the well-being of children by influencing the change in consciousness of the significance of the issue

Table 1. Number of the participants of the Children’s Worlds project, based on countries and age groups

Country	Total	Age group		
		8 years old	10 years old	12 years old
1	2	3	4	5
Algeria (Western region)	3676	1244	1149	1283
Colombia (Antioquia state)	2816	902	939	975
Estonia EST	3119	1076	1014	1029
Ethiopia	2877	953	944	980
Germany GER	3009	1056	1101	852
Great Britain (England) GBR	3298	990	989	1319
Israel	2777	886	988	903
Nepal	2953	975	983	995
Norway NOR	2864	930	960	974
Poland (Wielkopolska) POL	3157	1021	1119	1017
Romania ROM	4115	1249	1359	1507
South Africa (Western Cape)	3188	996	1061	1131
South Korea	7467	2432	2438	2597
Spain (Catalonia) ESP	3801	1032	1057	1712
Turkey (Istanbul) TUR	3024	959	1047	1018
TOTAL	53164	17259	17613	18292

Source: [Rees, Main, 2015, p. 19].

of quality of life of young people at home and immediate surroundings, but also with the relation to policy makers, professionals and the general public. The best way to recognize a subjective assessment is to ask the children to comment their own opinion about their quality of life.

The survey results presented in this article are based on an analysis of data from the second wave of the survey. It involved over 53 thousand children from 15 countries of the world, including 8 of Europe: Estonia, Germany, Great Britain, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain and Turkey (Table 1). The study was representative based on age and gender. The children were asked to complete surveys varying in each of three age groups: 8, 10 and 12 years old. However, they all contained many common elements, making it possible to compare different groups of children. The final questionnaires were prepared after verification, based on pilot studies. The study was voluntary and it ensured anonymity of participants.

3. The study course in Poland¹

In Poland The Children's Worlds study was conducted among primary school pupils aged from 8 to 12 from Wielkopolskie (Greater Poland) voivodeship. The scheme of selecting a representative group of respondents was based upon multistage, stratified random sampling. The prepared sampling frame was a list of primary schools which were assigned weights proportional to their size.

The minimum value of the sample in the research project was established at the level of 1000 children from each of the differentiated age groups (8, 10, and 12 years old). Because schools were selected with probabilities proportional to the total number of class groups, only one class group for each children's age group (from 2nd, 4th and 6th grade) was randomly selected from each of 65 sampled school.

Expecting that children's well-being differs due to the place of residence, a point was made that children from individual regions of the voivodeship and those from rural and urban schools, public and non-public, should be properly represented in the sample.

According to Polish law a parental consent is not obligatory. Nonetheless, some schools decided that it was required, which consequently decreased the number of potential respondents. The absence of parental consent was responsible for the fact that finally the survey included 3272 school children from 64 schools.

After checking the collected material as regards contents and formal requirements, 3157 respondents were finally qualified for further analysis (1021 8-year-olds, 1119 10-year-olds, and 1017 12-year-olds).

¹ In each country, the research teams prepared procedures for the selection of children and made the study. The recommendations were that the team conducted a study on a similar basis, but not everywhere the same levels were considered, e.g. the town-village. Data went to a common database, based on which the analysis was performed for the purposes of this article.

The study of children's well-being was carried out among primary school children, from grades 2, 4, and 6. This means that, apart from a few exceptions, the age of respondents invited to participate in the study fell within 8-9 years old (2nd grade), 10-11 years old (4th grade) and 12-13 years old (6th grade).

Out of 3157 school children participating in the study 48% were girls. Taking into account the type and location of schools taking part in the study, it was established that children from urban schools constituted 57.7% of all respondents, whereas only one out of 30 pupils attended non-public school. Nearly all young respondents (99.5%) reported were born in Poland. Over 99% of all respondents were living in a household with their own family and 85.5% of them were living in a full family (both with a mother and a father) [Strózik et al. 2015b, p. 9].

4. Metodology

There is a number of specific overall life satisfaction measures that were constructed for assessing child and adolescent well-being as well as general scales that can be used on the whole population [Gilman, Huebner 2000; Casas 2011]. In our study we used three psychometric scales: a single-item scale on Overall Life Satisfaction (OLS), a reduced version of the Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS-5), and an adapted version of the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) (Table 2).

Table 2. Psychometric scales used in the research

Instruments	Response scales	Items included
OLS	5-point smiley faces scale 11-point scale, from <i>Not at all satisfied</i> (0) to <i>Totally satisfied</i> (10)	How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?
SLSS-5	5-point scale, from <i>I don't agree</i> to <i>Totally agree</i> 11-point scale, from <i>Not at all agree</i> (0) to <i>Totally agree</i> (10)	My life is going well My life is just right The things in my life are excellent I have a good life I have what I want in life
BMSLSS	5-point smiley faces scale 11-point scale, from <i>Not at all satisfied</i> (0) to <i>Totally satisfied</i> (10)	Satisfaction with your family life Satisfaction with your friends Satisfaction with your school experience Satisfaction with your own body Satisfaction with the area where you live

Source: [ISCWeB 2013].

OLS

It is the simplest single-item, but important measure of overall life satisfaction [Campbell et al. 1976]. In our study, we asked the children how satisfied they were with their life as a whole. For purpose of analysis, the responses obtained on a 5-point faces scale (8-year-olds) or an 11-point scale from “not at all satisfied” to “totally satisfied” (10 and 12-year-olds) were transformed into a value from 0 to 100.

SLSS

We used in the study a reduced version of Huebner’s [1991] Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale, which was successfully tested in earlier studies [e.g. Rees et al. 2010; Casas et al. 2012]. The scale was based on five statements about children’s overall life satisfaction (Table 2). The children aged 8 responded the questions using a 5-point scale with a range from “I do not agree” to “totally agree” whereas 10- and 12-year-olds used an 11-point scale ranging from “not at all agree” to “totally agree”. We formed the total SLSS scale by adding the scores of five items and transforming the sum from 0 to 100. The internal consistency of the SLSS-5 ranged in our sample, depending on the country and the age group, from 84 to 97 (Cronbach’s α).

BMSLSS

The next measure applied in the study was an adapted version of the Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale [Huebner 1994; Seligson et al. 2003]. The BMSLSS consisted of five items, each representing one of the five life domains: family, school, friends, living environment and self. We calculated a version of this scale using the questions about children’s satisfaction with their family life, friends, school experience, local area and body (Table 2). The satisfaction was measured on a 5-point faces scale (8-year-olds) or an 11-point scale from “not at all satisfied” to “totally satisfied” (10- and 12-year-olds). The five items were summed to create a total life satisfaction score and transformed so that it was from 0 to 100. Cronbach’s α of the BMSLSS in our sample lied between 54 and 77.

Data analysis entailed, aside from descriptive analysis, Student’s t-tests to examine differences between countries, boys and girls and between three age groups [Strózik et al. 2015a, p. 4].

5. Results

Satisfaction of children with their own lives should be evaluated as high in each of the analyzed countries. This is evidenced by the indicators used in the analysis (OLS SLSS, BMSLSS) – all are higher than 80. The highest satisfaction of life was among children from Romania and Turkey, and the lowest in Germany, the UK and Estonia. In most cases analyzed 12 year olds indicated a lower level of satisfaction with life than 8 years old (Table 3). Only Norway and Turkey had SLSS value in the oldest group of children higher than among the youngest children. The largest differences were recorded in Poland (in each of the analyzed indicators), where the difference

between the values of the analyzed indicators of 8-year-old and 12-year-old children was about 9 points.

Table 3. Mean scores for SWB indicators according to age group and country

Age group	Country							
	EST	ESP	GBR	GER	NOR	POL	ROM	TUR
OLS								
8 year-old	90.9	93.1	86.6	90.3	89.7	93.5	94.8	92.3
10 year-old	91.6	92.5	89.2	90.7	91.7	91.9	95.5	96.0
12 year-old	87.7	87.9	84.1	85.7	88.4	84.3	94.7	89.4
SLSS								
8 year-old	84.1	88.3	83.9	83.9	86.4	90.0	90.8	85.9
10 year-old	86.4	91.2	87.6	87.2	90.3	88.1	94.4	93.1
12 year-old	81.1	84.9	83.2	81.1	88.6	81.4	93.4	85.9
BMSLSS								
8 year-old	87.4	92.2	86.7	85.3	90.5	91.1	92.2	92.4
10 year-old	88.7	90.1	87.4	86.8	91.3	89.8	93.3	93.8
12 year-old	83.0	85.4	82.5	81.4	88.7	83.3	92.0	88.1

Source: own calculations based on answers to survey questions.

Table 4. % of children with low well-being (mid-point or below) according to age group and country

Age group	Country							
	EST	ESP	GBR	GER	NOR	POL	ROM	TUR
OLS								
8 year-old	7.8	6.3	13.2	8.9	9.7	5.1	3.7	7.0
10 year-old	5.6	4.9	6.8	6.3	6.3	5.5	2.5	3.2
12 year-old	6.5	5.4	12.9	7.6	6.1	10.8	2.0	8.8
SLSS								
8 year-old	9.2	6.2	10.9	9.9	7.6	6.0	4.1	9.5
10 year-old	6.8	2.8	7.1	6.7	3.5	6.1	1.6	4.2
12 year-old	8.3	5.2	11.2	9.0	4.5	10.6	2.2	8.6
BMSLSS								
8 year-old	3.3	1.1	3.1	3.2	2.1	0.8	0.8	1.5
10 year-old	2.6	1.4	3.5	1.5	1.3	1.6	0.6	1.6
12 year-old	4.4	1.6	4.8	4.0	1.2	5.1	0.8	3.2

Source: own calculations based on answers to survey questions.

Over 13% of 8-year olds from Germany rated generally their life low (50 points of OLS or less). In the same country, the percentage of 12-year-old children who misjudged their life was less than 13%. The application of the SLSS scale in Germany also resulted in the highest proportions of the low-satisfied with life. Relatively the lowest number of children indicating dissatisfaction was found in Romania in each age group and for each measure. Significantly lower percentages of children with

low satisfaction with life were obtained for BMSLSS – 5%, it was exceeded only in Poland for 12-year-old children (Table 4). It is worth noting that the increase of age was accompanied with the percentage of Polish children who achieved 50 points or less.

Life satisfaction in boys and girls was in most cases on a similar level (Table 5). Statistically significant differences in SWB between boys and girls occurred only among 8-year-old children in Estonia (scale SLSS and BMSLSS) and Poland (BMSLSS), 10-year-olds in Germany (OLS and SLSS) and Romania (SLSS) and among 12-year-olds in Germany (all scales), the UK (OLS and SLSS), Norway (OLS and BMSLSS) and Poland (OLS).

The analysis of the degree of satisfaction of children with specific aspects of BMSLSS scale leads to isolating those factors that positively or negatively affect the assessment of life satisfaction. Among 8-year-old children, the family life achieved the highest ratings for satisfaction, only in Norway children found higher satisfaction with the neighborhood (Table 6). However, in Germany the area of residence was an element to be rated relatively low, even lower than the school life, which reached the lowest scores in the remaining 7 countries. Every fourth German 8-year-old is unhappy with the area in which he/she resides.

Table 5 Mean scores for SWB indicators according to age group, sex and country

Age group	Sex	Country							
		EST	ESP	GBR	GER	NOR	POL	ROM	TUR
OLS									
8 year-old	Boys	90.5	93.2	85.6	91.1	89.0	93.5	94.4	91.2
	Girls	91.4	93.0	87.5	89.4	90.3	93.5	95.1	93.3
10 year-old	Boys	91.3	92.5	89.5	92.2*	91.6	91.9	95.9	95.7
	Girls	92.4	92.5	88.7	89.1*	91.9	92.5	95.3	96.3
12 year-old	Boys	88.0	88.4	87.0*	87.1**	90.8*	86.4*	94.5	90.6
	Girls	87.3	87.3	81.0*	84.4**	86.7*	82.2*	94.9	88.3
SLSS									
8 year-old	Boys	82.1*	88.4	83.2	83.9	85.8	89.7	90.2	84.4
	Girls	86.0*	88.1	84.5	83.9	86.9	90.5	91.7	88.1
10 year-old	Boys	85.7	91.6	86.6	88.7*	89.9	88.1	94.5	93.3
	Girls	87.3	90.8	88.7	85.6*	90.7	88.7	94.4	92.3
12 year-old	Boys	81.1	85.4	85.3*	82.8**	89.6	82.4	93.3	86.9
	Girls	81.1	84.3	81.0*	79.5**	87.8	80.5	93.6	84.9
BMSLSS									
8 year-old	Boys	86.1**	91.9	86.3	85.0	89.7	90.4**	92.1	91.7
	Girls	88.6**	92.6	87.2	85.5	91.2	91.9**	92.5	93.0
10 year-old	Boys	88.2	90.1	87.6	87.1	90.9	89.9	92.7*	93.4
	Girls	88.7	90.1	87.2	86.6	91.7	89.8	94.1*	94.3
12 year-old	Boys	83.1	85.2	85.0*	81.9	89.9**	83.9	91.6	88.4
	Girls	82.9	85.6	79.9*	81.1	88.0**	82.6	92.5	87.8

T-tests: * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

Source: own calculations based on answers to survey questions.

The results for boys and girls were similar, there was a statistically significant difference only in 9 cases, including 4 related to school experiences. As for this issue, in no country the assessment for boys was higher than for girls, and in Estonia, the UK, Norway and Romania, the average scores for girls were significantly higher than among boys. Generally, only in one case the score for boys was higher than average. This applies to 8-year-old boys in Norway who scored family life satisfaction above average compared to their female counterparts.

Table 6. 8-year-old children's satisfaction with various life domains according to age group, sex and country (0-4 scale)

Satisfaction with:	Sex	Country							
		EST	ESP	GBR	GER	NOR	POL	ROM	TUR
Your family life	Total	3.6	3.8	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.7
	Boys	3.5**	3.8	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.7**	3.8	3.7**
	Girls	3.7**	3.8	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.8**	3.8	3.8**
Your friends	Total	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7
	Boys	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.7
	Girls	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7
Your school experience	Total	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6
	Boys	3.3*	3.5	3.3*	3.2	3.4*	3.4	3.6**	3.6
	Girls	3.5*	3.5	3.5*	3.3	3.6*	3.5	3.7**	3.7
Your own body	Total	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.7
	Boys	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.5**	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.6
	Girls	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.4**	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.7
The area where you live	Total	3.5	3.7	3.4	3.1	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Boys	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.1	3.7*	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Girls	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.2	3.8*	3.7	3.7	3.7

T-tests: * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

Source: own calculations based on answers to survey questions.

Among 10-year-old children, family life in each country was assessed as maximum (as of 8-year-olds), and in Romania and Turkey mean scores were close to 10 points (Table 7). These two countries are characterized by high average also in the case of two other aspects: the evaluation of school experience and their own bodies. As far as the lowest rating some discrepancies were noted. In Estonia, Spain, Poland and Romania school experience was the lowest rated (in Romania on an equal level with the surroundings); Britain and Norway – the body, in Turkey – friends, in Germany – the area of residence. Note the relatively low assessment of this issue in Germany – it is the lowest, taking into account all the aspects discussed in all the analyzed countries in a group of 10-year-olds.

Table 7. 10-year-old children's satisfaction with various life domains according to age group, sex and country (0-10 scale)

Satisfaction with:	Sex	Country							
		EST	ESP	GBR	GER	NOR	POL	ROM	TUR
Your family life	Total	9.3	9.3	9.1	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.6	9.7
	Boys	9.3	9.3	9.1	9.3	9.2	9.4	9.6	9.7
	Girls	9.3	9.3	9.1	9.2	9.4	9.4	9.6	9.7
Your friends	Total	8.9	9.0	8.9	9.2	9.2	8.8	9.0	9.1
	Boys	8.9	9.1	8.9	9.1**	9.2	8.8	8.9	9.0
	Girls	8.9	8.9	8.9	9.3**	9.1	8.7	9.0	9.2
Your school experience	Total	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.4	9.0	8.6	9.3	9.4
	Boys	8.4*	8.6**	8.5	8.2**	8.9*	8.6	9.2*	9.2*
	Girls	8.9*	8.9**	8.7	8.5**	9.2*	8.7	9.4*	9.5*
Your own body	Total	8.7	9.1	8.5	8.5	8.8	9.0	9.4	9.5
	Boys	8.8**	9.2**	8.7*	8.8*	8.9	9.0	9.4	9.4
	Girls	8.5**	9.0**	8.3*	8.2*	8.7	8.9	9.4	9.5
The area where you live	Total	8.8	8.9	8.6	8.0	9.4	9.1	9.3	9.2
	Boys	8.7	8.8	8.6	8.0	9.3**	9.1	9.2	9.3
	Girls	8.8	9.0	8.6	8.1	9.5**	9.1	9.4	9.2

T-tests: * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

Source: own calculations based on answers to survey questions.

Table 8. 12-year-old children's satisfaction with various life domains according to age group, sex and country (0-10 scale)

Satisfaction with:	Sex	Country							
		EST	ESP	GBR	GER	NOR	POL	ROM	TUR
Your family life	Total	9.1	9.0	8.9	8.8	9.3	9.0	9.6	9.5
	Boys	9.1	9.0	9.1*	8.8	9.3	9.0	9.6	9.6**
	Girls	9.0	8.9	8.7*	8.8	9.3	9.0	9.6	9.4**
Your friends	Total	8.6	9.0	8.8	8.9	9.3	8.3	8.9	8.8
	Boys	8.5	8.9*	8.8	8.9	9.2	8.3	8.9	8.7
	Girls	8.6	9.1*	8.7	8.9	9.3	8.3	9.0	8.9
Your school experience	Total	7.9	8.0	8.0	7.6	8.8	8.0	8.9	8.4
	Boys	7.6*	7.8*	8.1	7.6	8.8	7.8*	8.7*	8.3
	Girls	8.2*	8.3*	7.9	7.7	8.7	8.3*	9.1*	8.5
Your own body	Total	7.7	8.2	7.2	7.6	7.7	7.8	9.3	8.7
	Boys	8.0*	8.4*	8.1*	8.2*	8.3*	8.3*	9.3	8.9*
	Girls	7.3*	8.0*	6.4*	7.1*	7.3*	7.3*	9.3	8.5*
The area where you live	Total	8.3	8.5	8.3	7.7	9.3	8.3	9.3	8.5
	Boys	8.2	8.5	8.3	7.5	9.4	8.4	9.3	8.5
	Girls	8.4	8.5	8.2	7.8	9.3	8.3	9.2	8.5

T-tests: * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

Source: own calculations based on answers to survey questions.

The clearest differences in the assessment of satisfaction with various aspects between boys and girls can be seen in the case of school and the body. Only in the UK and Poland differences in the assessment of school experience by gender were not significant. However, in each analyzed country the assessment of this question was higher among girls than among boys, in Estonia the difference was even 0.5 points. In four countries the assessment of own bodies among boys and girls was statistically significantly different. In Germany, the difference was even 0.6 points.

In most cases, 12-year-old children achieved lower scores than in the younger groups. Average scores of above 9 points were obtained only in 7 cases: family life in Estonia, Norway, Romania and Turkey (in the two latter countries they are closest to the average scores of 10 pts.), friends in Norway, own body and surroundings in Romania. 12 year children most appreciate family life (Spain, UK, Germany and Norway at a similar level of rating as friends). Once again, the closest region was relatively worst evaluated in Germany. Compared with younger groups of children there was a marked decline in satisfaction with school experience and own bodies, only in Romania these issues were rated as slightly worse by 12-year-olds. Thus these two issues undercut the overall evaluation of life satisfaction in this age group. Own body was worst rated by children from the UK – average rating of 7.2 indicates that children in this country are moderately satisfied with how they look. In this regard, statistically significant differences in seven countries were taken for analysis. Only in Romania the assessment in boys and girls was at a comparable level. In some cases, the differences in the assessments of the body are quite large, e.g. in Norway and Poland, the boys gave their body on average 1 point more, and in the UK 1.7 point. In this country the average rating of bodies among girls was 6.4 point. One in three British 12-year-olds is unhappy with her body. In turn, female children in most of the analyzed countries (except Norway) assessed school experience better. Statistically significant differences in the assessments of this issue by gender were found in Estonia, Spain, Poland and Romania.

6. Conclusions

The study on subjective well-being of the children aged 8-12 years from the selected European countries shows that the children's satisfaction with their lives was fairly high. The SWB indicators was the highest in Romania and Turkey, the lowest in Germany, Great Britain and Estonia. The level of overall life satisfaction was decreasing along with age of the children. The share of children whose assessment of their life was low reached the level of 0.6% (BMSLSS for 10-year-olds in Romania) to even 13.2% (OLS for 8-year-olds in Great Britain).

When examining different life domains, the study reports that the aspect of life which the children are most satisfied with (regardless of age and sex) is their family life in all studied countries. The study confirms previous results [e.g. Casas et al. 2013; The Children's Society 2014, Strózik et al. 2015a] about the importance

of family relations as one of crucial contributors to children's SWB. Much worse marks in all countries are given by the pupils mainly to their school life, especially among 12-year-old children. The overall subjective well-being as well as children's satisfaction with different life domains is decreasing along with age of the children [e.g. Currie et al. 2012]. For all analyzed life aspects older children felt significantly less satisfied than younger children. Those differences are mainly visible in the comparison of 12-year-olds with their younger colleagues and concern, above all, satisfaction with their own bodies. There was a relatively low level of satisfaction among the 12-year-olds (especially among girls, the lowest in Great Britain) with their own bodies (except Romania). In Germany children indicated relatively low satisfaction with an area where they were living.

Testing the quality of life of children, and particularly its diversity in different countries is a complex process. This article presents the main results of the comparative analysis, however, we have to continue the issue in further studies, taking into account, among other things, differentiation factors of cultural or social aspects. However, it is obvious that utilizing a huge potential of the Children's Worlds survey, a detailed analysis need to be and will be carried out to understand children's lives in the European and other countries better.

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